



SAFE SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER



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Adolescent Television Viewing

Watching more than one hour of television per day makes adolescents more prone to violence in adulthood, according to a new study published in the March 29, 2002 issue of the journal *Science*. Results indicated that students who watched one hour or more of television per day were more likely in their late teens and early twenties to engage in aggressive acts against others.

See Viewing, Page 2



Parental Involvement and Violence Prevention

Addressing parents' fears regarding their children's safety and security at school helps strengthen the bond between parents and schools. Listed below are five ways that you as an administrator can involve parents in your school.



1. Provide user-friendly safety, violence, and substance abuse videotapes that parents can check-out for viewing and discussing with their children.
2. Ask parents to get involved in your school's Safety Committee, which will enhance two-way communications between parents and your school.
3. Invite parents to attend school assemblies with their children on special safety and security topics, such as bullying prevention. Such programs would show parents the importance of safety issues and educate them on the school's policy and reporting procedures.

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4. Address parents' fears about increased exposure to drugs and alcohol by providing parents with guides and videotapes that teach them how to use daily opportunities to communicate with their children about these concerns.

5. Hold a School Safety Night to give parents a realistic picture of your school's safety and security problems and how they are currently being addressed. Give parents the opportunity to respond to surveys and share their views and solutions to security concerns.

Viewing, Continued from Page 1

More than 700 children participated in the long-term study, which reported on their behavior from adolescence to adulthood. Study participants and their mothers were interviewed four times over the course of 18 years and assigned to three categories, those who watched: less than one hour of television per day, between one and three hours per day, and more than three hours per day.

Study results indicated that 5.7 percent of adolescents who watched less than an hour of TV per day committed aggressive acts against other people in later years. In contrast, 51.3 percent of the adolescents who watched over one hour of TV per day committed aggressive acts later.

Information on aggressive acts committed by the study subjects came from interviews, as well as state and federal records of arrests and charges for adult criminal behavior. Researchers grouped the violent acts according to whether they occurred around age 16, age 22, or age 30.

According to the study, three to five violent acts take place during an average hour of prime-time television, and 20 to 25 violent acts occur in an average hour of children's television. The study did not indicate if program "subject matter" was correlated to the results.

Strong Parent-Child Connection Protects Students From Substance Abuse

According to a recent study in the journal *Addiction*, a strong attachment to a mother figure, and living with both parents protects students from substance abuse. Researchers at Newcastle University, England surveyed more than 3,000 middle school students in Germany, Italy, and the U.K., and reported that 42.3 percent of 14- to 15-year-olds use drugs. However, only 32 percent of students with either a strong maternal relationship or both parents at home use drugs. Among students with both a strong connection to their mother and two parents at home, only 16.6 percent of students reported substance abuse problems.

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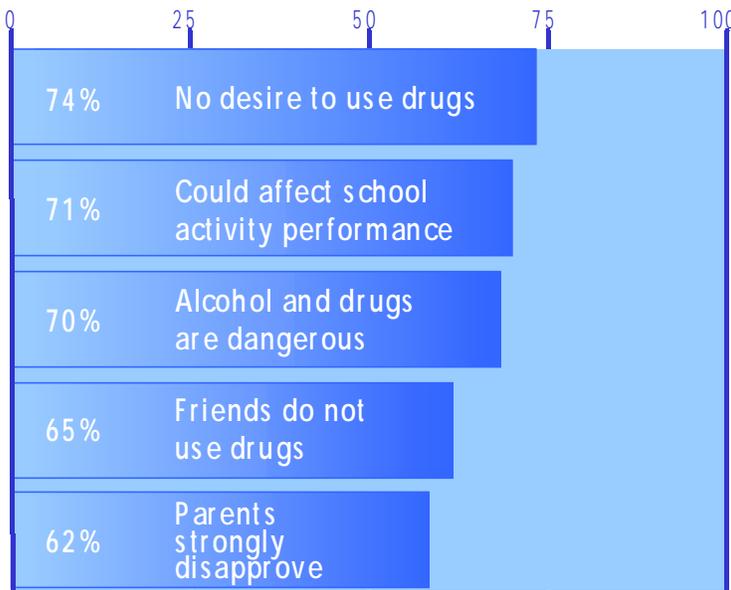




Students Report Education Prevents Drug Usage

Half of sixth-graders who responded to the 2001 Minnesota Student Survey reported that, as a result of the prevention education provided at their schools, they do not use alcohol or drugs. The Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning surveyed 133,000 students and found a decrease in both violent behavior and substance abuse. Students who reported that they did not use alcohol or drugs offered the following reasons:

REASONS FOR ABSTINENCE



For student survey questions and further information, visit: <http://children.state.mn.us/newsrel/01Studsrel.html>.

Disciplinary Suspensions Considered Ineffective for Young Students



Researchers responding to reports of high student suspension rates in Minnesota schools advocate alternatives to disciplinary suspensions for young students. Researchers expressed concern that Minnesota Public Schools suspended 4,000 kindergartners, first-graders, and second-graders during SY2000-01. The two- to five-day suspensions were mostly for discipline violations such as fighting, defiance, disorderly conduct, and persistent lack of cooperation. University of Minnesota researchers explained that disciplinary suspensions do not teach students correct behavior. Instead, students experience fear, anger, and greater academic difficulty. Veteran Minnesota teachers acknowledged the limitations of disciplinary suspensions, but explained that sending one or two extremely disruptive students out of the classroom allows the majority of the students to learn. For further information visit: www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/3210266.htm.

Silent Classroom Management

John Hopkins University's Good Behavior Game works to help elementary school teachers improve student behavior without scolding. Melanie Davis of Woodson-Dear Elementary School in Richmond, Missouri, begins the Good Behavior Game daily by grouping her students in teams. Davis seats children in groups of two to five students and lets them select a name for their group.

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Then throughout the day, she places tally marks on the whiteboard, awarding points for good behavior or complying with directions. Davis deletes tally marks for poor behavior or not paying attention. As students learn that their behavior and that of their teammates impacts their progress, they work to encourage each other to listen, line up for the door, and contribute to peace in the classroom. For further information on this program, see the description of the Good Behavior Game in the DoDEA Intervention Strategies Guide 1-2.

Prevention Videotapes to Meet Students' Needs



Do videotapes used in your prevention programs emotionally involve students in the lesson? According to a recent Vanderbilt University study, the quality of student discussion of educational videotapes indicates how well the lesson will affect students' behavior. Researchers maintain that videos that are relevant and require critical thinking can powerfully affect students. The researchers offered the following criteria for evaluating effective prevention program videotapes. Does the video:

- ★ Involve students emotionally and intellectually?
- ★ Reassure students that their classmates' thoughts, feelings, and problems are similar to theirs?
- ★ Present real life examples rather than dramatic simulations?

- ★ Offer answers and responses to situations that are realistic for students?
- ★ Teach students how to change their situations and improve their lives?
- ★ Include a racially and culturally diverse presentation that allows all students to identify with the video?

For further information visit www.livewiremedia.com/At-risk.html.

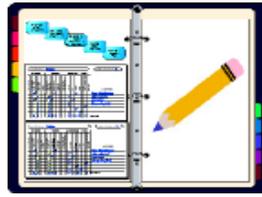
Technology Update: Smart Lockers

DoDEA principals evaluating physical security measures might consider "smart" school lockers that open with proximity cards. The lockers can be controlled electronically at a central office enabling school administrators to:

- Open student lockers to assist with searches in the event of a bomb threat or report of a weapon at school;
- Secure lockers in the event of a school lockdown; and
- Obtain reports on locker usage to identify students that might be accessing their locker frequently because they are selling drugs.

At approximately \$300.00 per locker, the lockers are more expensive than traditional school lockers that usually cost approximately \$100.00 per locker. Use of smart lockers might also require the establishment of policies on searches of school property that address student privacy concerns, including a reminder to students that lockers can be searched at any time because they are school property.





Safe School Planning

Summertime Planning

With the school year winding down, administrators have much to do in order to complete the year-end administration of grades, transcripts, and the myriad of other details necessary to close down operations for the summer. However, the respite of summertime brings with it a golden opportunity to do some Safe School Planning for the next school year.

By using the backward planning approach, one can take time to analyze, plan, and implement school policies, programs, and facility changes prior to the start of next year's classes. So take advantage of some "down" time to establish your updated Safe School Plan. Here's how:

Serious Incident Reports	Review to determine any significant problems (Phase One – Identify Problems) that need to be addressed.
Plan Objectives	For any objectives that you did not attain, (Phase Two–Determine Objectives) determine the steps you need to take in order to improve next year.
School Policies	Review to identify those policies that caused particular difficulty, were misunderstood, or were repeatedly violated. Use your Policy and Program Review, Tool 6, to help you think through all of these issues.
School Programs	Review to determine effective programs and areas that require attention. Again, use Tool 6 to support your efforts.
School Physical Security	Walk through the entire complex, inside and out, to determine your security needs, using Tool 7, Physical Security Review. With fresh memories from this past year's experiences you will be alert to the existing vulnerabilities.

The five main security concerns that DoDEA administrators shared with us this year were:

- **Entry and Access Control** Address this concern with a combination of policy, program and physical security measures. Refer to the May 2002 DoDEA Newsletter for more information on this subject.
- **Fighting and Bullying** Address this concern by working through your Policy and Program Review, Tool 6.
- **A Need for More Parental and Community Involvement** This program area demands some good old fashioned Public Relations and an appeal for help.
- **Theft** This area of concern can be addressed with an increased application of physical security measures.
- **Student Behavior on Buses and Playgrounds** The solution to this concern lies in the proper application and balance of policy, program, and physical security measures.



DoDEA Prevention Programs

This article is the second in a two-article series describing prevention programs that DoDEA school administrators have considered effective. For this article, principals in the DoDEA Japan School District described programs that benefited their students.

Principals described two types of prevention programs that might be referred to as either “store-bought” or “home-grown.” Of the hundreds of “store-bought,” or prepared violence prevention curricula available from publishing firms, schools in the Japan District said they experienced success with Bully-Proofing Your School, Character Counts, Don’t Laugh At Me, Second Step, Learning the Skills of Peacemaking, and Student Workshop: Conflict Managers.

Principals also enthusiastically described the following “home-grown” programs designed and implemented by their guidance counselors, teachers and school administrators. Highlights of these programs include:

Atsugi Peer Mediation Program

Cherrye Hall, Principal, Lanham Elementary School, Atsugi Naval Air Station

- ★ The military installation commander introduces the peer mediation program to students and emphasizes and reinforces the importance of student-to-student cooperation.
- ★ Fifth-graders receive peer-mediation training, then teach peer mediation to the younger classes.
- ★ Through this program students successfully resolve their own disputes.
- ★ Incidents of bullying behavior have decreased as a result of this program.

Emotional Behavior Assistance Team

Tari Wright, Principal, Kinnick High School, Yokosuka Naval Base

- ★ Members of this team include the nurse, guidance counselors, psychologist, alcohol and substance abuse counselor, and a counselor from family services.
- ★ Throughout the school year team members present classroom lessons on topics such as suicide prevention, anti-bullying, and sexual harassment prevention.

Misawa Peer Mediation Program

Tom Larue, Principal, Sollars Elementary School, Misawa Air Base, Japan

- ★ Peer mediation is promoted to students and is made available to students during school recess to assist with resolving interpersonal conflicts.
- ★ In grades 3-4, guidance counselors present lessons to prevent students from teasing their classmates.
- ★ In grades 5-6, guidance counselors survey students regarding their experience with bullying and present an extensive Bully-Proofing prevention curriculum.



 **Teaching Tolerance and Kindness**

Sara Porter, Principal, Byrd Elementary School, Negishi, Japan

- ★ This program enables school administrators to learn about student conflicts and how to address tensions early.
- ★ Parents are encouraged to talk frequently with teachers.

 **Yakota Violence Prevention and Peer Mediation**

Scott Sterry, Principal, Yakota West Elementary School

- ★ The assistant principal and guidance counselor meet individually with at-risk and troubled students to discuss their feelings and home life.
- ★ Educators encourage students to bring their anger management issues to the guidance counselor early.

 **You Are Special**

Linda Connelly, Principal, King Elementary/High School, Sasebo Naval Base, Japan

- ★ Each student is recognized weekly at the front of the class.
- ★ Students share personal information about themselves.
- ★ At the end of the student's presentation, classmates applaud as the student receives a button or sticker acknowledging their contribution.

Commercially Available Violence Prevention Programs

For further information about these programs, please see the references indicated below.

Bully-Proofing Your School, Intervention Strategies Guide 1-1

Character Counts, Intervention Strategies Guide 1-2

Don't Laugh At Me, Intervention Strategies Guide 1-1

Second Step, DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook

Learning the Skills of Peacemaking, Intervention Strategies Guide 1-2

Student Workshop: Conflict Managers, Intervention Strategies Guide 1-2



Special thanks to Bruce Derr, School Superintendent of the Japan District for his support with this article and coordinating and providing principals' responses regarding the prevention programs mentioned above.



Teaching Telling

Teaching students to report potential incidents is critical to preventing violence for two reasons: 1) the U.S. Secret Service reports that student shooters tell other students, but not adults, and 2) Alfred University discovered that “one in five students has heard about someone in their school who has a plan to shoot someone.”

According to Alfred University’s August 2001 report, *Lethal Violence in Schools*, eight percent of students reported having considered shooting someone at school, and 20 percent of U.S. students have heard another student talking about shooting someone at school. Student reports of the availability of guns make the talk more credible; twenty-four percent of students reported that they could “easily get a gun, if they wanted one.”

On May 15, 2002, Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secret Service Director Brian Stafford announced the results of the U.S. Secret Service’s three-year study of school shooters. *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States* reports that in more than 75 percent of school shootings, the perpetrators told other students of their plans before the incident. Secretary Paige explained that perpetrators usually “behaved in ways that caused others concern...many felt desperate and let others know that.”

Reassure students that reporting troubled peers helps their friends and might potentially save lives. Remind students of the difference between tattling and telling: tattling is usually intended to get another person into trouble, while telling protects students and teachers and brings aid and possibly relief to an anxious friend. Offer real life examples of both options and acknowledge that both choices are understandable.

- ☹️ The friends of a Santana, California student delayed telling adults because they did not take their friend’s expressions of anger seriously, and on March 5, 2001, he killed two people and wounded thirteen others.
- 😊 However, in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a student notified an adult and prevented a Columbine High School-style attack on her school because she was concerned for her teacher’s safety. On November 24, 2001, police officers arrested three New Bedford High School students for conspiracy to commit murder following an investigation and search of their homes that revealed weapons, ammunition, and documents describing a planned attack.

For further information, visit:

U.S. Secret Service Threat Assessment Center, at: www.ustreas.gov/usss/ntac.shtml.

