



CSPV SCHOOL VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

FS-SV07

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Reducing School Violence

- Individual and environmental factors interact to promote or inhibit violent behavior. (These are referred to as risk factors and protective factors, respectively).
- Exposure to multiple risk factors during childhood in a number of domains (i.e., individual, family, peer group, community, and school) appears to increase significantly the likelihood of later violence.
- From conception to age six, risk factors for violence include:
 - perinatal difficulties (e.g., low birth weight, oxygen deprivation);
 - physical trauma to infants; and
 - minor physical abnormalities and brain damage.
- Poor family management practices increase the risk for violence by children. Such practices include:
 - parents' failure to set clear expectations for their children;
 - failure to supervise and monitor children's behavior;
 - excessively severe, harsh, or inconsistent punishment;
 - physically abusive or neglectful parenting; and
 - violent disputes between parents.
- Community contexts also contribute to the risk of violence. These risk factors include:
 - neighborhoods with extreme poverty and unemployment; and
 - socially disorganized neighborhoods with high crime rates, high population density, high residential mobility, physical deterioration, and low levels of neighborhood attachment.
- As children approach adolescence, rebelliousness, association with peers engaged in violence, favorable attitudes toward the use of violence, and early initiation of violent behavior all predict later violence.
- Schools can contribute to risks for violence or can, by their arrangements and actions, inhibit violent behavior.
- A lack of clear rules governing student behavior, failure to enforce school rules and policies, and ineffective academic instruction all contribute to the development of antisocial behavior in schools.
- A strong academic mission, clear nonviolent and prosocial behavioral norms, consistent and fair rule enforcement, and a climate of emotional support appear to reduce school disorder.
- During the years of school attendance, students who experience academic failure are at increased risk for involvement in crime and violence. If schools ensure academic success for all students, they are likely to reduce the student's risk for violence.
- A lack of commitment to learning is also predictive of juvenile crime. Schools that instill a commitment to learning promote academic success and are likely to reduce the risk for violent behavior.

- Four key ways schools can contribute to the prevention of violence include:
 1. the use of management and instructional practices in classrooms and on playgrounds that promote the development of social bonding to school and academic success,
 2. the promotion of prosocial norms and behavior,
 3. teaching skills for resolving conflict nonviolently, and
 4. minimizing the availability and acceptance of weapons.
 - School-based violence prevention efforts achieve the best results if they are nested within a coordinated, well-designed prevention system involving the entire community.
 - Schools can play an important part in violence prevention, but they should not be expected to reduce levels of community violence.
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The information for this fact sheet was excerpted from the following book chapter. *Violence in American Schools* was developed by CSPV through a grant from the W.T. Grant Foundation:

Hawkins, J.D., Farrington, D.P., & Catalano, R.F. (1998). Reducing School Violence Through the Schools. In D.S. Elliott, B.A. Hamburg, & K.R. Williams (Editors), *Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective*, (pp. 188-216). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

For more information on how to obtain a copy of this book, please contact Cambridge University Press, 110 Midland Avenue, Port Chester, NY 10573. Telephone: (800) 872-7423, E-mail: orders@cup.org, or URL: www.cup.org.