

FACES NEWSLETTER

Family and Consumer Science



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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Helping Children Understand and Prevent Violence

The Facts

- Violence is the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something.
- Violence is a learned behavior. Most children learn about it through television and toys. Others experience it in their communities and homes through frustration, abuse or emotional neglect.
- According to the American Medical Association, the average American child has seen 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on television.
- Children are more likely to use violence when they see or experience it as a way to solve problems.
- It is estimated that 1.2 million elementary-aged children now have access to guns when they are home alone.
- Violence can be unlearned with help from adult and parents.

Stopping the Violence

Adults have a great impact on the reduction and prevention of violence. Most of the factors that contribute to violence are controllable by adults and parents. The following are suggestions as to what adults can do to help children overcome violence.

Understand violence

Violence is often committed for one or more of the following reasons:

- ✓ Expression: to release feelings of anger or frustration.
- ✓ Manipulation: to control others or get something they want.
- ✓ Retaliation: to retaliate against those who have hurt them or someone they are close to.

Recognize the warning signs

The learned behavior of violence can be changed. In order to begin the process of solving the problem, one must recognize the warning signs.

- ✓ Loss of temper on a daily basis.
- ✓ Frequent physical fighting.
- ✓ Significant physical fighting.
- ✓ Increase in use of drugs or alcohol.
- ✓ Detailed plans to commit acts of violence.
- ✓ Announcing threats or plans to hurt others.
- ✓ Cruelty to pets or other animals.
- ✓ Carrying a weapon (any weapon) to school.
- ✓ Artwork or writing that depicts isolation or anger.
- ✓ Self-isolation from family and friends.

Get involved

- ✓ Listen and talk to the child on a regular basis.
- ✓ Help the child understand that conflicts can be resolved without use of violence.
- ✓ Monitor what it is that the child is watching on television.
- ✓ Help the child prepare for and avoid situation that may lead to violence.
- ✓ Take an active role in the child's school.
- ✓ Insist on knowing the child's friends, activities and whereabouts.
- ✓ Keep aware of any gang influences in your community.

Get help

You don't have to deal with the problem alone. When concerned about the presence of warning signs in a child, it is

appropriate to do something about those concerns. The following professionals can help diagnose the child's behavior and attitude:

- ✓ School counselor
- ✓ Doctor
- ✓ Trained mental health professional

The most effective interventions have adults, parents, school and health professionals working together to provide monitoring and support.

How Kids Can Help

As children get older they too can help themselves stay safe and stop violence in their community. The following are suggestions as to how kids can help stop violence:

- Settle arguments with words rather the weapons.
- Trust your feelings. When you sense danger, get away fast. Familiarize yourself with safe routes for walking in your neighborhood.
- Know good places and people to seek help from.
- Report anything suspicious or any crimes to an authority (police, teacher, parent).
- Don't use drugs or alcohol. Stick with friends who are against violence and drugs.
- Get involved with you school to make it a safer and better place.

**If you knew these five things
you'd probably apply for
SNAP benefits after all!**

Filling out an application for FNS/SNAP benefits (previously Food Stamps) may seem a bit daunting, but before you throw your hands up in the air and mutter “no way!” I’d like for you to consider five things:

**#1 – YOU CAN FILL OUT JUST A
BIT OF INFORMATION ...**

If you’re not able to complete the entire application, for any reason, you can print just the first page; fill in your name, address and signature; then, turn it in to your county’s Department of Social Services (DSS). Including a phone number where you can be reached would also be helpful. This alone gets the process started.

**#2 – YOU CAN HAVE SOMEONE
YOU TRUST APPLY FOR YOU ...**

If you prefer that someone you trust (and who knows your financial circumstances) applies for you instead, you can fill out a form to allow this person to apply for you – he or she is called your “authorized representative.” You can also have an authorized representative shop for you using your EBT benefit card.

**#3 – YOU CAN COMPLETE YOUR
APPLICATION ONLINE ...**

If you prefer to complete your application online (typing), rather than by hand (writing), you can do that online. After you’ve keyed in your information, print it off, sign it, and take it to your county’s Department of Social Services (DSS).

**#4 – YOU CAN REQUEST A PHONE
INTERVIEW ...**

If you’re not able to attend an in-person interview at DSS, for any reason, you can request that your initial interview be conducted by phone instead. So, don’t let transportation or mobility issues get in your way! You and DSS will get the needed forms and documents back-and-forth to each other using the postal service.

**#5 – YOUR BENEFITS BEGIN ON
THE DATE YOUR APPLICATION IS
RECEIVED ...**

The clock starts ticking on the day that you turn in your application – that’s the date that your benefits will start (retroactively), if you’re approved. Your county’s DSS has 30 days to process a regular application, or 7 days to process an emergency application. So there’s no payoff for thinking about applying, or leaving a completed application sitting on your kitchen counter!

So, with all of these supports and possibilities for getting your application done, I’d like for you to now take your hands down from over your head and instead commit to “I can do this!” Here’s how to quickly find your county’s DSS while you’re in the momentum.

Onslow County Farmers Market

Are you concerned about the safety of the produce you buy? Would you like to learn to grow your own fruits and vegetables?

Join other adults in our 7th year of class room and hands-on education sponsored by the Onslow County Farmers Market and NC Cooperative Extension. Class begins Friday, February 1st 5:00 to 7:00 pm and every Friday through the end of June.

For more information contact Larry Kent at [910-455-5873](tel:910-455-5873).

10 New Year's Resolutions You Can Keep

New Year's is a time for starting fresh and setting goals that you'd like to accomplish. For many people this comes in the form of New Year's resolutions. Get organized, stop smoking, learn a new language and lose 30 pounds are just a few of the popular resolutions that just never seem to come to fruition. Instead of making promises you can't keep, face the reality and make resolutions that are within your means. Here are 10 New Year's resolutions you can keep:

1. **Be Nicer to People:** Being nicer to people is something we can all realistically do more often. This New Year's resolution doesn't require you to donate to a charity every month or compliment every person you see on the street, but just be kinder to people. Simply saying hello and goodbye to people, watching what you say before you blurt out an insult and lending a helping hand to someone, even when it's inconvenient for you, are all realistic examples of being nicer to people.
2. **Get More Sleep:** One New Year's resolution you could actually keep is getting more sleep. It will

certainly require some effort on your part to finish tasks early so you can make it to bed at a decent time, but it's not an impossible feat either. Your body and mind will appreciate the extra Zs, and getting more sleep can actually help you accomplish your other resolutions much easier.

3. **Give Blood:** If you'd like to give back to the community in a big way but cannot commit to being a volunteer, why not give blood? Giving blood is a terrific selfless act that makes a huge difference in people's lives. Your donation of one pint can save up to three lives and you can give blood every 56 days if you want. Even if you only donate a couple times a year, it's still more than what the average American donates. Your New Year's resolution will save lives; and it doesn't get much better than that.
4. **Indulge in Moderation:** So many people make grandiose New Year's resolutions, like quit drinking and stop eating junk food, but cannot stick to them. These resolutions are not realistic for the average person because we all like to indulge every once in a while. You'll have a better chance at limiting your alcohol and junk food intake if you do it in moderation. It's highly unlikely that someone who enjoys red wine, chocolate and pizza are going to be able to give it up cold turkey, so let yourself indulge in moderation for a more realistic approach to healthier eating.

5. **Floss Regularly:** Flossing your teeth and gums regularly is a New Year's resolution you can certainly keep up with. Obviously if you have to add it to your resolutions list, it's not the easiest habit to develop, but it's not impossible to get better at. For a couple extra minutes every morning or night, start flossing before you brush your teeth. Regular flossing has many oral health benefits, such as preventing cavities, removing plaque, preventing bad breath and giving you a better teeth cleaning.
6. **Stop Overspending:** Do you really need expensive shoes, the latest cell phone or the hottest car on the block? Probably not. You may or may not be able to afford these luxuries, but that doesn't mean overspending isn't a problem. If you genuinely want to save money and manage your debt, you should stop overspending as a New Year's resolution. If you stop overspending and start living within your means, it will make a world of difference for your finances and state of mind. It may require the help of a financial advisor or a patient friend, but stopping overspending is a realistic New Year's resolution you can actually keep.
7. **Do Your Best at Work:** Many New Year's resolutions include finding a better job, but in this tough economic climate, the employed should be so lucky to simply have a job. If you really want to maximize your potential and better your career, make a resolution to do your very best at work. There may be additional responsibilities you could take on, or maybe you could stay late to help out a coworker. If you're unsure about how you can do better than you already are, ask your boss and I'm sure they'd be happy to tell you and impressed that you asked.
8. **Do Exercises that Make You Happy:** Exercising is almost always on everyone's New Year's resolutions list and it's usually followed by 'lose 20 pounds.' If you really want to start exercising regularly and see weight loss results, you may need to tweak your resolutions a little. Instead of simply putting exercise, try doing exercises that make you happy. With the amount of exercises and workout classes available today, you shouldn't waste your time doing exercises that frustrate you or make you feel less than stellar. It doesn't matter if you prefer long-distance running, yoga or weightlifting; if you do what makes you happy you'll be more likely to exercise regularly.
9. **Recycle:** If you want to do something good for the environment and actually stick to it this year, make recycling your New Year's resolution. Recycling is a realistic resolution you can keep up with, especially if your recyclables can be picked up at your house. Even if you don't have that convenience, you may not have to drive far to recycle plastic, paper, glass, aluminum and other recyclable products. To ensure that you follow this

resolution, designate a bin or box for recycling so that family and guests know where to put their recyclables and nothing goes to waste.

10. Give More Affection: If you aren't the most affectionate person and want to start giving more hugs every day, you can make this one of your realistic New Year's resolutions. It's not too terribly hard to give more affection every day and it doesn't have to be physical either. A smile, kind words and spending time with friends are other easy examples of showing affection to those you care about.

In the coming months check your FACES newsletter for articles and your local Cooperative Extension office for programs, hints and tips to help you keep your resolutions.

Don't Clash Over Cash

When asked how much money is enough, a wealthy individual replied, "Just a little bit more."

Most families find there is never enough money, so sooner or later they squabble about how to spend the limited dollars. Meshing different styles of handling money doesn't just happen because people love each other. It takes effective communication, time, and effort.

Couples often have a harder time resolving money issues than other conflicts. Money issues tend to be raised repeatedly and are more likely to be mishandled.

If your money discussions escalate to shouting matches or tearful sessions, changes are needed. Realize each of you

will have different attitudes and values. To one, money may represent power. To another, it may mean security or status. One may be a spender, the other a saver. The concern is not that you always agree about money, but how you disagree and that you come to a suitable compromise.

What Is an Argument Worth?

Save arguments for important issues and major expenditures. Decide amounts each person can spend without reporting to anyone. It might be \$5, \$20, \$50, or whatever fits your budget. These regular allowances provide a sense of spending freedom and eliminate discussions over personal items and incidentals.

A Time and a Place

Talking about money "later" or promising to discuss it "some other time" may never happen. Schedule regular meetings to discuss financial matters. This keeps you and your co-spender informed and can prevent minor concerns from becoming major problems.

The particular time you decide to meet will depend on family schedules. Try to avoid meeting between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. when people are usually tired and hungry. Meeting just before pay day or when bills are due is often a good choice.

For your meeting, choose a place with minimum distractions. Do not let the television, radio, and phone interfere with your communications. Include all family members when appropriate. Children can learn from this process. Allow everyone a chance to express feelings, wants, and needs without interruption or criticism. Family members are more likely to support a

decision if they are included in the decision.

Listening Habits

Effective communication requires good listening. What kind of listener are you? During a disagreement, do you find yourself planning your defense? Does your mind wander? Do you stop listening if a subject is difficult to understand?

Listen for key points. Ask questions if you don't understand something. Be careful not to criticize, argue, or give feedback that keeps someone from expressing feelings.

Use "I ..." Messages

The words you choose and your tone of voice can fuel or diffuse an argument. Another is more likely to hear you if you use "I-Messages" instead of "You-Messages." "You-Messages" tend to be verbal attacks of blame and criticism. "I-Messages" focus on you and your feelings.

The Three Parts of an I-Message:

1. "I feel ..." Make a clear statement of how you feel.
2. "When you ..." Name the specific behavior that caused you to feel that way.
3. "Because ..." Say why the behavior or event is upsetting.

Instead of this: "Y_o_u_n_e_v_e_r_
_r_e_c_o_r_d_t_h_e_a_m_o_u_n_t_s_o_f_
_c_h_e_c_k_s_y_o_u_w_r_i_t_e_"

Try this: "I_f_e_e_l_f_r_u_s_t_r_a_t_e_d_
_w_h_e_n_y_o_u_d_o_n't_r_e_c_o_r_d_
_c_h_e_c_k_a_m_o_u_n_t_s_
_b_e_c_a_u_s_e_I_d_o_n't_w_a_n_t_
_t_o_p_a_y_f_e_e_s_f_o_r_a_
_b_o_u_n_c_e_d_c_h_e_c_k_"

Remember: "I-Messages" have three specific parts. Just starting a sentence with "I" doesn't make it an "I-message."

Solving Money Problems

If a problem is worth arguing about, it is worth solving. Combine good communication skills with the following steps:

1. Acknowledge that there is a problem. Get feelings out in the open.
2. Identify the real problem. Money issues are often emotionally charged. Organized, written records give objective information rather than guesses. Be sure the issue is really money.
3. Discuss only the identified problem. Keep personalities, past complaints, or other problems out of it.
4. Brainstorm alternatives. List all possible actions/solutions no matter how ridiculous. No one should comment on suggestions until the list is complete.
5. Discuss each alternative and agree on a possible solution. Write it down. A compromise may be the best solution. Everyone should feel his or her wishes were considered.
6. Make every effort to support the solution. Identify and avoid obstacles. Recognize necessary sacrifices. Perfect solutions are rare.
7. Keep communications open while working out the solution. Each person needs to feel understood, appreciated, and loved.

*Nancy W. Hudson, CFCS
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Do you want to become a Master Gardener Volunteer?

Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteer Class Starts January 31, 2013

Are you a gardener who would like to learn more about growing plants in Onslow County? Are you interested in volunteering in your community? If so, you may be interested in becoming a Master Gardener volunteer.

The Onslow County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension is offering a Master Gardener Volunteer class starting January 31. The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a joint endeavor of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and volunteers who wish to learn how to be better gardeners and help other gardeners by sharing their knowledge. The program is designed to recruit and train volunteers to help meet the educational needs of the citizens of Onslow County.

Class participants learn about a wide variety of gardening subjects including vegetables, fruits, lawn grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees. The training focuses on developing diagnostic skills for insects and diseases of plants. Classes are also given on landscaping for water quality, soils, composting, propagation, wildlife control and much, much more!

Master Gardeners receive 40 hours of training and after graduation they provide 40 hours of volunteer work in the community. Master Gardeners are involved in a range of community projects including: answering homeowner inquiries at the Extension Office and Farmer's Market, mailing out information bulletins to homeowners, conducting plant clinics, working with school children on special horticultural projects, talking to garden clubs, working on community beautification projects and developing the new Discovery Gardens of Onslow.

The 2013 Master Gardener course will begin January 31 and end April 2. Classes normally will be taught Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 am – Noon. Cost for the course is \$100, which includes a comprehensive Master Gardener Manual.

Persons interested in receiving an application for the 2013 course should call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension - Onslow County Center at (910) 455-5873, and request an application. Spaces in the class are limited.

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