



CSPV SCHOOL VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

FS-SV08

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Evaluations of School-Based Violence Prevention Programs

- There are four major stages of the school years: early childhood (ages 2-5), middle childhood (ages 6-11), early adolescence (ages 12-14), and middle adolescence (ages 15-18). The phases correspond to preschool, elementary school, junior high/middle school, and senior high school. In each of these stages there are key violence-related tasks.
- School-based preventive interventions are strategically beneficial. In each stage in the school years, there are key developmental tasks to be mastered. School provides an important environment for overall developmental success.
- Early childhood is increasingly recognized as a key stage in the development of aggressive violent behaviors.
- The development of self-regulation appears to be important during the preschool years. It is also causally linked to other processes that lead to aggressive-violent behavior.
- Caregiver to child ratios and the quality of these adult/child interactions are key environmental influences in the development of self-regulation.
- During middle childhood, the key tasks include the development of children's normative beliefs about aggression and the development of children's interpersonal negotiation skills.
- School contextual factors that can influence development at the middle childhood stage are: interpersonal relations with peers and classmates, teachers' perceptions of children's aggression, and the probability of exposure to antisocial youth.
- A key task of early adolescence is the development of a stable peer group. Whether that peer group is primarily prosocial or antisocial in orientation significantly affects the probability of aggressive and violent behavior.
- Important school-based organizational influences for middle adolescence include the practice of changing classes with their homeroom class and being instructed in a smaller, more personalized classroom.
- A key task of middle adolescence is the formation and consolidation of an identity, including a personal identity and racial ethnic identity.
- Early childhood interventions employing an ecological violence prevention approach may help reduce violence by promoting overall social competence and providing hope for improving children's competencies in other developmental areas.

- There is evidence of the potential for early childhood violence prevention programs to function as primary prevention initiatives for later delinquent/antisocial behavior; particularly when these programs begin early and involve parents in the preventive intervention.
 - Improvements in family functioning and parenting behavior are linked to lasting and positive effects on child behavior.
 - Evaluation research indicates that school-based violence prevention efforts may serve as primary prevention for children, particularly when the intervention targets several key stages of development.
 - School-based violence prevention programs are not enough to change the tide of violence on school grounds. Changes in school policies and the way schools deal with the growing number of violent incidents are also necessary.
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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:

Samples, F., & Aber, L. (1998). Evaluations of School-Based Violence Prevention Programs. In D.S. Elliott, B. Hamburg, & K.R. Williams (Editors), *Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective*, (pp. 217-252). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

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