

Protect Your Child From Dating Violence

There are a number of things parents can do to help protect their children from dating violence:

Be a role model for your children. Find healthy ways to deal with anger and conflict in your own relationships. If you want your children to learn to respect themselves and others, it is critical that you respect yourself, your partner and other people.

Talk regularly with your children about how to have a healthy relationship, teaching them the importance of respect, independence and self-worth. Teach your children to state their feelings, opinions, desires and reactions clearly.

Help your children to learn to control their anger and to resolve conflicts peacefully. Encourage them to learn to recognize their personal warning signs for anger. How do they physically feel when they get angry? Teach them techniques to calm down such as counting backwards from ten to one; deep breathing; or just walking away. Help them to learn ways to resolve conflicts without resorting to name-calling, blaming or insulting the other person.

Before your children start dating, help them to set up guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Discuss with your children some of the warning signs of potential abusers. Help your children to understand that any incident of violence in a relationship is a predictor of very serious problems.

Let your children know that while dating can be romantic and exciting, bad things can happen. Help them to develop strategies to deal with difficult situations.

Ask for teen dating violence prevention and intervention programs in your children's school.