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Chicago Dept of Public Health



OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

# Violence Prevention E-Brief

## Safe At School?



### Schools safer, but room for improvement exists

In the past month alone:

- 2 schools locked down after armed teen spotted
- At least six killed in Amish school shooting
- Colo. town mourns teen killed in school siege
- Details emerge about teen held in Wis. Shooting

Schools are the safest place for children -- safer than the street, the mall, or even the home. According to the Justice Policy Institute, 99 percent of children's deaths occur away from school, after hours and during holidays. It's important that schools are safe havens for learning. (NEA, <http://www.nea.org/schoolsafety/whatyoucando.html>)

Some of us argue for "hard" responses such as metal detectors, added security personnel and zero-tolerance for weapons possession. Others favor "soft" solutions that include more counseling, conflict-resolution programs, and better communications between school and home.

It will take a combination of both approaches, administered with reason and centered in respect, to keep our children -- along with the education employees who work in our schools -- from harm.

### Tool Box for REASSURING YOUR SCHOOL-AGED CHILD

If your child asks questions about a shooting or other violent event in your area or elsewhere, find valuable guidance at :

<http://www.nea.org/schoolsafety/index.html#young>

- Talking with younger children, ages 4-7
- Talking with grade-school children, ages 8-12
- Talking with teenagers
- Specific Questions and Answers

**Provide reassurance** and comfort and listen to the concerns expressed by your child.

**Ask them how they feel** and answer their questions the best that you can.

Also, take care to **reassure her that you and school officials will do your best to assure his or her safety.**

And **let your child know you're available** if she wants to talk more at another time.

Even if you don't see your child watching coverage of a major violent event, **don't ignore it.** If there's a major story in the news, especially one involving children, your child probably knows about it.

