

Safety at School

Many schools are implementing strategies to help reduce acts of violence and make schools safer. Those strategies include:

- **Teaching prevention skills.** Students are taught mediation skills (problem solving and communication) and ways to handle their emotions—especially anger—without hurting others. Students are also taught “safe” behaviors such as doing activities in groups, alerting school personnel if a stranger is on school grounds, and reporting situations that threaten other students’ safety.
- **Providing alternatives to gangs.** Such alternatives include activities that build self-esteem and help students deal with feelings of powerlessness. Strategies include providing special assistance to students who are at risk of becoming gang members, creating an atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging in all students, informing parents and school staff about gangs, and teaching students how to avoid being drawn into gangs.
- **Improving school designs.** Features that improve safety include centrally located office areas, well-lit hallways with convenient exits, restrooms that are closer to administrators, and the elimination of dead-end hallways and staircase hideaways.
- **Monitoring visitors carefully.** Schools are becoming more assertive in screening visitors, requiring them to register when entering the building/campus and employing security personnel. Many schools now ask that parents give the names of adults who are allowed to pick up a child.

Parents’ Responsibility

- **Visit/volunteer at school frequently.** The more parents are involved and visible, the safer their children’s schools will be.
- **Get to know your children’s friends and their families.**
- **Teach safe behaviors to your children:** not talking to strangers, getting to know school staff other than their teachers, taking safety in numbers, and avoiding students who do not handle anger effectively.