



Philadelphia Collaborative
Violence Prevention Center

www.phillyviolenceprevention.org

Safe Neighborhoods, Safe Lives: Things that Prevent or Reduce the Impact of Violence in the Community

Expert's Tips for Preventing Violence from
the Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center
For more information, please visit www.phillyviolenceprevention.org

Youth Development (Tips 11-19)

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11. Give a young person your time.

This is the most valuable thing you can offer to them, to your community, and to the future.

Importance: Caring adults are essential to a child's healthy development. And healthy development is powerful protection and prevention; it's the best way to prevent youth from engaging in risky behaviors. Children become successful adults when they are provided ongoing and secure relationships with parents, teachers, mentors, coaches, youth volunteers, and neighbors.



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How it helps: Young people need to have adults who they can turn to for support, safety, advice, and guidance. Children need this support in all aspects of their lives including family, school, and community. Additionally, a national research study conducted by America's Promise Alliance showed that teens with stronger parental influences do better in health and education.

References:

- Bogenschneider, K. (1996). Family Related Prevention Programs: An Ecological Risk/Protective Theory for Building Prevention Programs, Policies, and Community Capacity to Support Youth. *Family Relations*; 45: 127-138.
- Ginsburg KR, Alexander PM, Hunt J, Sullivan M, Zhao M, and Cnaan A. (2002). Enhanced Likelihood for a Positive Future: The Perspective of Inner-City Youth. *Pediatrics*; 109(6): 1136-1143.
- Guerra, N. (1994). Violence Prevention. *Preventive Medicine*; 23: 661-664.

For more info:

Caring Adults

www.americaspromise.org

National Clearinghouse for Families and Youth

http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/topics/positive_youth_development

12. Focus on what you can change, not what you can't.

Be active in solving problems and move through what is beyond your control.

Talk to others about how to do this in your everyday life.

Importance: Being stuck in the past can hinder your future progress. When individuals spend time worrying about things from the past that they cannot change, they are negatively impacting the things that they could be doing in the present or future. It is important to take the proper steps to remove current problems because stress has the ability to cause continual conflict and unhappiness in your life.

How it helps: By identifying and defining a problem, you can quickly discover if it is able to be easily overcome. Seeking help for a problem that is too much for you to deal with is not a sign of weakness. Evaluating and choosing the best course of action in solving a problem will help you to move past it more easily.



References:

- Herman-Stabl, M, Stemmler, M. & Petersen, A. (1995). Approach and Avoidant Coping: Implications for Adolescent Mental Health. Journal of Youth and Adolescence. 24(6): 379-394.
- Wallerstein, N. & Bernstein, E. (1988). Empowerment Education: Freire's Ideas Adapted to Health Education. Health Education and Behavior. 15(4): 379-394.

For more info:

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/>

American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/hurricane-resilience.aspx>

13. Provide opportunities for young people to get involved.

Adults -- Be a mentor for a young person and show him or her how to become a leader. Include youth in every aspect of community planning and implementation.

Young people -- Join your neighborhood boards; they need your advice.

Importance: The involvement of young people in community solutions is essential. Allowing youth to be involved in the process reinforces that their contributions are important while encouraging them to explore where their interests lie. The skills learned from these activities can help with future academic achievement and workforce readiness.

How it helps: Allowing youth to carve out roles within the planning and implementation process serves to give them a sense of self-worth and recognition. Just a year working with a mentor can produce significant benefits for youth. Working with adult mentors provides youth with the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships and an increased stake in their community.



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References:

- Ginwright, S & James, T. (2002). Cures From Assets to Agents of Change: Social Justice, Organizing and Youth Development. New Directions for Youth Development. 96(1): 27-46.
- Sherrod, L., et al. (2002). Dimensions of Citizenship and Opportunities for Youth Development: The What, Why, When, Where and Who of Citizenship Development. Applied Developmental Science, 264-272.

For more info:

City Kids Foundation

<http://www.citykids.com/index.php>

Get Involved

<http://www.getinvolved.gov/>

Volunteer Match

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

Youth Service America

<http://www.ysa.org/programs>

14. Good friends matter.

Young people -- Hang out with friends who are doing good things in school, in the community, and for their families. Know who you are hanging out with, what they are doing, and where they are going.

Adults -- Know these things about the people in your children's lives.

Importance: Friends can influence you to do many things, good or bad. Positive friends can influence you to practice safe behavior and good study habits, while negative friends can pressure you to do things that are not in your best interest. Many times, the activities of negative people put them at risk for emotional or physical pain.



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How it helps: Friends provide emotional support, and youth with friends are less likely to feel lonely. Having friends provides another venue to receive social and emotional guidance. Youth also tend to be more enthusiastic about school if they have friends that attend.

References:

- Berndt, T. (1999). Friends Influence on Students' Adjustment to School. Educational Psychologist. 34(1): 15-28.
- Nelson, R. & DeBacker, T. (2008). Achievement Motivation in Adolescents: The Role of Peer Climate and Best Friends. The Journal of Experimental Education. 76(2): 170-189.

For more info:

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/friendships/MH00125>

15. Talk to your kids about gangs.

Teach your children about the myths and realities of joining a gang. Research shows that gang membership, even for a short period, has long-term life consequences for youth. Instead of offering protection, gang membership actually increases the immediate risk for violence victimization. Know your kids' friends and keep them involved in positive activities that build their self-esteem, social support networks, and ability to resist peer pressure.

Importance: Children are joining gangs at young ages; many join before the age of 12. Both boys and girls are susceptible to gang membership, and both experience consequences that last a lifetime. Although youth often stay in gangs for less than a year, most experience a sharp increase in criminal activity and risk for victimization while they are a member. For instance, researchers found that children in gangs were 10 times more likely to carry a gun than non-gang members.



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How it helps: Gang-related delinquency and violence accounts for a disproportionate amount of the crime in a community. Educating kids about the risks of gangs and providing them with the skills to resist joining protects our children and our communities from the consequences of gangs.

References:

- Thornberry, T. P., Krohn, M. D., Lizotte, A. J., Smith, C. A., & Tobin, K. (2003). *Gangs and Delinquency in Developmental Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Klein, M. W., & Maxson, C. L. (2006). *Street Gang Patterns and Policies*. New York: Oxford University Press.

For more info:

COPS: Parent's Guide to Recognizing Warning Signs and Preventing Gang Involvement (available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Hmong)
<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?item=1309>

16. Make room for sports and active play.

Sports can be a healthy outlet for excess energy, taking the place of hanging out with troubled peers. Sports also offer healthy role models through coaches.

Importance: Youth that are physically active are healthier than those who are not active. Sports have an impact on concentration and learning. Playing sports gives youth a constructive venue to release the stress of everyday life.

How it helps: When children get involved with sports they gain the ability to get stronger physically and mentally. Sports can raise a child's self esteem. Research shows that children that play sports tend to feel more confident and have an easier time dealing with stress or depression.



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- Ginsburg, K. (2007). The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds. *Pediatrics*, 119(1): 182-191.
- Kremer-Sadlik, T. & Kim, J. (2007). Lessons from Sports: Children's Socialization to Values Through Family Interaction During Sports Activities. *Discourse and Society*, 18(1): 35-52.
- Harrison, P., & Narayan, G. (2003). Differences in Behavior, Psychological factors, and Environmental Factors Associated with Participation in School Sports and Other Activities in Adolescence. *Journal of School Health*, 73(3): 113-120.

For more info:

American Heart Association

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4596>

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/>

17. Skills, knowledge, and resources are important for young people.

Help them develop good health habits, life skills, and self-esteem that can last into adulthood.

Importance: It is increasingly important for young adults to develop good habits and skills in the various aspects of life. Without them, youth limit the educational and occupational opportunities available to them as well as potentially jeopardizing their health. For youth, recognizing faults and improving upon them is an essential part of building up self-esteem and growing as an individual.

How it helps: Once bad habits are developed, they can be hard to break. By helping youth develop good habits, you can help put them in a better position to develop job and life skills that can have a lasting impact in their lives. Youth are more likely to take an interest in their educational and social development if their parents or role models are actively involved.



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Morreale, S. & Schwartz, N. (1995). Helping Americans Eat Right Developing Practical and Actionable Public Nutrition Education Messages Based on the ADA Survey of American Dietary Habits. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 95(3): 305-308.

Wakefield, J. (2002). Developing Habits of Giving and Serving: The Heart of the Youth-Serving Organization. New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising. 36: 73-90.

For more info:

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/>

Philadelphia Children's Connection

<http://www.philadelphiachildrenconnection.org/>

18. Expect and respect.

All young people in every community need to be held to high expectations because they live up or down to those expectations.

Importance: Young children can pick up on the negative or positive feelings that we hold towards them. Holding high expectations of youth can have a positive effect on how they perform in and out of school.

How it helps: Having community support and high expectations has been known to have a positive impact on youth development. Respecting young adults and holding them to a higher standard provides them with more self-esteem and a greater likelihood of higher academic performance and better decision making.

References:

Glick, J. & White, M. (2004). Post-secondary School Participation of Immigrant and Native Youth: The Role of Familial Resources and Educational Expectations. Social Science Research. 33(2): 272-299.

Kuperminc, G., et al. (2008). Parent Involvement in the Academic Adjustment of Latino Middle and High School Youth: Teacher Expectations and School Belonging as Mediators. Journal of Adolescence. 31(4): 469-483.



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For more info:

High Expectations

http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/heart_high.html

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/>

19. Understand the different needs and interests of youth.

Programs in the community for sports, music, art, and academics can meet different needs. Not all programs work for all young people.

Importance: As youth get older, changes in their interests and abilities leave many of them uninterested in participating in programs that may have attracted them in the past. Because they are also voluntary, only programs that are attractive and can meet the different needs of the various groups of youth are likely to be successful.

How it helps: Taking into account the needs and interests of young people by tailoring the program content emphasizes that the voices of our young adults are being heard and valued. This can help raise the levels of sensitivity by recognizing the differences in backgrounds and experiences among young adults.

References:

- Quinn, J. (1999). Where Need Meets Opportunity: Youth Development Programs for Early Teens. *The Future of Children: When School is Out*, 9(2): 96-116.
- Stoneman, D. (2002). The Role of Youth Programming in the Development of Civic Engagement. *Applied Developmental Science*. 6(4): 221-226.

For more info:

After School Activities Partnership

<http://www.phillyasap.org/home.aspx>

City Kids

<http://www.citykids.com/index.php>