

## Safety Begins at Home

We read or hear about violence regularly so it is natural to assume that there is more violence today than in the past. In fact, despite some painful and tragic events, the opposite is true. It is impossible to maintain a free society and also eliminate all opportunities for violence. But we can influence the likelihood that violent acts will occur through the culture in our homes, communities, and schools. The following is a tip sheet on how we can all reduce violence in our society.

### Home

- Teach children age-appropriate safety practices with fire, sharp objects, electricity, burns, 911 calls, etc.
- Model mutual respect, patience and peaceful conflict resolution
- Use books and stories to demonstrate the values of kindness, empathy and integration
- Provide comfortable opportunities for children to share their observations and feelings
- Establish age-appropriate guidelines, boundaries, and expectations
- Provide children with the security of knowing they are loved unconditionally
- Help children debrief daily
- Limit exposure to violent games and media to avoid desensitizing children to the painful outcomes of violence

### School

- Model mutual respect and peaceful conflict resolution
- Provide reading and writing opportunities that explore the values of kindness and empathy
- Create opportunities for students to use teamwork to achieve goals
- Guide students to identify and focus on outcomes that will benefit them
- Incorporate community service opportunities at school
- Provide a comfortable environment for children to share their observations and feelings
- Establish age-appropriate guidelines, boundaries, and expectations
- Have skilled professionals available for counseling, depression, grief, and anger management

### Community

- Provide opportunities for children to participate in organized social and activity groups
- Create a community culture that appreciates diverse ages, ethnicities, cultures, gender identity and personalities
- Encourage inclusion and intergenerational interaction
- Establish links between children and public safety, social service, and faith communities
- Identify a couple of Search Institutes developmental assets that your community can actively support and advance