

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE/ ENVIRONMENT

SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify the skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team, try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skill assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know about this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I know about this</i>
1. Know when it is important to teach my child positive values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Know why I don't want to expose my child to any kind of violent behaviors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know that witnessing domestic violence will have a negative impact on a child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Am aware that watching violence on TV will negatively influence a child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know that watching too much TV is not healthy for a child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Know that I am a role model for my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know that my problem-solving skills and social interactions influence my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Know that I have to teach my child how to deal with his/her emotions, including frustration and anger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Know that the environment we live in is our lifeline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Know that it is our responsibility to provide a clean and healthy environment for our children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Am aware of environmental issues that impact my child and me directly, e.g. hole in the ozone layer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Am aware of the importance of recycling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Am aware of things I can do to keep the environment clean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Know how to teach my child to be environmentally conscious.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Know why it is important to conserve energy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You have now completed the assessment section on “Making the World a Better Place” and identified those skills that you would like to strengthen in order to make better decisions on your own. The following guide can help you in planning how you can learn about and practice these skills. Choose a few skills that you want to develop and, with your team, write down your plan of action. Remember, once you accomplish these goals you can go back to your assessment tool and select new goals to build on your new skills.

EXAMPLE

GOAL:

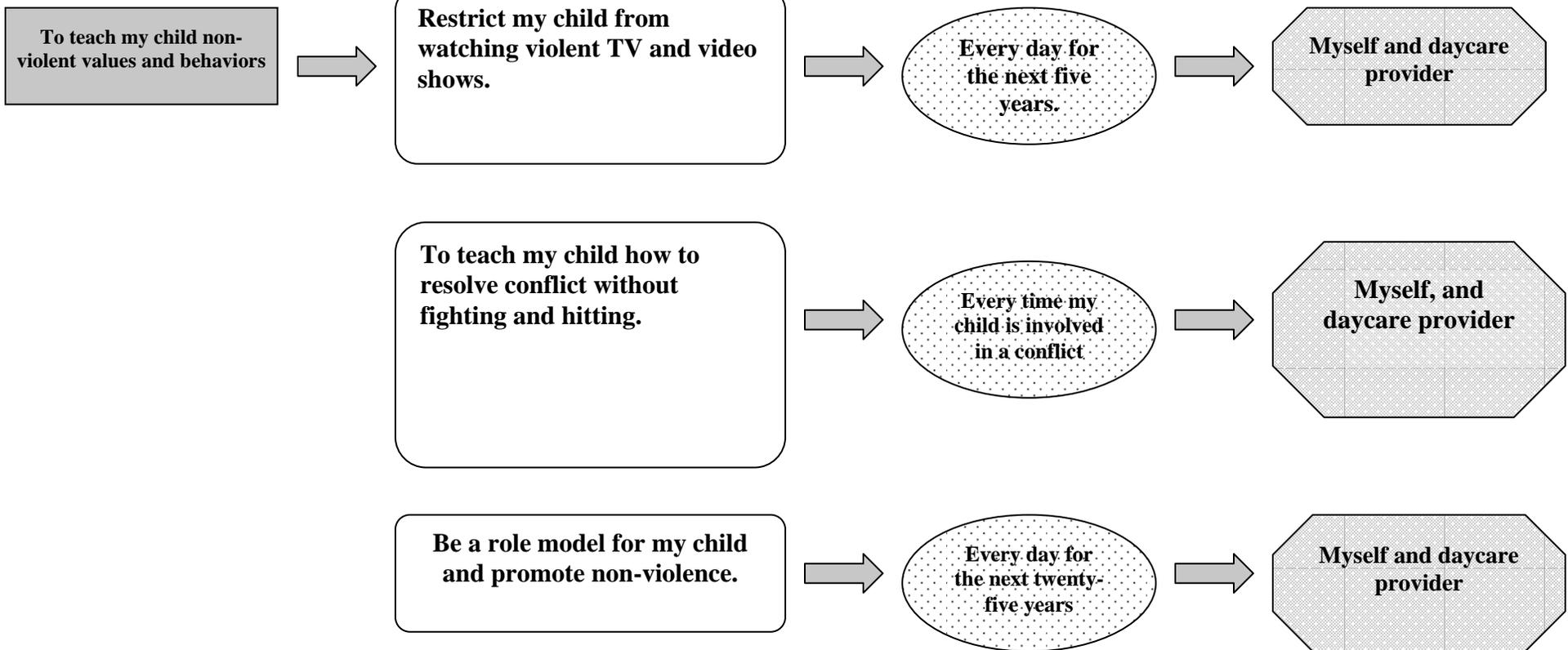
IMPROVE PARENTING SKILLS

State Skill 1:

Plan:

When:

Who:



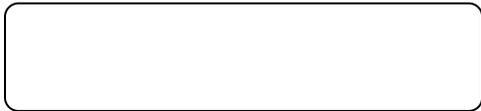
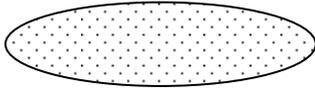
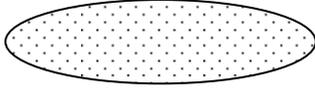
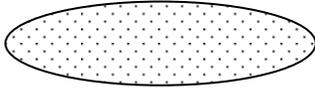
GOAL: WORK ON PARENTING SKILLS

State Skill 1:
To be developed
and/or improved.

Plan:
How do you plan to learn,
develop and improve this skill?

When:
When, where, and how often will you
work on this skill and by when will you
have mastered this?

Who:
Who will assist you?

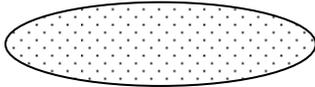
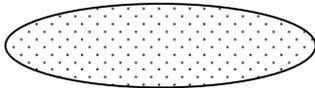
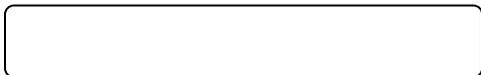
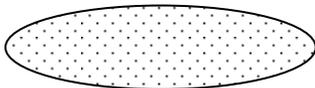
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			→		→	
			→		→	

State Skill 2:
To be developed
and/or improved.

Plan:
How do you plan to learn,
develop and improve this skill?

When:
When, where, and how often will you
work on this skill and by when will you
have mastered this?

Who:
Who will assist you?

	→		→		→	
			→		→	
			→		→	

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

Parents want the best for their children. They want them to receive a good education and be able to live in a healthy and safe environment. Most parents try to teach their children good morals and values so that they will grow up to be kind, responsible and considerate towards others as well as productive members of society. Part of this goal also includes the need to protect children from negative influences and harm and encourage them to reach their potential.

What kind of values and morals would you like to teach your child(ren)?

What positive influences would you like your child to be exposed to? How would you achieve this?

What kind of negative influences or harmful forces would you like to protect your child from?

If you could change one thing to make the world a better place for your child, what would that be?

All parents can contribute to making the world a better place for all children by teaching them the skills and abilities needed to reach that goal. Most of these skills must be taught

from an early age on and must be addressed consistently. Let's take a closer look at some of these skills and values individually.

Kindness, Not Violent Behaviors

For adults to foster the types of positive behaviors we discussed above and prevent violent and aggressive behaviors in children, it is important for us to think about where and how children learn.

The earliest and most important teachers of children are their parents because parents usually spend the most time with their children and function as role models. Therefore, if parents display kind and responsible behaviors, their children are likely to do so as well. The children of parents who engage in violent behaviors are much more likely to become violent as well. Children who witness domestic violence, for example, often exhibit physically aggressive behaviors themselves. Also, these children often view violence as a means of problem solving and lack conflict resolution skills.

Discussion

Can you think of any behaviors you or anyone else in your child's immediate environment may exhibit that could promote violent behaviors for your son/daughter?

If so, can you think of strategies, resources and supports that you could use to change these behaviors?

ACTIVITY

Talk about someone you trust and respect about any kind of violent behaviors that may have an impact on you and your child.

At times, particularly when people are in relationships, it can be difficult to acknowledge violent behaviors as such. In some situations very controlling or even assaulting behaviors are mistaken for caring. Some people may put up with violent behaviors because of fear or lack of financial and emotional resources. However, violence in relationships is always wrong and many times dangerous. (For more information on this issue, please refer to Module 2.) In addition, such violence can also have devastating

effects on your child's physical and mental well being. Therefore, you owe it to you and your child to avoid any kind of violent relationships. If you are in a relationship that is violent, it is vital that you seek help as soon as possible. People who are violent may promise that they will get better, but most will not be able to do so without help.

Consider the following situations:

Susi, 18, has been going out with Derek, 20, for almost two years now. They have an eight-month-old daughter, Jennifer, who lives with Susi in a foster home, while Derek lives at home with his parents. Susi is a senior in high school and is planning to attend college in the fall. She is looking forward to going to school and plans to reside with her daughter in family housing on campus. Derek dropped out of high school about three years ago and works as a prep cook at a local restaurant. While Derek is a lot of fun to be with and always pays child support, he is very jealous and often spies on Susi to find out where she is going when he is not around. Lately, he has been accusing her of seeing other guys that are smarter than he is. Even though Susi is assuring him that she is not seeing anybody else, he doesn't believe her. Two weeks ago he started pushing her and screaming in her face even when she was holding the baby. Susi doesn't know what to do.

What advice can you give to Susi? What would you do in a situation like this? What kind of impact do you think this may have on Jennifer? Where would you turn for help?

Abigail, 17, lives in a TLP with her one-year-old son, Mokesh. The father of the baby, Leroy, 20, is currently serving a twelve month prison sentence for assault and battery. Before he went to prison, Leroy hit Abigail several times. On two occasions she had to go to the hospital because her injuries required medical attention. Abigail really likes Leroy and doesn't understand why he acts that way sometimes. Although he has not hit the baby, she often wonders if he would "loose it" with him the same way he does with her. When he gets angry, he is just overcome by rage and there is nothing that can stop him. He has been writing her from prison regularly and told her how much he loves her and the baby. He also told her when she went to visit him that he had changed and that he wants to marry her as soon as he gets out. Abigail does not know what to do.

What advice would you give to Abigail? Do you think her baby would be at risk if she were to go out with him again? Where would you tell Abigail to turn for help?

Kim, 20, just moved into her own apartment with her son, Carlos, age three. The father of the baby was never involved with his upbringing, but Kim's sister, Loraine, 25, has helped her with providing for Carlos. Loraine was always there for Kim when she needed her and Carlos is very attached to her. Over the past year, however, Loraine has changed. She is moody, unpredictable, and gets angry for no apparent reason. Kim also doesn't like the crowd her sister is hanging with. Just yesterday her sister came to her apartment and got into a big fight with Kim right in front of Carlos. She started to push her and was calling her names. She then proceeded to threaten to kill her. When Kim told her that she would call the police if she did not stop, Loraine left the apartment. Now Kim is not sure what to do.

What do you think is going on with Loraine? What advice would you give Kim? What do you think Carlos thinks and feels about the situation? If you were in Kim's situation, where would you turn to for help?

***This kind of exposure to dangerous and harmful situations will put children at risk to be hurt and will promote violent behaviors. If you find yourself at risk of or in a violent relationship of any kind, you must seek help.**

ACTIVITY

Establish a list of circumstances and events that would be warning signs of a possible violent relationship.

ACTIVITY

Research programs and resources addressing treatment and prevention of domestic violence and record your findings below.

In addition you can contact the following hotlines for help and shelter:

NATIONWIDE

- National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE

STATEWIDE

- SafeLink 24-hour hotline (877) 785-2020 (English/Spanish) TTY: (877) 521-2601
- Casa Myrna Vazquez 24-hour hotline (Boston Area): (800) 992-2600 (English/Spanish)
- Jane Doe, Inc. (617) 248-0922, M-F, 9a.m. - 5p.m. www.janedoe.org
- Police Emergency: 911
- Directory Assistance (For phone numbers of local battered women's shelters & services): 411
- Victim Compensation and Assistance Division, Office of the Attorney General (617) 727-2200
- Asian Shelter/Advocacy Project (617) 338-2355
- Network for Battered Lesbians (617) 236-7233

BOSTON AREA

- Boston: Casa Myrna Vazquez, (800) 992-2600
Renewal House, (617) 556-6881
- Cambridge: Transition House, (617) 661-7203
- Chelsea: Harbor Cove, (617) 884-9909
- Dorchester: Mary Lawson Foreman House of Casa Myrna Vazquez, (800) 992-2600
- Jamaica Plain: Elizabeth Stone House, (617) 522-3417
FINEX House, (617) 288-1054
- Somerville: Respond, (617) 623-5900

CAPE COD AND THE ISLANDS

- Hyannis: Independence House, (800) 439-6507
- Martha's Vineyard: Women's Support Services, (508) 696-7233
- Nantucket: A Safe Place, Inc., (508) 228-2111

SOUTH OF BOSTON

- Attleboro: New Hope, (800) 323-4673

- Brockton: Woman's Place Crisis Center, (888) 293-7273
Brockton Family & Community Resources, (508) 583-5200
- Fall River: Our Sister's Place, (508) 677-0224
Women's Center/SSTAR, Inc., (508) 675-0087
- New Bedford: Greater New Bedford Women's Center, (508) 999-6634 or (888) 839-6639
- Norwood: New Hope, (800) 323-4673
- Plymouth: South Shore Women's Center, (888) 746-2664
- Quincy: DOVE (Domestic Violence Ended), (617) 471-1234
- Taunton: New Hope, (800) 323-4673

NORTH OF BOSTON

- Haverhill: Women's Resource Center, (800) 400-4700
- Lawrence: Women's Resource Center, (800) 400-4700
- Lowell: Alternative House, (978) 454-1436
- Malden: Services Against Family Violence, (781) 324-2221
- Newburyport: Women's Crisis Center of Greater Newburyport, (978) 465-2155
- Salem: HAWC (Help for Abused Women and Their Children), (978) 744-6841

WEST OF BOSTON

- Framingham: Women's Protective Services, (508) 626-8686
- Gardner: Women's Resources, (877) 342-9355
- Greenfield: NELCWIT (New England Learning Center for Women in Transition), (413) 772-0806
- Holyoke: Women's Shelter/Companeras, (413) 536-1628
- Leominster: Women's Resources, (877) 342-9355
- Northampton: Necessities/Necesidades, (888) 345-5282
- Pittsfield: Women's Services Center, (800) 593-1125
- Springfield: YWCA of Western Mass.-ARCH (Abuse and Rape Crisis Hotline), (413) 733-7100
- Waltham: Support Committee for Battered Women, (800) 899-4000
- Webster: New Hope Inc., (800) 323-4673
- Westfield: YWCA- New Beginnings, (800) 479-6245
- Worcester: Daybreak, Inc., (508) 755-9030

Other Factors that Contribute to Aggressive and Violent Behaviors

Other factors, such as television also can contribute to an increase in violent and aggressive behaviors in children. Children who watch too much TV and watch show that are violent are proven to behave more aggressively than those whose TV time is limited and who are restricted from watching violence. Actually, research studies prove that children who watch violence on TV frequently will become more aggressive as teenagers and adults and are at a higher risk of getting into trouble. However, not all television programs are bad. Some programs, particularly those offered on public television channels, can be positive and educational. Parents must be familiar with the contents of the television shows they allow their children to watch.

ACTIVITY

Research children’s television programs and select three shows you would and would not allow your child to watch. Record your findings below.

TV Programs I Would Not Allow My Child to Watch	Reason for My Decision
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TV Programs I Would Allow My Child to Watch	Reason for My Decision
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Videos can be an alternative to TV because they allow parents to control the content of the program material. Also, children often enjoy watching their favorite stories and movies more than once.

ACTIVITY

Evaluate the content and messages of five children’s videos and rate them accordingly.

Title:	Reason for my choice:
#1	
#2	
#3	
#4	
#5	

As stated previously, in addition to the kind of shows children watch, the length of time spent watching television is also an important factor in a child's development. While television occasionally can help parents keep their children busy while they perform necessary household chores, TV cannot assume the role of a surrogate parent. All too often parents are tempted to let their children watch too much television because it keeps them occupied with a minimal amount of work and investment on the parent's part. However, watching too much TV can also have a very negative effect on the child's physical health due to the lack of exercise. In addition, a child's development of social and coping skills may be also be impacted by too much television. Children need opportunities to interact with their peers in order to develop social skills and learn how to maintain positive relationships. In addition, intellectual development may be impaired by deprivation of stimuli other than TV.

Consider the following:

Mary, 19, often watches television while her 28-month-old son, Raymund, is sitting on the couch with her. Most of the time Mary is watching "R" rated movies that contain violence and bad language. When Raymund's dad comes to pick him up for his weekly visit, he tells Mary that she should not watch that kind of stuff when Raymund is around. Mary tells him that Raymund is too young to understand anything that is going on. But Raymund's dad insists that she should not watch these movies in his son's presence.

What do you think? Who is right? What would you do?

When **Emma's** five-year-old son, Austin, returns from kindergarten, he storms in the house and switches on the television. When asked what he is doing, Austin replies that he wants to watch this "really cool show" everyone in his class is talking about. Emma knows, however, that the show contains a lot of violence, so she tells Austin that she does not want him to watch the show. Austin starts crying and begs his mom to let him watch. He states that he would be the only kid not allowed to watch and all the other kids would think that he was weird if he could not talk with them about today's episode of everyone's favorite action heroes.

What would you do?

Ernest, 18, is the father of three-year-old twin boys. He shares the responsibility of caring for them with their mother, Arlene. When Ernest takes care of the children, he lets them watch a lot of videos. Actually, Ernest has about 30 children’s movies and many times the twins watch them all day long. When Arlene tells him that she doesn’t like them watching that many videos, he replies that it is not a big deal. They like watching videos and do not want to do anything else. In addition, Ernest states that their watching TV also allows him to get work done around the house and to study for college. He proceeds to tell Arlene that he is going to college to eventually earn more money and pay more child support, which would improve the lives of the twins in the long run. But Arlene insists that he should limit the number of videos he lets the kids watch, because when they return to her house they are “wild” and out of control.

What do you think? Who do you think is right? What would you do if you were Ernest/Arlene?

Toys

The kind of toys your child plays with and the kind of play he/she engages in also influences behaviors and attitude towards violence. If hurtful and aggressive interactions are a part of your child’s everyday play, he/she is at risk to become desensitized to violence in general. Therefore, you need to know your child’s play and be selective in picking out toys. Many action figures, for example, promote violent play and often also imitate violent interactions observed on TV. Children who frequently play with toy guns and are involved in games, such as “laser tag” may have more difficulty understanding that shooting and killing is lethal and wrong.

ACTIVITY

Evaluate your child’s play and the toys he/she plays with and record your findings below.

My child’s favorite games are:

My child relates to others in the following ways:

My child exhibits the following behaviors when he/she is angry or frustrated:

My child’s favorite toys are:

Positive Role Modeling

In order to learn how to behave appropriately in social interactions, children need to observe positive interactions by the adults around them. They need to learn how to solve arguments without aggression/violence by seeing their parents and other adults in their lives demonstrate positive conflict resolution skills. While disagreements are a normal part of everyone's life, it is important to teach our children how to deal with them in a productive and non-violent way. To be able to do so we have to think about our own attitudes and skills.

Consider the following:

Robert, 21, is the father of five-year-old Nathan. Robert is a previous gang member who had some really bad experiences with violence. Therefore, it is very important to Robert to teach his son about the dangers associated with violent behaviors. He teaches Nathan that violence and aggression lead nowhere. However, their six-year-old neighbor has recently started pushing Nathan around and often takes his toys away. Nathan has asked his Dad what to do. Robert does not know what to tell his son. On the one hand, he does not want him to solve this problem through fighting back. On the other hand, he also wants Nathan to learn to stand up for himself and not let other kids walk all over him. He also does not want to intervene by telling the neighbor what to do because he thinks that that would not be a long-term solution.

What do you think? What advice would you give to Nathan?

Complete the following:

How do you handle conflict?

How do you want your child to handle conflict?

Which skills do you have to teach your child how to use non-violent conflict resolution?

Anger and Impulse Control

In addition to teaching your child positive conflict resolution skills, you may also want to address how your child deals with anger and impulse control. (*For more information, refer to the section on discipline/understanding your child's needs and behaviors in this module.*) It is important for parents to understand that anger, just like happiness and sadness, is a normal emotion. However, anger should be expressed in appropriate ways and should be proportionate to the event that has caused the emotion. Often we confuse the behavior associated with anger with the emotion, itself, and in an attempt to control

behaviors, deny our child the emotion. Unfortunately, if we don't help children distinguish between the two, they will become confused, frustrated, and more likely to act out their anger.

Consider the following:

Samuel, age three, is playing with his friend, Nat, also age three. Nat takes Sam's favorite toy away. Sam responds by getting angry and proceeds to hit Nat on the head with a wooden block. Sam's mother who has observed the interaction intervenes by telling Sam that he is a bad boy and needs to go into time out.

What do you think Sam thinks and feels?

Would your response be the same?

How can Sam's mother help him to react differently in the future?

Another factor to consider in raising well adjusted and non-violent children is that research has proven that children who learn to delay gratification and can control their impulses get along much better with others, are less likely to commit crimes, and are more likely to succeed in life than those who do not.

Consider the following:

Jerome, age 4, has always been very impulsive and impatient. He has a hard time waiting for anything and gets very angry if things don't go his way. When Jerome goes grocery shopping with his mother, Charlette, 20, and they pass the candy aisle, Jerome often demands that his mother buy him candy. When his mother tells him that he has to wait or that she is not going to buy him any, Jerome throws himself on the floor and starts kicking and screaming. Charlette does not know what to do in these situations. She wants to teach her son that he will have to wait sometimes or that he will not always get what he wants. Furthermore, she wants to teach him that kicking and screaming will not get him anywhere. On the other hand, these situations are quite embarrassing and it seems easiest to just let him have his way. Also, Charlette tells herself that Jerome is still young and has a lot of time to learn how to control himself.

What would you do in Charlette's place?

At what age do you think children should start to work on controlling impulsive and angry actions?

If he does not learn how to deal with his impulses, how do you think Jerome will be as an adolescent or adult?

It is also important to role model leadership skills and convey our belief that we can make a difference. We must teach our children to stand up for their beliefs without engaging in violent and destructive behaviors. Rather than followers, we want to raise responsible children who have the ability to make good and informed choices. We do not want our children to be negatively impacted by the influence and action of others. Instead, we would like them to be able to make positive changes in society and possibly improve the lives of others.

Vivian lives in a pretty violent neighborhood with her daughter Kirsten, age 4. Every day they hear police sirens and witness people fighting. Also gangs of youth roam through the neighborhood and Vivian suspects that some of them are into selling and using drugs. Vivian tries to keep her daughter away from all this and usually keeps to herself. When Kirsten asks her mother if she can play outside with her, Vivian replies that it is too dangerous. One day, two of her neighbors approach Vivian and ask her if she is interested in joining the other mothers of the housing complex in establishing a mothers against violence initiative that will focus on making their neighborhood a safer place for the children. Vivian is not sure what to do. She agrees that the conditions in the housing complex are unsafe but she doesn't want to get involved and thinks that there is nothing anybody can do to change the situation anyway.

What would you do? Do you believe that these mothers could make a difference in curbing violence at their housing complex?

Consider your own situation. Do you think you can make a positive difference for your child and maybe other children in your neighborhood? Why or why not?

In which kinds of situations do you think you can role model leadership skills for your child?

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Finally, list any additional strategies and ideas on how you could raise your child to become a considerate, non-violent member of society who may help make the world a better place.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

The environment we live in is our lifeline. The world around us provides us with shelter, nourishment and the air we need to survive. Without any of these resources, we could not exist. The environment, therefore, becomes a precious resource we need to appreciate and protect for our own as well as for our children's and their children's sake. It is our responsibility to leave future generations a world that will provide for them what it has given us. The environment is a delicate and complex structure influenced by many factors. Its ecological balance is fragile, and even seemingly small changes somewhere on the globe can bring devastating consequences for all living beings. You may know that the deforestation of the rain forest in Brazil has a major effect on the climate control around the world. You may also have heard about the growing hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica. You may have even asked yourself what this has to do with you or this country. The answer to that is quite simple. You and your child are affected by these ecological issues. While politicians recognize borders, the environment does not. Consequently, the world depends on every single human being to help save the environment from pending ecological disaster. Every single one of us has to contribute in this effort.

What do you think you might be able to do to help save the environment?

ACTIVITY

Call your city or town hall to find out what environmental protection programs your community has to offer.

As you probably found out through your research; there are many different ways that we can all help protect the environment.

RECYCLING

Almost all cities, town and communities offer recycling programs. Materials, such as paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum and glass are collected, washed and used to make new products. By reusing these materials, valuable resources, such as trees, can be saved.

By purchasing products made of recycled materials you will also help the environment. While these products are often a little more expensive than those made of non-recycled materials, they are a good investment in our future if you can afford them.

ACTIVITY

Participate in your local recycling program. For information on your local recycling initiative, call ECOL at (800) 800-6881.

TRANSPORTATION

Car emission is one of the major contributors to air pollution in the world. It not only affects the quality of air we breathe and presents possible long-term health consequences, but it's also responsible for the hole in the ozone layer. This layer protects the earth from harmful and potentially deadly rays of the sun. For example, the increase in skin cancer has partly been related to the decrease of ozone.

Many people assume that there is nothing they can do to help ease these concerns, and that's very unfortunate for us all since apathy will only make the present situation much worse. **We can make a difference!** By taking public transportation and participating in car pools, you can help decrease pollution. Also you may want to ride a bike if you live in an area where you can do so.

ACTIVITY

Evaluate your transportation needs and habits and think about how you can adjust these to help improve the environmental concerns mentioned above.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Sometimes little adjustments in our day-to-day actions can have a tremendous positive effect on the environment.

- ❖ Take along canvas bags for your groceries and other purchases when you go shopping, so you won't have to waste resources needed to make paper or plastic bags. If you forget your bags, remember to recycle the plastic and paper ones.
- ❖ Do not purchase sprays and products that contain aerosol, which contributes to the reduction in ozone. Instead, purchase hand pumps. They may be somewhat more inconvenient, but much healthier.
- ❖ If you need to dispose of a refrigerator or air conditioner, bring it to a recycling/disposal location where the chemicals in the appliance can be processed properly, without harm to the environment. If inappropriately disposed of, these appliances are very harmful to the ozone layer.

- ❖ Organically grown fruits and vegetables have not been sprayed with pesticides so they are generally considered more healthful. They are also more expensive to purchase, unfortunately.
- ❖ All chemical products are potentially hazardous to the environment. Be sure to dispose of chemicals, paints, etc. in a safe and environmentally sound way. Even regular batteries are potentially harmful to the environment if not disposed of properly. You may, therefore want to consider using rechargeable batteries instead. Many towns have special days for recycling toxic products. Call your town hall or ECOL at (800) 800-6881.
- ❖ Conserving energy and resources is another very important step to take in order to preserve our world. Since our resources are limited, we have to be careful using them. Taking a shower instead of a bath, for example, saves a considerable amount of water. Not turning the air conditioner on until the house temperature has reached 75 degrees will save electricity. Purchasing cars that get good gas mileage will preserve oil resources and air quality.
- ❖ Products made out of natural materials, such as wood and cotton, are biodegradable while products made out of man-made materials, such as rubber and plastics (including disposable diapers) are not. Therefore, products that are not going to break down will clutter our overburdened landfills for hundreds of years. So, purchasing products made of natural materials will help reduce our trash problem.

Can you think of additional things you can do to help preserve the environment?

Can you think of any activities, projects or games that would help you teach your child about the environment and our responsibility to help preserve it?