

## **Facts:**

- Adolescence and early adulthood are characterized by much higher rates of both perpetration and victimization of violence than other years
- Schools remain among the safest places for our young people. However, there are steps schools can take to improve potential violent situation
- Intentional violence accounts for one-third of all injury deaths in the United States
- Youth are three times more likely than adults to be victims of violence. One quarter of youth violent victimizations involve the use of a firearm
- Creating a safe school requires many preventive measures for mental and emotional problems as well as early identification of warning signs for such conditions
- **Early Warning Signs:** (when observing a child's behavior it is imperative that the examiner look for multiple signs and consider the appropriate context. The signs must be presented in combination and indicate a need for further analysis to determine the appropriate intervention)
  - social withdrawal
  - excessive feelings of isolation and being alone
  - excessive feelings of rejection
  - being a victim of violence
  - feelings of being picked on and persecuted
  - low school interest and poor academic performance
  - expression of violence in writings and drawings
  - uncontrolled anger
  - patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating and bullying behaviors
  - history of discipline problems
  - past history of violent and aggressive behavior
  - intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
  - drug use and alcohol use
  - affiliation with gangs
  - inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms
  - serious threats of violence
- **Imminent Warning Signs:** (usually these signs are apparent to both staff and parents and safety is the first and foremost consideration)
  - serious physical fighting with peers or family members
  - severe destruction of property
  - severe rage for seemingly minor reasons
  - detailed threats of lethal violence
  - possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons
  - other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide
- The most significant settings for the development of aggression in childhood are the home and school
- Children's aggression in the home is often, but not always, related to their aggression at school
- Research indicates that aggression in school is most often directed at peers. Most

- aggression is displayed by male students and directed at male students
  - Research indicates that typical school fights are about retaliation, rules of the games, and possession of toys, equipment and/or territory
  - Youth behavior can be charted on a developmental pathway that contains incremental stages for delinquency and violence. On this pathway individuals begin with minor offenses and work their way up to more serious offenses. The earlier the minor offenses begin, the more likely the individual will eventually engage in more serious violent behavior.
  - Child abuse, parents' inadequate child rearing practices, disruptions in family functioning, antisocial parents, and aggressive interactions between siblings are risk factors in the home that are associated with children's aggression at school
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In the inner city, there are four types of violence common during childhood and adolescence: childhood aggression, gang violence, robbery, and dating violence. Each of these types of violence functions to meet the adolescents' needs.