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**During 1999,
52% of all
murder victims
under 18 in
the U.S. were
killed by guns.**

KIDS AND GUNS IN AMERICA

United State Continues to Lead the World in Child Deaths from Firearms

In one year, firearms killed no children in Japan, 19 in Great Britain, 57 in Germany, 109 in France, 153 in Canada, and 5,285 in the United States. [1]

It shouldn't take a school shooting or an inner-city neighborhood shooting to make us realize that American children are more at risk from firearms than the children of any other industrialized nation, according to the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

In the United States, young children die or are badly injured because their parents or other gun owners don't store their firearms properly, and children find loaded guns and use them unintentionally on themselves or other Children, that Brady Center, based in Washington, D.C., claimed recently.

Older children are more at risk from horseplay with available guns, while teenagers use guns for impulse suicides and for crime. All are vulnerable to getting caught in the crossfire from guns used in domestic violence and in crime. Meanwhile, the gun lobby opposes every common-sense measure to reduce the accessibility of firearms to kids, from Child Access


Prevention (CAP) laws to the mandatory sale of trigger-locks or child-proof, "personalized" guns.

Although the National Rifle Association (NRA) insists that the entertainment industry bears responsibility for exposing children to violent images, it refuses to accept responsibility for providing children with both the means and the ideology to hurt themselves and other people.

The Gun Problem

As the rate of gun violence dramatically increased during the 1980s and early 1990s, American children paid the price. From 1984 to 1994 the firearm death rate for 15-19 year olds increased 222% while the non-firearm homicide death rate decreased almost 13%. While deaths from gunfire have been decreasing since 1994, firearms are still expected to overtake motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death among American children.

Cars do kill children: so do poorly-made toys and swimming pools and dozens of common household items.



But of all the thousands of products with which children have contact, only one -- firearms -- are completely exempt from consumer protection regulations.

Back in 1972, when the Consumer Product Safety Commission was created, the gun lobby's political power ensured that the one product that is specifically designed to cause death and injury remained exempt. Thus, most handguns have so little trigger resistance that they can be fired by a three-year old, while many guns fire when dropped on the floor. Many popular semi-automatic handguns lack magazine safety disconnects or load indicators, meaning that children have no way of knowing that a gun that appears unloaded actually has a bullet in the chamber.

Other Government Bans

Our government recalls or bans hundreds of products when even a few children are killed or injured by a flawed design. Recently, some schools have created "peanut-free zones" in their cafeterias because of the tiny number of children who are highly allergic to peanut products. In 1999, major car manufacturers began installing inside-trunk latches on new cars because 11 children had died the previous year by suffocating in locked car trunks. For years, the gun industry has made their products more and more lethal, instead of devoting any of its profits to the development of a childproof gun, and the industry is absolutely immune to government intervention for its actions.

The gun industry and their mouthpieces at the NRA have fought every reasonable effort to protect

children from guns by legislation. At the state and federal level, the gun lobby fights CAP laws which hold a gun owner responsible if a child gains access their unsecured gun. It fights laws that mandate the sale -- not the use, just the sale -- of trigger locks with new firearms. It opposes raising the age for handgun possession to 21 -- the same age at which we permit young people to drink -- even though 18- and 19-year olds commit more crimes than any other age group.

"Joe Camel With Feathers"

And by coaxing hundreds of local governments, schools and youth groups to support its Eddie Eagle program, the NRA ensures that thousands of kids get the message that they shouldn't touch guns, which are for grownups. What Eddie Eagle really does is put responsibility on young children not to touch or play with guns -- rather than on grownups for keeping the guns inaccessible. Eddie Eagle also ensures that children learn that using guns is an adult behavior to aspire to -- creating new generations of gun-owners and gun purchasers.

Not for nothing has Eddie Eagle been called "Joe Camel with Feathers." Despite the fact that there has never been any proof that the Eddie Eagle program is effective at teaching children to stay away from guns, the NRA continues to insist that this public relations program alone will solve the problem of kids and guns.

Kids and Guns: Key Facts

For every child killed with a gun, four are wounded. [2]

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the rate of firearm death of children 0-14 years old is nearly twelve times higher in the U.S. than in 25 other industrialized nations combined. The firearm-related homicide rate is nearly 16 times higher for children in the U.S. than in 25 other industrialized countries combined. The suicide rate of children 0-14 years old is twice as high in the U.S. as it is in those same 25 other industrialized countries combined.

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Suicide Rates for Teenagers

Between 1980 and 1994, the suicide rate for teenagers 15-19 increased by 29%; the increase in firearm-related suicides accounted for virtually all (96%) of the increase in the overall suicide rate.

Currently, an estimated 39% of households have a gun, while 24% have a handgun.

From 1993 through 1997, an average of 1,409 children and teenagers took their own lives with guns each year.

Interestingly, there is no difference in the non-firearm suicide rate between the U.S. and these other countries. Virtually all the difference is attributable to suicides committed with guns in the U.S.[3]

Over 3,500 students were expelled in 1998-99 for bringing guns to school. Of these, 43% were in elementary or junior high school. This means that, in a 40-week school year, an average of 88 children per week nationwide are expelled for bringing a gun in school. And these figures include only the children who get caught. [4]

Murder Victims And Guns

During 1999, 52% of all murder victims under 18 in the U.S. were killed by guns. In 1986, guns were used in 38% of such murders. In 1999, 82% of murder victims aged 13 to 19 years old were killed with a firearm. [5]

In 1998, more than 1200 children aged 10-19 committed suicide with firearms. Unlike suicide attempts using other methods, suicide attempts with guns are nearly always fatal, meaning a temporarily depressed teenager will never get a second chance at life. Nearly two-thirds of all completed teenage suicides involve a firearm. [6]

In 1998, 3,792 American children and teens (19 and under) died by gunfire in murders, suicides and unintentional shootings. [7]

That's more than 10 young people a day.

Lack of Laws

There are very few laws governing children's access to guns. The Brady Law made it illegal for children under age 21 to purchase handguns from licensed dealers, although a loophole still permits 18-21 year olds to purchase handguns from private or unlicensed individuals.

Shooters in the Columbine High School massacre used four guns purchased at gun shows, three of which were bought by an eighteen-year-old friend who didn't have to undergo a background check. Each state has different laws governing the transfer and possession of guns to and by juveniles. Most states permit teenagers to possess long guns, including assault weapons grand fathered by the 1994 assault weapon ban, without adult supervision.

Child Access Prevention Laws

Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws have been passed by 18 states. These states hold gun owners criminally liable if children access their unsecured weapons and hurt themselves or someone else. In 1997, the Journal of the American Medical Association published a study showing that accidental deaths of children from firearms decreased 23% in the two years after CAP laws went into effect.

For information on the laws affecting children and guns in each state, see State Laws.

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For more information, please contact: Brady Center To Prevent Gun Violence, 1225 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, D. C. 20005. Phone: (202) 371-9615. Website" www.bradycampaign.org

HOTLINE



Children's Defense Fund's Child Watch Program Brings Together Politics And Poverty Among Children Child Watch Visitation Program

According to the Washington, D.C.-based Children's Defense Fund (CDF).....

- ◆ Every 44 seconds, a baby is born into poverty ...
- ◆ Every minute, a baby is born without health insurance...
- ◆ Every minute, a baby is born to a teen mother..
- ◆ Every 2 hours, a child or youth under 20 is killed by a firearm...

These statistics may receive a concerned nod from an elected official or a corporate leader, yet it is hard to feel passionate about numbers, CDF officials point out.


It is difficult to put your arms around phrases like "one in every five", they feel. But it is hard not to feel passionate about a one-pound infant you see struggling to survive, an infant too small to wrap your arms around, they stated.

CDF's Child Watch Visitation Program) supplements the all-important facts with the passion that numbers lack. In recent statements CDF leaders explained that their Child Watch Program was designed to allow our leaders to witness firsthand what is happening to our children. It highlights the faces and stories of real children that too often go unnoticed among statistics and reports.

Organized by volunteers and advocates in local coalitions across the country, the Child Watch Visitation Program moves executives, clergy, legislators, and other community leaders out of their offices, corporate boardrooms, and legislative chambers and into the world of the children and families who are affected each day by their decisions.

What is the Child Watch Visitation Program?

"Earlier today, as we started this tour, someone called us the movers and shakers of the religious



community. After this experience, we are the moved and the shaken. - Archbishop John Roach, Minneapolis

These powerful words were spoken by Archbishop John Roach after his participation in a Child Watch visit in Minneapolis. All over the country, community leaders like Archbishop Roach are being shaken by the things they see and hear and by the children and families they meet through the Child Watch Visitation Program.

How Does Child Watch Work?

The three main goals of the Child Watch Visitation Program are raising awareness, creating new leaders, and inspiring action. Child Watch programs are planned and implemented by coalitions of local organizations, with CDF providing organizing materials, training, and ongoing assistance. Each local coalition determines the goals, focus, and format of its local Child Watch Visitation Program. Since 1991, with support from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the AT&T Foundation, and the Gerber Foundation, CDF has trained people from more than 200 communities to carry out Child Watch visits.

The Child Watch Visitation Program includes four major components:

- ◆ On-site visits to programs serving children and families
- ◆ Briefings by public policy experts and others
- ◆ Written background materials
- ◆ Experiential activities

Together, these four components serve as a comprehensive tool to educate community leaders about children's issues and motivate them toward action. The program is designed to illustrate both the problems and the solutions that exist in a community. First it highlights the problems by demonstrating how a community reacts to children and provides critical services and treatment. Then it showcases solutions and how intervention and preventative investments save lives, money, and resources.

Seeing the Children Behind the Statistics

"Child Watch is an attempt to see the world as a child sees it," said former Colorado Gov. Roy Romer, who participated in a Child Watch tour. "You can learn a lot just by getting out of your office and seeing how the world is really working. If you walk into a creative child care facility or a hospital that's caring for young children, you begin to see how what we do really affects their lives," said Romer.

"It's a wonderful way to make the leadership in the community aware of how crucial our policies and practices are for children."

The Child Watch Visitation Program helps unveil a picture of children and families that many community leaders have never before seen and one on which they cannot easily turn their backs. The program also shows leaders that while the situation for many children is critical, wonderful programs and dedicated caregivers bring us great hope for the future. Local program coordinators and participants alike have an opportunity to see, hear, feel, and touch children in their communities when they participate in the program.

Child Watch visits include activities that help participants get a better feeling for the realities of everyday life for low-income families.

Local Participation

In Hartford, Conn., participants engaged in an exercise to see how far they could stretch a family budget based on a monthly welfare check.

Religious leaders in Ft. Worth, Texas took their Child Watch tour on empty stomachs.

And in Williamson, West Virginia, participants listened for eight long minutes to a tape of a six-year-old screaming to a 911 operator for help as the child's mother was beaten by a boyfriend.

Countless Child Watch participants say they have changed their thinking about children because of Child Watch. "People who live outside a world of poverty and neglect, no matter how compassionate they are often don't understand how difficult it is to raise children in a low-income community," said



Child Watch Director, Kim Adler.

"For instance, if you've never had to go hungry for more than a few hours, you don't know what it's like for children whose families can't afford to feed them every time they are hungry."

Inspiring Action

The Child Watch Visitation Program not only shocks participants but also empowers them with the knowledge that they have the ability to make a difference. At the conclusion of each tour, participants don't leave feeling powerless because of the magnitude of the problems they have witnessed. They leave inspired by the endless possibilities of ways to help. Participants are offered a variety of ways that they can take action for children through advocacy, volunteerism, and philanthropy. Contacting their legislators and volunteering in their communities are just a couple of ways that they are encouraged to get involved.

The measure of a successful Child Watch is how much participants' attitudes change and whether they are inspired to take local action in their community that will make children's lives better," said Adler.

Involvement With Children

"Ideally, we want every person who goes on a Child Watch to find a new path of service and involvement for children. Even if they just take one action for children, it will make a difference."

In Lake Charles, Louisiana, a group of business leaders and elected officials participated in a Child Watch program to learn more about that community child health care needs. After visiting the Kid-Med clinic, which serves rural children, and hearing from parents about their difficulty accessing health care for their children, a number of participants signed up to become recruiters to enroll children in the state Children's Health Insurance Program.

A group of legislators also agreed to support a bill that would allocate 20 percent of monies received from tobacco settlements with the state to fund a pharmacy program for the uninsured. After visiting

several child care centers and meeting the children and providers, business and union leaders in Helena, Montana, were moved to action to improve the quality and affordability of child care in their community.

Three Groups Volunteer

Three organizations agreed to partner with three child care centers to offer materials, volunteers, and in-kind support. The carpenters union offered the services of their apprentice carpenters to help the centers meet some of their construction needs.

At a Denver Child Watch, a philanthropist, while visiting a day care center that had just learned it was losing some government funding for snacks and lunches, wrote a \$15,000 check to "help ease the pain" until a permanent solution was found.


While the focus may vary from community to community, the ultimate goal of every Child Watch Visitation Program is the same: to improve the lives of children by promoting action on the local, state, and national levels. Participants learned that every individual, congregation, organization, and business is powerful. Each can and must make a difference for children in their communities and across the country.

Child Watch Stories

Participants of a Child Watch Visitation Program organized in Stillwater, Oklahoma, were provided with a first-hand look at the path a young victim takes once abuse is reported.

A college-aged actress played the 13 year-old victim of incest, but the professionals who helped her along the way were real. The audience followed behind a police cruiser as the victim was shuttled from the emergency room to the police station to the court and forced to tell and re-tell the painful details of sexual abuse.

This emotional journey was designed to garner support for the establishment of a child advocacy center where all of these services would be coordinated under one roof. They achieved their goal, and at The Care Center, a child abuse response and evaluation center, police and child protection



investigators, social workers, and medical personnel work together to ease the pain of a traumatic experience.

First Child Watch Tour

On Michelle Shain's first Child Watch tour, she saw young mothers who were dying of AIDS plan for the future care of their children. She watched scared, sick, and injured children wait for treatment at an inner-city health clinic. And she came within a fingertip's reach of tiny, drug-addicted babies.

"I was so moved," says Shain, president of the Junior League in Greenville, S.C., and a mother of three. "None of us could contain our tears. It was just so powerful."

Determined that others in her community would come to better understand children's needs, Shain, along with Ed Marshall, executive director of Success By 6, the local United Way's early childhood education program, began recruiting advocates to form a Child Watch coalition in Greenville County.

"Coalitions are an important part of Child Watch, because you get so many ideas and different viewpoints," said Marshall. "And you have that many more hands to call upon to do the work."

How One Coalition Began

Initially, Marshall and Shain brought together representatives from the school district, the children's hospital, the chamber of commerce, a local children's agency, and a corporation. Each person invited a few more people, and the coalition grew to 29 members from various organizations.

Since 27 percent of preschoolers tested in Greenville County were not ready for first grade, the coalition decided to focus its first Child Watch tour on school readiness. With a donation from Nations-Bank in hand, Marshall and Shain wrote a letter to the governor, inviting him to participate in Greenville's first Child Watch. Although the governor at first declined, the coalition "didn't take no for an answer," said Marshall. Two of the governor's major supporters phoned him to plead the Child Watch case, and "three days after we had a no, we

had a yes," Marshall recalled.

Creating New Leadership for Children

To bring the Child Watch experience into even more communities and create stronger leadership at the local level, in May, 1995, CDF kicked off a new regional training initiative. With support from the Ewing Marrion Kauffman Foundation, CDF provided 10 Child Watch coalition leaders with the skills to train each new Child Watch coalition as they launch their local initiative.

"Regional trainers are invaluable because they can talk about their own Child Watch experiences and give communities a realistic sense of what works and what doesn't work," said CDF Child Watch Director Kim Adler.


Julie Rehder, a child advocacy consultant in North Carolina, trains coalitions in her state and other southern states. Her main goal, she said, is to help coalition members explore ideas for themes for the tour they are planning. According to Rehder, it's often simply a matter of getting coalition members to brainstorm together out loud until they come to a consensus.

"Regional trainers also help coalitions tailor their tours to the communities' needs, teach coalition members the kind of skills that will help them become better children's advocates, and provide ongoing assistance and support," said Adler.

One February Morning

So, early one February morning about eight weeks later, 94 local and state leaders, including Gov. David Beasley and his wife, Mary Wood Beasley; Tunky Riley, wife of former U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley; and Greenville Mayor Knox White gathered for their tour of local day care and early learning centers.

Touched by the children they saw, the Greenville Child Watch participants took immediate action, said Shain. One corporation head, after taking the Child Watch tour, donated 10 new computers to



the city's recreation department. Another CEO wrote an op-ed piece for the local newspaper about his Child Watch experience and the need for family-friendly workplaces.

Greenville Child Watch participants and the coalition also began lobbying intensively for more full-day kindergarten slots across the state. Partly as a result, state legislators agreed to pump \$21 million into state school districts for more full-day kindergarten programs.

In Greenville, the number of available programs jumped from 19 to 44. "Almost every child who now needs full-day kindergarten can get it," said Marshall. "And what we did behind the scenes helped make it happen. "Both Marshall and Shain agreed that Child Watch was so successful because the coalition worked extremely hard and did a good job of planning. "Sometimes in groups you have five or six people who do all the work," said Shain. "What told me we had a successful coalition was that everyone was there, doing the work."

A Non-Political Approach

Marshall advised that Child Watch coalitions should include members from both ends of the political spectrum "to defuse politics" and coalitions should give themselves at least six months to plan a Child Watch tour. It's also important, said Shain, that each coalition member relinquish exclusive ownership and be willing to work in a team. "We had some initial struggles," she says, "but the coalition held together well, and everyone lent their experiences and resources and made it work.

"Child Watch is one of the best things I've ever been part of," said Shain. "It's a wonderful feeling to be part of something magic that is really making a difference for children."

Teen Mom Hopes Child Watch Helps

Karrah Flores doesn't mind having strangers regularly visit her home, look into her bedroom, and wave when she's sitting in her kitchen. In fact, the 19-year-old hopes that the Child Watch participants

who tour the Denver, Colo., group home for pregnant teens and teen mothers where she lives will use the experience to deepen their understanding of young people in her situation.

"I'm not a screw-up," said Flores, who was homeless and living in her car when she found out she was pregnant. She was referred to the Bridgeway group home and education center when a local counseling agency couldn't find a family with which she could live. "I'm just a human being who made a wrong decision in life. Everybody on earth has made a mistake. Mine is just more noticeable."

Inspiring Action

Child Watch has tremendous potential to move participants to action to create local solutions. Since 1995, the 135 members of the Pittsburgh coalition have been educating community leaders about the problems faced by the children languishing in Allegheny County's foster care system. Lawmakers, corporate executives, foundation officials, and the media have been moved to action by the conditions they have seen at the juvenile court facility where 200 children spill out of waiting rooms designed to hold 40 people and wait hours for their cases to be heard.

The opportunity to meet these children and families and to hear the stories of their struggles has resulted in improvements to both the system and the court facility. The Child Watch participants have

"I'm not a screw-up," said Flores, who was homeless and living in her car when she found out she was pregnant.

"I'm just a human being who made a wrong decision in life. Everybody on earth has made a mistake. Mine is just more noticeable."

created an on-site playground, a snack program, a Juvenile Court Masters Project so additional hearing officers can be hired, and were instrumental in advocating for the construction of a new juvenile court facility to be designed with the needs of children and families in mind.

Before people visit Bridgeway, Flores said, many think that pregnant teens are irresponsible and that "we reproduce and think it's no big deal." A benefit of the Child Watch visits, she said, is that participants come to understand that the teens at Bridgeway are doing their best to better their situations.

How That Group Home Helped

"They see that Bridgeway is here to help us finish high school and go to college, and show us we need to have jobs," said Flores. "And they understand that sometimes we do need assistance from the government, but that's not our whole way of life." Flores, who opted to give up her son for adoption, has enrolled in a sign language interpreter's program, has a full-time job, and hopes to become an assistant housemother at Bridgeway after she has completed the maximum 18-month stay there.

One of Flores' housemothers, Mary Bernard, lived at Bridgeway for almost eight months before she gave birth to her daughter, now 5. Bernard is married, works part time at Bridgeway, and attends college full time. Bernard said she hopes Child Watch visits help community leaders understand that teen moms are not lost causes.

Bernard also hopes Child Watch will encourage business leaders to provide teen mothers with jobs. "It is worth helping people in this situation get on with their lives and produce a better second generation, and to break the chain of single parenting and welfare," said Bernard. "We have to give everybody a chance to get a new start, so they can make their life better."

For more information, please contact: Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Phone: (202) 628-8787. <http://www.children'sdefense.org>

HOTLINE

Talking With Kids About Sex and Relationships

Despite recent declines, 4 out of 10 girls in the U. S. get pregnant at least once by age 20. Many teens say they are concerned about pregnancy, but still think "it can't happen to me".

But it does - to one million girls every year.

Studies show that kids who feel they can talk with their parents about sex - because their parents speak openly and listen carefully to them - are less likely to engage in high-risk behavior as teens than kids who do not feel they can talk with their parents about the subject.

So, concerned groups urge parents to discuss their feelings about sex with their children - and feel such talk will go a long way to prevent teen pregnancy.


Children Now (www.childrennow.org/) suggests reading useful tips suggested by Talking with Kids about Sex at: www.talkingwithkids.org/

Most parents want to do their best in talking with their kids about sex and sexuality, but we're often not sure how to begin. Talking With Kids has some advice.

Explore your own attitudes

Studies show that kids who feel they can talk with their parents about sex -- because their moms and dads speak openly and listen carefully to them -- are less likely to engage in high-risk behavior as teens than kids who do not feel they can talk with their parents about the subject. So explore your feelings about sex. If you are very uncomfortable with the subject, read some books and discuss your feelings with a trusted friend, relative, physician, or clergy member. The more you examine the subject, the more confident you'll feel discussing it.

Even if you can't quite overcome your



discomfort, don't worry about admitting it to your kids. It's okay to say something like, "You know, I'm uncomfortable talking about sex because my parents never talked with me about it. But I want us to be able to talk about anything -- including sex - - so please come to me if you have any questions. And if I don't know the answer, I'll find out."

Start early

Teaching your children about sex demands a gentle, continuous flow of information that should begin as early as possible -- for instance, when teaching your toddler where his nose and toes are, include "this is your penis" or "this is your vagina" in your talks. As your child grows, you can continue her education by adding more materials gradually until she understands the subject well.

Take the initiative

If your child hasn't started asking questions about sex, look for a good opportunity to bring it up. Say, for instance, the mother of an 8-year-old's best friend is pregnant. You can say, "Did you notice that David's mommy's tummy is getting bigger? That's because she's going to have a baby and she's carrying it inside her. Do you know how the baby got inside her?" then let the conversation move from there.

Talk about more than the "Birds and the Bees"

While our children need to know the biological facts about sex, they also need to understand that sexual relationships involve caring, concern and responsibility. By discussing the emotional aspect of a sexual relationship with your child, she will be better informed to make decisions later on and to resist peer pressure. If your child is a pre-teen, you need to include some message about the responsibilities and consequences of sexual activity. Conversa-

tions with 11 and 12-year-olds, for example, should include talks about unwanted pregnancy and how they can protect themselves.

One aspect that many parents overlook when discussing sex with their child is dating. As opposed to movies, where two people meet and later end up in bed together, in real life there is time to get to know each other -- time to hold hands, go bowling, see a movie, or just talk. Children need to know that this is an important part of a caring relationship.

Give accurate, age-appropriate information


Talk about sex in a way that fits the age and stage of your child. If your 8-year-old asks why boys and girls change so much physically as they grow, you can say something like, "The body has special chemicals called hormones that tell it whether to become a boy or a girl. A boy has a penis and testicles, and when he grows older his voice gets lower and he gets more hair on his body. A girl has a vulva and vagina, and when she gets older she grows breasts and her hips grow rounder."

Anticipate the next stage of development

Children can get frightened and confused by the sudden changes their bodies begin to go through as they reach puberty. To help stop any anxiety, talk with your kids not only about their current stage of development but about the next stage, too. An 8-year-old girl is old enough to learn about menstruation, just as a boy that age is ready to learn how his body will change.

Communicate your values

It's our responsibility to let our children know our values about sex. Although they may not adopt these values as they mature, at least they'll be aware



of them as they struggle to figure out how they feel and want to behave.

Talk with your child of the opposite sex

Some parents feel uncomfortable talking with their child about topics like sex if the youngster is of the opposite gender. While that's certainly understandable, don't let it become an excuse to close off conversation. If you're a single mother of a son, for example, you can turn to books to help guide you or ask your doctor for some advice on how to bring up the topic with your child. You could also recruit an uncle or other close male friend or relative to discuss the subject with your child, provided there is already good, open communication between them. If there are two parents in the household, it might feel less awkward to have the dad talk with the boy and the mom with the girl. That's not a hard and fast rule, though. If you're comfortable talking with either sons or daughters, go right ahead. Just make sure that gender differences don't make subjects like sex taboo.

Relax

Don't worry about knowing all the answers to your children's questions; what you know is a lot less important than how you respond. If you can convey the message that no subject, including sex, is forbidden in your home, you'll be doing just fine.

What's safe sex?

If two people have sexual intercourse, and one of them has HIV or another sexually transmitted disease, he could give it to his partner(s). Doctors believe that if the man wears a latex condom whenever he has intercourse, it helps to protect him and his partner from giving each other HIV. That's why people call sexual intercourse with a latex condom "safe sex."

Is it true that you can't get pregnant the first time that you have sex?

No.

You can get pregnant anytime you have sexual intercourse. Wearing a latex condom, taking birth control pills, or using other contraceptives are very effective at preventing pregnancy. However, the only absolute way to not get pregnant is to not have sex at all. You might also use this question as an opportunity to point out that not having sexual intercourse is a good idea for teens. Help them understand there are other ways to show affection.

Talking With Kids About Tough Issues is a national campaign by Children Now and the Kaiser Family Foundation.

For more information, please e-mail: talk@talkingwithkids.org

Talking With kids: Resources

Web Sites:

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

This site is designed to serve both AACAP Members, and Parents and Families. You will find information on child and adolescent psychiatry, fact sheets for parents and caregivers, AACAP membership, current research, practice guidelines, managed care information, awards and fellowship descriptions, meeting information and much more.

American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and its member pediatricians dedicate their efforts and resources to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. Its mission is to attain optimal physical, mental and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

American Psychiatric Association

The American Psychiatric Association is a medical specialty society recognized world-wide. Its 40,500 U.S. and international physicians specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional illnesses and substance use disorders.

Children Now

Children Now uses research and mass communications to make the well being of children a top priority across the nation. Co-publishers of the booklet Talking with Kids about Tough Issues.

Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

A resource for health policy information, from a leading private family foundation. Co-publishers of the booklet Talking with Kids about Tough Issues.

Kids' Health

KidsHealth is one of the largest sites on the Web providing doctor-approved health information about children from before birth through adolescence. Created by The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media, our mission is to provide the best children's health information on the Internet!

National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Preventing teen pregnancy by supporting values and stimulating actions that are consistent with a pregnancy-free adolescence. The Campaign's goal is to reduce the teen pregnancy rate by one-third between 1996 and 2005.

National Crime Prevention Council

Material on raising safe and healthy children. Provides activities to teach young children how to deal with scary situations and issues such as run-ins with bullies, guns, drugs, and strangers. In English and Spanish.

National Parent Information Network

Clearinghouse on elementary and early childhood education, and urban education. Provides information to parents and those who work with parents and to foster the exchange of parenting materials. Materials included full text on NPIN have been reviewed for reliability and usefulness.

Parents.com

A site for parents, run by the publisher of Parents, Child, Family Circle and McCall's magazines.

SchoolCity.com

SchoolCity's purpose is to enrich education by providing teachers, students and parents the superior tools and information they need to harness the power of the Internet.

Books:

Battles, Hassles, Tantrums & Tears: Strategies for Coping with Conflict and Making Peace at Home.

Beekman, Susan and Jeanne Holmes. New York: Hearst Books, 1993.

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & How to Listen So Kids Will Talk.

Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish. Mamaroneck, NY: International Center for Creative Thinking, 1990.

Talking with Kids about Violence

Web Sites:

Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

As the largest national, non-partisan, grassroots organization leading the fight to prevent gun violence, the Brady Campaign and the Brady Center are dedicated to creating an America free from gun violence, where all Americans are safe at home, at school, at work and in their communities.

Educators for Social Responsibility

ESR's mission is to make teaching social responsibility a core practice in education so that young people develop the convictions and skills needed to shape a safe, sustainable, democratic and just world.

Institute for Mental Health Initiatives

The mission of the Institute for Mental Health Initiatives is to distinguish the elements of mental health and develop and promote specific programs and

processes to select target audiences.

Talking with Kids about Sex

Web Sites:

Advocates for Youth

Advocates for Youth is dedicated to creating programs and advocating for policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.

American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists

The American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists is devoted to the promotion of sexual health by the development and advancement of the fields of sex therapy, counseling and education. The Association's mission is to provide professional education and certification of sex educators, counselors and therapists, as well as individuals who supervise sex therapists in training.

ETR Associates

Our mission at ETR Associates is to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and communities by providing leadership, educational resources, training and research in health promotion with an emphasis on sexuality and health education.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Founded in 1916, Planned Parenthood is the world's largest and oldest voluntary family planning organization. Planned Parenthood is dedicated to the principles that every individual has a fundamental right to decide when or whether to have a child, and that every child should be wanted and loved.

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)

Incorporated in 1964, SIECUS develops, collects and disseminates information, promotes comprehensive education about sexuality and advocates the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices.

FamilyTalks.com

This Web site is dedicated to helping parents to communicate with their children effectively about sexuality. Along with features on books and workshops by Dona Caine, the site will also continually add new resources to help parents learn to be "askable parents."

Books:

When Benjamin Wants To Know: Family Conversations about the "Facts of Life."

Caine, Dona. Ordering information from www.familytalks.com

How to Talk to Your Child About Sex.

Eyre, Linda and Richard. New York: GoldenBooks, 1998.

It's So Amazing!: A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families.

Harris, Robie H. Illustrated by Michael Emberley. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 1999. (All ages)

It's Perfectly Normal: Growing Up, Changing Bodies, Sex and Sexual Health.

Harris, Robie H. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 1994. (Ages 10 and up)

Sex Is More Than a Plumbing Lesson: A Parent's Guide to Sexuality Education for Infants Through the Teen Years.

Stark, Patty. Dallas, TX: Preston Hollow Enterprises, 1990.

Talking with Kids about Drugs and Alcohol

Web Sites:

The American Council for Drug Education

The American Council for Drug Education is a substance abuse prevention and education agency that develops programs and materials based on the most

current scientific research on drug use and its impact on society.

The Healthy Competition Foundation

With the Healthy Competition Campaign, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association seeks to educate young people and their families about the potential health dangers of performance enhancing drugs and to eliminate their use at all levels of sports.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

The world's largest resource for current information and materials concerning alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment, the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) is a service of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, which is under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Inc.

Founded in 1944 by Marty Mann, the first woman to find long-term sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) provides education, information, help and hope to the public. It advocates prevention, intervention and treatment through offices in New York and Washington, and a nationwide network of Affiliates.

Partnership for a Drug-Free America

The Partnership For A Drug-Free America is a non-profit coalition of professionals from the communications industry, whose mission is to help teens reject substance abuse.

PRIDE

Founded in 1977 by Thomas J. Gleaton Ed.D. and Marsha Keith Schuchard, PRIDE (Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education), is the largest and oldest organization in the nation devoted to drug- and violence-free youth.

Books:

Preparing for the Drug-Free Years: A Family Activity Book.

Hawkins, J. David, et. al. Seattle: Developmental Research and Programs, 1998.

Cool Parents, Drug-Free Kids: A Family Survival Guide.

Coombs, Robert H. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

Other Resources:

National Institute on Drug Abuse Information & Treatment Referral Helpline: 1.800.662.HELP



Talking with Kids about AIDS & HIV

Web Sites:

AIDS Action

Founded in 1984, AIDS Action is the only organization solely dedicated to responsible federal policy for improved HIV/AIDS care and services, vigorous medical research and effective prevention.

AIDS Action Committee

AIDS Action Committee's mission is threefold: to provide support services to people living with AIDS and HIV, as well as the people who love and care for them; to educate the general public, health care professionals and individuals whose behavior could put them at high risk for HIV infection; and to advocate at the local, state and federal levels for fair and effective AIDS public policy/funding.

American Foundation of AIDS Research

AMFAR's mission is to prevent HIV infection and the disease and death associated with it and to protect the human rights of all people threatened by the epidemic of HIV/AIDS.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers, guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, will provide relief to victims of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Long Island Association for AIDS Care, Inc. (LIAAC)

LIAAC is a regional community-based, 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit agency delivering comprehensive programs to all Long Islanders infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. LIAAC's driving philosophy is to provide a stable and comprehensive safety net that ensures our services reach the many diverse communities of Nassau and Suffolk.

Mother's Voices

Mothers' Voices is the only national, non-profit, grassroots organization mobilizing parents as educators and advocates for HIV prevention.

Pediatric AIDS Foundation

Our mission is to identify, fund and conduct critical pediatric research that will lead to better treatments and prevention of HIV infection in infants and children, to reduce and prevent HIV transmission from mother to child and to accelerate the discovery of new treatments for other serious and life-threatening pediatric diseases.

Books:

And the Band Played On: Politics, People And the AIDS Epidemic.

Shilts, Randy. New York: Viking Penguin, 1987.

The Eighteenth Emergency.

Byars, Betsy. New York: Viking, 1973. (Ages 9-12)

What's a Virus Anyway? The Kids' Book About AIDS.

Fassler, David, and Kelly McQueen. Burlington, VT: Waterfront Books, 1990. (Ages 5-10)

Alex, the Kid with AIDS.

Girard, Lina Walvoord. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whiteman & Co., 1991. (Ages 8-11)

Other Resources:

National HIV and AIDS Hotline: 1.800.342.2437

Talking With Kids About Tough Issues is a national campaign by Children Now and the Kaiser Family Foundation

E-mail: talk@talkingwithkids.org

HOTLINE



Governors Association Recognizes Arts Education as Significant in Creating the 21st Century Workforce

Arts education is a cost-effective way to help build the workforce of tomorrow, according to an issue brief produced by the National Governors Association (NGA).

The report, *The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation*, provides examples of how arts-based education can build skills, increase academic success and lower the incidence of juvenile crime. It offers examples from states that are already using the arts in education and after-school programs, as well as policy recommendations for states looking for innovative and cost-effective ways to produce successful students and productive employees.

Prepared by the NGA's Center for Best Practices, which provides governors with innovative ideas and examples of excellence in state government, the issue brief addresses one of the key issues for states: the importance of human capital to an area's economic vitality. According to the report, today's challenging workplace demands academic credentials as well as less tangible assets - including flexibility, highly developed interpersonal skills and problem-solving ability.

"The NGA brief underscores the positive effect that arts education can have on preparing children and youth for success in the workforce," said Eileen B. Mason, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. "In addition to contributing to cognitive, emotional, and social development, participation in the arts gives children an appreciation for the skill, discipline, and sacrifice necessary for achievement."

Creative Experiences and Enthusiasm


"A creative approach to learning improves performance in the classroom and builds the self-esteem of our children. If you look into the faces of children who are involved in a creative activity, you will see their enthusiasm for learning and their pride in being part of a creative experience," said Alabama Governor Don Siegelman, chair of NGA's Economic Development and Commerce Committee. "For states to be competitive, an educated and well-trained workforce is a primary ingredient for a vibrant economy. Research suggests that education in the arts provides a distinct advantage, reinforcing multiple skills that connect learning to real work."

The report cites multiple research studies showing the positive effects of arts education on student learning, school attendance, communications abilities and higher order thinking skills.

"The NGA brief underscores the positive effect that arts education can have on preparing children and youth for success in the workforce," said Eileen B. Mason, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. "In addition to contributing to cognitive, emotional, and social development, participation in the arts gives children an appreciation for the skill, discipline, and sacrifice necessary for achievement."

Enhanced Workforce Readiness

The brief includes examples of how states benefit from enhanced workforce readiness, as a result of having provided arts instruction to students. For instance, New York's Empire State Partnership uses the arts not only to enliven the teaching of other disciplines, but also to put the students' skills to work with professionals outside the classroom in developing community projects. Research cited in the brief



also shows how the arts contribute to lower recidivism rates, increased self-esteem and the acquisition of job skills in at-risk populations.

"Governors and states have been extremely innovative in using the arts to meet their state's educational goals. The arts are a proven solution in creating a learning environment that engages students, including those who are at risk, and prepares them to be productive participants in tomorrow's economy," said Jonathan Katz, CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

Recommended Activities

Among the policy actions for governors recommended by the brief are the following:

- ◆ Include arts education as an element of comprehensive education reform legislation.
- ◆ Facilitate the interaction between governors' education policy advisors, economic development leaders and school leadership - especially in those areas with high numbers of at-risk youth. A state's top arts and culture officers can act as resources in these interactions.
- ◆ Leverage the willingness of the private sector to contribute to the arts by providing seed funding and starter grants to innovative arts-based education programs.

The policy brief is the second in a series on best practices that demonstrate the value of the arts as policy tool in economic development, produced through a cooperative agreement between the National Governors Association and the National Endowment for the Arts, with assistance from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

National Governors Association

The National Governors Association, founded in 1908, is the instrument through which the nation's governors collectively influence the development and implementation of national policy and apply creative leadership to state issues. Its members are the governors of the 50 states, three territories

and two commonwealths.

The National Endowment for the Arts provides national recognition and support to significant projects of artistic excellence, thus preserving and enhancing our nation's diverse cultural heritage. The arts endowment was created by Congress and established in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. Since then, it has awarded more than 117,000 grants to arts organizations and artists in all fifty states and the six U.S. jurisdictions.

This public investment in the nation's cultural life has resulted in both new and classic works of art reaching every corner of America. For more information about the National Endowment for the Arts, visit the agency's Web site at www.arts.gov.

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies is the membership organization of the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. NASAA's mission is to advance and promote a meaningful role for the arts in the lives of individuals, families and communities throughout the United States.

To learn more about the role of state arts agencies and their programs, go to NASAA's Web site at <http://www.nasaa-arts.org>

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HOTLINE

Kids Count Says 2000 Was A Better Year For Children

KIDS COUNT tracks 10 indicators for a year-by-year portrait of how children are faring in every state. They include infant mortality rates, child death rates, teen birth rates, high school dropout rates, the percentage of children in poverty, and children living with parents who do not have full-time, year-round employment.

For the Most Part, the News This Year is Good

Improvements were seen in 7 of the 10 indicators. There were only two measures—the percentage of low-birth weight babies and the percentage of families headed by a single parent—for which most states were doing worse than a decade ago. And in one area—the percentage of 16- to 19-year-old high school dropouts—there has been no significant change since 1990.

Heading in the Right Direction

"We have to attack poverty head on," Gale Walker, founder of Children of the Rainbow, said recently. "We need creative programs that can help families." Start with what they really need, she urged. "Listen to them."

This Past May, Walker was one of the eight speakers gathered in Washington, DC to launch the 2002 KIDS COUNT Data Book. The book, published annually by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, tracks the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of U.S. children, state by state. This year's book is made up of data from the year 2000, which is compared to information from earlier editions. Casey has been collecting and reporting this information for more than a decade.

Walker knows what she's talking about. She struggled to keep her family together on public assis-

tance for six years, before starting Children of the Rainbow in 1991, a creativity-based child care center in San Diego. The center grew out of the lesson that she'd learned: affordable, quality child care, particularly for infants and young children, is one of the things poor families really need.

Progress Still Needed

"We've had a decade of progress improving [these] indicators," said Jim Carr, a senior vice president with Fannie Mae Foundation. "Still, the current status and prospects of our nation's children appear grim. The numbers, say advocates, are still too high. Although infant mortality rates in the United States are at an all time low, they are still higher than several other industrialized nations. And our child poverty rate is among the highest in the developed world."


Across the country, people and programs are working to make sure improvements in numbers translate into real improvements in the lives of our nation's children, he pointed out.

"We have identified a growing number of programs that can change the odds. These aren't coming from Washington, DC, but from states, cities and nonprofits," said Doug Nelson, president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Connecticut and Minnesota, for example, have created programs to keep families connected to a share of their welfare grants even after they've entered the workforce. Illinois and New Jersey "stop the clock" for working families, extending their access to critical welfare supports.

Who's Minding the Children?

As Walker made clear, child care remains critical. Lack of good, affordable care threatens to derail many families and children. States like Maryland, Minnesota and Massachusetts are fighting this by using state money to fund new facilities and train family care providers. For older kids, Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles and New York City have strong emerging models of academic, cultural and recreational before- and after-school programs.

Health care coverage, too, remains a pressing



need. States and counties are mobilizing to help cover the millions of American children-8.4 million in 2000-who lack health insurance. A New Orleans program uses community residents to help families enroll eligible children in Medicaid and the s t a t e Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Similar Programs

A similar program in San Antonio recruits neighborhood residents as enrollment mentors.

Rhode Island reimburses commercial insurance plans for the cost of treating low-income families.

It's clear that while there's good work going on all over the country, much remains to be done. To help families thrive, Nelson and others said, states and the federal government must make helping children a priority and dedicate the resources to build, track and evaluate a system of supports to help people succeed as both workers and parents.

"The results will pay off for all of us," Nelson said.

For more information, contact: www.Connectforkids

HOTLINE

Stuck in the Middle

By Caitlin Johnson
Connect For Kids

It's a blustery Thursday afternoon in May, and a Tornado Watch has been issued for the greater Washington, DC area.

Rumors are that school will let out early. The lights in the classroom flicker as I arrive. I think, It's always something. The kids can't sit still, they keep jumping up to look at the sky darkening outside. The energy from the storm and their anticipation infuses the room with a weird, unsettling electricity.

The teacher looks exhausted, and I soon see why. In 8th grade, anything can be a distraction but the mention of an early dismissal is certain to be. We turn the lights off and listen to a CD of Black Star singing a rap music "poem." It momentarily captures their attention. When it's time to read another poem aloud, though, they talk over each other. One student races over to the window to look out, others pinch each other, a few just sit at their desks and talk aloud to no one in particular.

For the first time in the months I've been teaching, I find myself looking at my watch and thinking, twenty more minutes, just get through it. I've given up trying to reach them or make it fun. I want to go home as badly as they do.

The Ugliers

I'll admit up front that I'm the luckiest teacher I know. I teach creative writing just one day a week and host a weekly after-school writing club. I work through DC WritersCorps, a program that puts writers into middle school classrooms. But despite my easy schedule, I'm exhausted at the end of the day. About half the time, I leave thinking, "This is not how it's supposed to be."

Before I started, I imagined it all so differently-that it would feel important. Rewarding.

But I'm finding middle school chaotic and the students hard to decipher. They aren't like high schoolers, who can hear an assignment and go where it takes them. Their affected maturity is deceptive; they can't handle themselves when there's too little structure. But they're not like elementary school students, either; they're over wanting to please you. And they're definitely not cute.

Let's face it, puberty is an ugly, confusing time. There are braces and acne and changing bodies. Hair in weird places. Growth spurts are merciless and unpredictable. Half of my students look and act almost like adults; the other half like children. When someone makes a slightly suggestive remark-and we read a lot of poetry, so it happens-half the class giggles and blushes, the other half looks around blankly, wondering what joke they're missing.

In these terrible 'tween years, it doesn't take an impending natural disaster to make your lesson plans go awry. A bra strap revealed or a crush uncovered can do it.

Don't Judge a Book By Its...

Of course, the worst thing about teaching in middle school is also the best, from a creative standpoint. The 8th grade angst and tension fuels some powerful creative work. They respond well to structured writing exercises, and their sometimes downright surprising stories or poems make all the chatter, energy and chaos worth it. Nearly all of the kids have had at least one "breakthrough" moment of insight or honesty about the world.

Take Jonathan, the class comedian, who makes us all laugh with dead-on mimicry of adults. When he's reading a poem or story and someone

**"I'm loved by people,
By my mom and Dad,
But I'm not loved by myself
I mean nothing to myself
I believe that is why I fail
I fail because there is nothing
Nothing that can stand by me
and tell me to do right
My parents tell me but that's not
enough
I need every day, every hour, every
minute and every second somebody
Someone who will always be there..."**

Rebecca

talks over him, he says, "Excuse me" in a stern, grandmotherly voice that is as surprisingly effective as it is hilarious. He writes with nearly all his senses, adding smells and sounds to his poems.

Last week, on our writing field trip to the U. S. Botanic Gardens, Jonathan wrote about a plant called the Flaming Glory Bower. He wrote, "The name does not go with the appearance. I may be silly most of the time, but that does not mean I can't be serious. Don't judge a book by its cover, or branches by the way they grow."

I've noticed that the girls posture more than the boys, playing tough and indifferent, all hard edges and attitude. Which makes the sudden intimacy in their work surprising. When we did "love poems to myself," Rebecca, among the toughest girls, with a fantastic lip-smack, eye roll and look of indifference—who walks into a room like she needs nothing, no one, to give her the right to be there—wrote this poem:

*"I'm loved by people,
By my mom and Dad,
But I'm not loved by myself
I mean nothing to myself
I believe that is why I fail
I fail because there is nothing
Nothing that can stand by me
and tell me to do right
My parents tell me but that's not enough
I need every day, every hour, every
minute and every second somebody
Someone who will always be there..."*

On the day she read that, everyone was quiet for a minute, thinking about what it meant to hear someone like Rebecca open up in this way. Some of the kids applauded. It was a weighty moment. Oh, but so short-lived. Within minutes, I was back to competing with fart jokes, note passing and blazing looks of boredom.

The Child-Adult Divide

I try not to take it personally. I know their chaotic energy is due to their—how shall I put this?—effervescence and not disrespect. But still, I often feel

grumpy, maternal. I try manipulation ("this next exercise is going to be really fun"), direct threats ("we won't do this if you can't handle it, we'll just sit quietly with our heads down on our desks"), but stop before I get to outright pleading.

It helps that Ms. Jacob, their English teacher, is in the classroom with me when I teach. She's young and energetic, and has worked in elementary and high schools. This year was her first experience with middle school. She seems to have figured out an approach that works for her, and I watch her for clues. It seems that just as the kids straddle the child-adult divide, Ms. Jacob walks the fine line between friend and authority figure. Just be a friend, and the class devolves into chaos. Just hand down rules, and testing limits takes over from learning. Because puberty is a time of testing your own power, these kids aren't afraid to say no if they suspect you're demanding something just for the sake of asserting your authority.

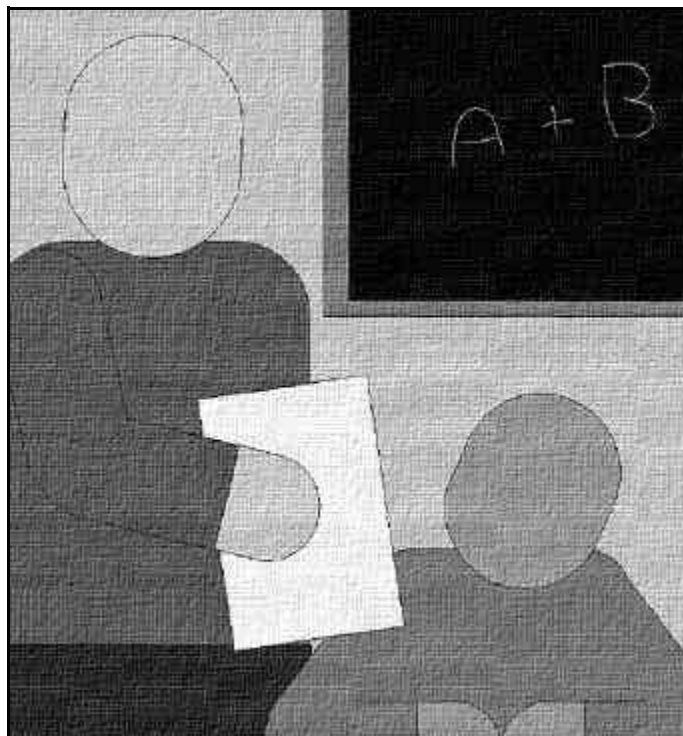
Structure And Supervision

"It's taken me the whole year to learn how to teach middle school," Ms. Jacob tells me that rainy afternoon, as both an apology and a pep talk. "They can't handle freedom like high schoolers, and they hate to be treated like kids, but that's what they are in a lot of ways. They want you to befriend them, but they need tons of structure and supervision."

So she talks to them about the upcoming dance, asks them about the music they like. She wants to know them, but she also keeps her distance. Despite her ability to reach and teach these kids, Ms. Jacob says she's headed back to high school next year. As for me, I don't know whether I'll sign up for another stint in a middle school classroom.

Why? Perhaps I was betrayed by my own expectations.

Younger children look at a teacher as the source of all knowledge and wisdom. The relationship between an interested high school student and a talented teacher can be complex and satisfying. But with middle schoolers, not much gets reflected back. They are self-absorbed, struggling to define themselves and understand all that's swirling around in



their heads and hearts. At times, their teachers barely register as more than annoying adult background noise.

Next Unsure About Next Year

At the same time, their need for consistent adult relationships is almost scary in its intensity: "I need every day, every hour, every minute and every second somebody/Someone who will always be there".

I'm ending the school year unsure whether WritersCorp should have done more to get me ready for the realities of teaching adolescents, and whether I'll consider this experience as a success, failure, or interesting experiment, but with a sheaf of papers that tells me at least sometimes, for some of them, my class offered these students the tools and the time to say what they needed to say.

I just don't know if that's enough.

Caitlin Johnson is senior writer/Web manager of Connect for Kids. For more information please contact: <http://www.Connectforkids.org>

HOTLINE

At least 180 Child Deaths Reported

CPSC, JPMA Launch Campaign About the Hidden Hazards of Placing Babies in Adult Beds

A national safety campaign aimed at reducing deaths associated with placing babies in adult beds has been launched by two national agencies.

The announcement was made recently at a press conference at the annual International Juvenile Products Show in Dallas, Texas, by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA).

Recent Data Reports Infant Deaths

CPSC data shows that from 1999 through 2001 at least 180 children under the age of two died after being placed in adult beds.

The national safety campaign encourages safe sleeping practices for babies. The campaign will be targeted to reach new and expectant parents, day care

providers, hospitals and health departments.

"Many parents may be unaware of the hidden dangers associated with placing babies in adult beds," said Acting CPSC Chairman Thomas Moore. "We are warning parents that simply pushing an adult bed against a wall or lining the edges of a bed with pillows won't protect their babies. In fact, these practices place infants in danger of suffocation and entrapment."

Robert Waller, Jr. executive vice president of JPMA said, "We are pleased to launch this national safety campaign with the CPSC to help inform parents of the hidden hazards of placing babies in adult beds. Our members hope to contribute to this effort by helping to get the word out with information provided to consumers at retail outlets nationwide."

Hidden Hazards

The CPSC data shows that babies placed in adult beds are at risk of dying from several hidden hazards including:

- ◆ Entrapment between the bed and wall, or between the bed and another object.
- ◆ Entrapment involving headboards, footboards or bed frames.
- ◆ Soft bedding-related hazards (such as suffocation on a pillow).
- ◆ Falls (sometimes into a pile of clothing or plastic, resulting in suffocation).
- ◆ Overlaying of the baby by another child or adult in the bed.

The campaign will include a video news release (VNR) that will be fed to stations nationwide



highlighting the hazards associated with placing babies in adult beds and safety pamphlets/posters distributed through retailers, hospitals, health departments and various grass roots organizations.

Acting CPSC Chairman Thomas Moore said "Many of these tragic deaths associated with placing babies in adult beds are preventable."

The CPSC recommends the following safety tips to ensure that babies under 24 months sleep safely:

Safety Tips For Babies

- ◆ Don't place a baby to sleep in an adult bed.
Hidden hazard: The baby could become entrapped between the bed & wall, or in headboards, footboards, bed frames. Babies could also fall or suffocate in soft bedding.
- ◆ Place babies to sleep on their backs in a crib that meets current safety standards and has a firm, tight-fitting mattress.
- ◆ If you use a portable crib or playpen, make sure it meets current safety standards. Use only the mattress or pad provided by the manufacturer.
- ◆ Babies should be placed to sleep on their backs, not their stomachs.
Hidden hazard: According to the Back to Sleep Campaign, "Babies sleeping on their stomachs seem to be more likely to succumb to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)."
- ◆ Don't place a baby to sleep on soft bedding.
Hidden Hazard: The baby could suffocate. Do not use soft bedding such as pillows and thick quilts and comforters for infants under 12 months old.

For additional safety information on safe sleeping practices for babies, contact the CPSC at (800) 638-2772 or write to CPSC, Washington, DC 20207 or visit its website at www.cpsc.gov.

HOTLINE

Gov't Warns on Baby Sleep Dangers

Should Infants Sleep With Their Mothers?

Putting babies to sleep in adult beds exposes them to hazards that include suffocation and falls, government safety officials warned.

More than 60 children younger than 2 die each year after being placed to sleep in adult beds, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said. Nearly all the deaths involve children 12 months or younger who suffocate.

A campaign being announced Friday is intended to promote safe sleeping practices for babies.

Parents Unaware of Dangers

"Many parents may be unaware of the hidden dangers," said Thomas Moore, the agency's acting chairman. "We are warning parents that simply pushing an adult bed against a wall or lining the edges of a bed with pillows won't protect their babies. In fact, these practices place infants in danger."

Between 1999 and 2001, 180 children younger than 2 were reported to have died while sleeping in adult beds, the agency said. Of that total, 38 were trapped between the bed and the wall or another object.

The agency did not release the names of victims. It described one incident where a 5-month-old girl sleeping with her parents in a waterbed got caught in the 4-inch space between the bed and a crib. The girl was suspended by her neck and died from a lack of air.

Pillows, Blankets, Extra Clothes Can Be Hazards

Some infant deaths reported involved suffocation from pillows or blankets. Other babies fell from

beds and suffocated after landing in clothes or plastic bags. In one case, a child fell into a five-gallon bucket and drowned.

Nearly one-third of the deaths in adult beds during that period were caused by an adult or another child laying on top of a baby, the commission said.

...a 5-month-old girl sleeping with her parents in a waterbed got caught in the 4-inch space between the bed and a crib. The girl was suspended by her neck and died from a lack of air.

Warnings To Parents

Agency officials has previously warned parents against sleeping in bed with their babies.

James McKenna, director of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Lab at the University of Notre Dame, said that recommendation is simplistic and "ignores human behavior". He said many mothers sleep safely with their babies while breast-feeding and have saved their babies' lives by being aware of their children even while sleeping. McKenna said the government statistics include cases of extreme neglect that do not represent most parents.

The agency said the number of infant deaths involving adult beds may be higher because its latest statistics are based on incomplete reports.

The safety campaign, undertaken by the government and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, seeks to educate expectant parents, day care providers, hospitals and health departments.

Since 1994, the agency has warned about the dangers of using soft bedding in cribs and putting infants to sleep on their stomachs. Both are associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, the name given for the sudden death of an infant younger than 12 months that remains unexplained after a complete investigation. It is the leading cause of death in infants between one month and 12 months.

Parental Safety Measures

The agency offered the following sleep safety tips:

- ◆ Do not place babies to sleep in an adult bed or on soft bedding.
- ◆ Place babies to sleep on their backs, not on their stomachs.
- ◆ Place them in a crib that meets current safety standards and has a firm, tight fitting mattress.
- ◆ Only use the mattress provided by the manufacturer and do not add a second one because children can suffocate in the spaces between them.
- ◆ Do not add soft bedding such as quilts, comforters, cushions and pillows.

For further information, contact:

Consumer Product Safety Commission:
<http://www.cpsc.gov>

Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association:
<http://www.jpma.org>

HOTLINE



Suggested Reading

By Cynthia Blair

Breaking Patterns of Child Abuse

Dysfunctional patterns are closed systems that serve a secret purpose, making them almost impossible to change from the outside. In *Patterns of Child Abuse: How Dysfunctional Transactions Are Replicated in Individuals, Families, and the Child Welfare System*, private practitioner Michael Karson, Ph.D., JD helps professionals recognize the purpose behind the patterns.

Using case studies and theoretical discussions, Karson demonstrates the ways in which family patterns are replicated in a child's psyche so that, as an adult, the child replicates the family pattern that is familiar to him. He also provides strategies for entering the pattern, thereby helping the members of the family without becoming part its dysfunction.

Karson calls upon systems theory, behaviorism, and psychoanalysis to increase understanding and deal with issues like comforting an abused child who cannot stand to be touched and handling individuals like sexually powerful teenaged girls and disruptive boys. He also tackles complicated issues like the reasons that children who have been abused idealize the parent who victimized them, the effect of borderline personalities upon both individuals and their families, and how family patterns operate in the context of therapy. In addition, the author explores conflicts therapists and other professionals are likely to encounter when dealing with child welfare cases.

The book's final chapter looks at ways of dealing with cases in which all approaches have failed. For example, Karson considers the case of untreatable children. The theoretical model he puts forth, as well as his in-depth analysis of the psychology of individuals and families, offer an important framework for professionals dealing with the child welfare system.

Patterns of Child Abuse: How Dysfunctional Transactions Are Replicated in Individuals, Families, and the Child Welfare System, by Michael Karson, Ph.D., JD, is published by

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A Handbook for Working with Sex Offenders

With sex offenders now estimated to represent approximately 15% of the United States' prison population, it is imperative that professionals in the criminal justice, human service, and mental health fields learn how to offer evaluation and treatment. *How to Work with Sex Offenders: A Handbook for Criminal Justice, Human Service, and Mental Health Professionals*, by Rudy Flora, LCSW, ACSW, is the first complete manual geared toward professionals who deal with this difficult population.

Clear and easy to read, the book serves as a comprehensive guide. It presents relevant new data helpful in interviewing sex offenders, outlines treatment options, and explains in detail the criminal justice, human services, and mental health systems as they are applied to this population.

How to Work with Sex Offenders also examines the different roles played by child protective services workers, law enforcement officers, prosecu-



tors, defense lawyers, parole officers, and other involved in the field. It covers individual, family, and group therapy models as well as concepts related to identifying sex offenders. It also provides profiles of exhibitionists, frotteurs, voyeurs, pedophiles, rapists, sexual sadists, and paraphiliacs.

Because many sex offenders were themselves victims of sex abuse, methods other than incarceration are required in order to help alleviate the problem. *How to Work with Sex Offenders* serves as an invaluable resource for those who work with this population, helping them to protect the public and the victim as well as to help the offenders themselves.

How to Work with Sex Offenders: A Handbook for Criminal Justice, Human Service, and Mental Health Professionals, by Rudy Flora, LCSW, ACSW, is published by

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Dealing with Youth Who Sexually Abuse

Treating Youth Who Sexually Abuse: An Integrated Multi-Component Approach by Paul Stephen Lundrigan, MA is a valuable resource for professionals who treat juvenile sex offenders. This comprehensive, practical guide pulls together all the latest practices and research, offering practical advice for therapists and administrators who work with this challenging population.

Treating Youth Who Sexually Abuse offers a comprehensive treatment program for adolescent sex offenders. The book covers every phase, beginning with assessment and running through relapse preven-

tion.

Because this population is often required to participate in several overlapping programs, coordination problems can seriously interfere with clients confronting their behavior. The book outlines a treatment approach that offers well-coordinated therapies that prevents loopholes. It also offers practical advice on treatment materials, reproducible group curricula, sample schedules for full-day treatment, staff training, and liability. It includes case studies, diagnostic criteria, tables, diagrams, and listings of relevant organizations and websites.

The book serves as an excellent training tool, reference book, and field manual that therapists, administrators, and anyone else involved with the assessment, treatment, and placement of sexually abusive youth will find helpful.

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The “Numb” Survivors

In *Recovering from Sexual Abuse, Addictions, and Compulsive Behaviors – “Numb” Survivors*, Sandra Knauer, LCSW offers ways of helping survivors of sexual abuse overcome their psychological dysfunctions. The book explores the ways in which survivors of abuse may attempt to avoid dealing the pain that results from their sexual abuse.

Survivors of abuse may become sexual perpetrators or sexual addicts, or they may experience such forms of physical dysfunction as alcoholism, sub-



stance abuse, workaholism, or eating disorders. They may have difficulty with trust and friendship, marriage and family, and violence.

Recovering from Sexual Abuse, Addictions, and Compulsive Behaviors teaches the reader how survivors came to use addictive or compulsive behaviors, why survivors continue to use them, what they need to recover, and where they can obtain the help they need to recover from addictive or compulsive behaviors.

The book outlines the entire course of sexual abuse and its aftermath. It also explores routes to recovery, including mechanisms for establishing healthy boundaries and twelve step programs. The book includes a comprehensive bibliography, a list of support groups and resources, and letters from survivors' groups.

Recovering from Sexual Abuse, Addictions, and Compulsive Behaviors – “Numb” Survivors, by Sandra Knauer, LCWS, is published by
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The Abuse of Men: Trauma Begets Trauma

While the issue of abused women has been received extensive attention, the other side of the coin, the abuse of men, has traditionally received much less attention. *The Abuse of Men: Trauma Begets Trauma*, edited by Barbara Jo Brothers, MSW, BCSW, provides an in-depth look at this important issue. The book addresses the impact of physical, sexual, and emotional trauma on men's relationships, as well as all other aspects of their lives.

The victimization of men damages their self-

esteem, their ability to trust, their recognition of personal boundaries, and their ability to form healthy relationships. *The Abuse of Men* looks at all forms of abuse against both men and boys, ranging from child-battering to spousal abuse. Further, the book explores how a culture of violence causes the victims to perpetuate the cycle of violence.

The six articles in the book address such topics as the role of abusive fathers in raising sons who themselves become abusers; socially-sanctioned forms of male-on-male violence including hazing and military training; and domestic violence committed against men by women. The book also offers suggestions for professionals who work with abused men and their partners. A step-by-step program that fosters understanding and enables healing and the building of positive relationships is included.

The Abuse of Men: Trauma Begets Trauma was co-published simultaneously as *Journal of Couples Therapy*, Volume 10, Number 1 2001.

The Abuse of Men: Trauma Begets Trauma, edited by Barbara Jo Brothers, MSW, BCSW, is published by


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Shaken Baby Syndrome

Every year, thousands of babies are shaken so badly that damage is caused. *The Shaken Baby Syndrome: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, edited by Stephan Lazoritz, MD and Vincent J. Palusci, MD explores every aspect of the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of Shaken Baby Syndrome.

The book provides information and advice on such topics as who shakes babies, why they do it, and



what symptoms and signs various medical specialists, including radiographers, ophthalmologists, neurologists, and pathologists, should look for in potential cases. In addition, it looks at how medical social workers should approach suspected cases, how police can most effectively investigate, how perpetrators can be prosecuted, and how educators, public health workers, counselors, and social workers can prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome.

The Shaken Baby Syndrome is a comprehensive resource for anyone who encounters SBS, providing the information that is required to help these tiny victims.

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Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy

Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy is a new journal published by The Haworth Press. It presents clinical, theoretical, and research articles addressing couple and adult relationship treatment issues, striving to uncover what works among various approaches to couple therapy.

The journal's focus is a wide range of couple therapies, including divorce therapy and sex therapy, for both heterosexual and homosexual couples. The journal was formerly published under the name *Journal of Couple Therapy*.

The charter issue, published in January 2001, includes such articles as "Three Aspects of the Thera-

peutic Conversation in Couples Therapy: Does Gender Make a Difference?" "Affect Regulation and Attachment Focused Treatment of a Husband with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and His Wife," and "Facilitating Post-Divorce Transition Using Narrative Therapy."

Future topics will include intervening with an emotionally abusive couple, how therapists harm marriages and what can be done about it, the relationship between parents and adolescents in Mexican-American and European-American Families, and racial and gender identity development for black and white women in interracial partner relationships.

The journal is designed to complement existing journals in family therapy, marital therapy, and psychotherapy by focusing on issues that are directly related to the interactions of couples.

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Journal of Clinical Activities, Assignments & Handouts in Psychotherapy Practice

The Journal of Clinical Activities, Assignments & Handouts in Psychotherapy Practice is another new journal, first published in January 2001. Developed by Lorna L. Hecker, Ph.D., who serves as its editor, the journal was inspired by her groundbreaking treatment guide, *The Therapist's Notebook*.

The journal provides homework, handouts, and self-help resources that can be used in any type of psychotherapy practice. The goal of these materi-



als is to enable clients to aid their own therapeutic process on their own time. Its creation is rooted in the fact that in the current climate of managed care and shrinking resources, clinical psychotherapists are under more and more pressure to provide short-term, outcome-focused treatment based on DSM-IV diagnosis.

The charter issue, for example, includes "Homework for the Psychotherapeutically Sophisticated Client," "The Brief Assessment of Tension Scale," and "The Gender Inequity." Future issues will address "The Power Equity Guide," which is an activity designed to assist couples in negotiating a fair and equitable relationships, "Tell Me About Your Parents," which helps reluctant adults parent their own children, and "Three Words," a brief assessment and intervention technique for use in psychotherapy.

The journal also includes several columns, including "Practitioners in the Trenches: Advice & Adage;" "Internet Therapeutics," exploring various

websites geared toward client self-help; "Psychotropics Update," written by a psychiatrist; "Clinical Research Update," summarizing recent clinical research; and "Reflections on Therapy," which provides space for therapists to reflect on the impact of therapy on themselves.

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HOTLINE

Heat-Related Child Deaths Remain Disturbingly High

New Survey Reveals Parents Still Underestimate the Dangers of Leaving Children Alone in Motor Vehicles;

SAFE KIDS and GM Renew Commitment This Summer to Avoid These Tragedies

Despite annual warnings to parents and caregivers that leaving kids unattended in hot cars can have tragic consequences, at least 30 more children died last year of hyperthermia.

On the heels of these deaths, a new poll by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and General Motors finds that while more adults overall are becoming aware of the dangers of leaving children unattended in or around a motor vehicle, one in five young parents believes it is acceptable to leave kids alone.

GM and SAFE KIDS announced that they will intensify their "Never Leave Your Child Alone" education outreach program. They will continue distributing English and Spanish-language brochures to

more than 300 SAFE KIDS coalitions nationwide this year, and are working with broadcast members of the American Meteorological Society (AMS) to spread the word at the grassroots level.

"Every time another child dies (in a hot car), my heart aches," said Michelle Puckett, who, with her husband, William, joined SAFE KIDS and GM in this safety project recently.

Children Should Not Be Left In Hot, Parked Cars

The Pucketts, of Winchester, Ky., lost their infant son Bryan in 1999 when their baby-sitter, a

registered nurse, left him in a hot car while she shopped. GM researchers have identified at least 150 children who have died since 1996 in all regions on the country as the result of being left or trapped in a hot, parked vehicle. Many of these children were in car seats and left behind or forgotten by an adult, while others gained access to an unlocked car and could not get out.

"These senseless deaths have to stop now," said William Puckett.

The SAFE KIDS-GM survey, conducted in April, revealed that overall, nine percent of parents believe it is OK to leave young children unattended in a vehicle. Among parents age 18-24, that figure is double. Those findings are relatively unchanged from an identical survey conducted in 1999. The poll also revealed that while more parents are locking their vehicles at home (58 percent vs. 50 percent in 1999), one in five parents rarely or never locks his vehicle, the same number reported three years ago.

The good news is that the number of adults polled who said that it is never acceptable to leave a child unattended in a vehicle increased significantly, from 75 percent in 1999 to 87 percent this year. The survey was conducted by Roper ASW and based on interviews with 700 families with children under age 18. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percent.

"No parent deliberately exposes their child to what becomes an oven-like temperature. The price they pay for this ignorance and absentmindedness is unimaginable," said Heather Paul, Ph.D., executive director of SAFE KIDS. "Our job is to convince parents that kids, cars and heat are a deadly combination." Elizabeth A. Lowery, GM vice president, environment and energy, agreed.

The SAFE KIDS-GM "Never Leave Your Child Alone" brochure includes safety tips and information about the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles. It is free and available through the more than 300 SAFE KIDS coalitions nationwide.

For more information, please contact: National SAFE KIDS Campaign, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 1000, Washington, D.C. 20004. Phone: (202) 662-0600; Fax: (202) 393-2072. Website: <http://www.safekids.org>.

HOTLINE

Heat & Entrapment in Cars

Why Kids Are at Risk and Tips on How to Protect Them

Parents running quick errands may think their cars will remain cool, but even on mild days temperatures inside vehicles can rise to dangerous levels in minutes, officials of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign said recently.

A young child's core body temperature can increase three to five times faster than that of an adult, causing permanent injury or death.

The family car parked in the driveway can also be dangerous. Unlocked cars pose serious risks to children who are naturally curious and often lack fear. Once they crawl in, young children don't have the developmental capability to get out.

One-third of the heat-related deaths in 2000 occurred when children crawled into unlocked cars while playing and became trapped.

Protecting Your Family

Heat

Never leave your child in an unattended car, even with the windows down.

Check to make sure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination, particularly when loading and unloading. Don't overlook sleeping infants.

Make sure you check the temperature of the child safety seat surface and safety belt buckles before restraining your children in the car.

Use a light covering to shade the seat of your parked car. Consider using windshield shades in front and back windows.

Trunk Entrapment

Teach children not to play in or around cars.

Keep car keys out of reach and sight.

Always lock car doors and trunks, especially

when parked in the driveway or near the home.

Keep the rear fold-down seats closed to help prevent kids from getting into the trunk from inside the car.

Be wary of child-resistant locks. Teach older children how to disable the driver's door locks if they unintentionally become entrapped in a motor vehicle.

Contact your automobile dealership about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.

If your child gets locked inside a car, get him out and dial 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately.

Protecting Communities

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign and General Motors have a national public awareness campaign to inform parents and caregivers about the dangers of leaving children unattended in vehicles, particularly on warm days. Never Leave Your Child Alone is a brochure that includes sobering facts about heat-related deaths to children trapped in cars and safety tips on how to protect your family. This brochure will be distributed to the public by more than 300 state and local SAFE KIDS coalitions and thousands of General Motors dealerships.

HOTLINE

CDC: Beware of Kids and Parked Cars

Dozens of children are killed each year when they are left unsupervised in or near family vehicles, whether they're left in a parked car on a hot day or backed over in the driveway, the government reported in early July.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said at least 78 children died in accidents linked to parked cars between the summers of 2000 and 2001.

The report came less than a week after two small children died in Southfield, Michigan, after their mother allegedly left them in the car for three

hours while she had her hair done.

Tarajee Maynor, 25, is charged with murder.

Janette Fennell, director of the San Francisco-based group KIDS 'N CARS, said such deaths are easily preventable. But it's wrong to assume the parents responsible are negligent and uncaring, she said.

"We've had quite a few cases where this has happened to caring, loving, doting parents because of our stressful, fast-paced lifestyle," Fennell said.

Problem Is Underestimated

Fennell says the numbers gathered by KIDS 'N CARS underestimate the problem, because many accidental deaths are not reported by the media. With firecracker-hot temperatures forecast across the nation during the end of June and beginning of July, the CDC also issued a reminder that heat can be deadly for adults as well as children.

Heat exposure kills about 400 Americans each year, with 8,015 deaths from 1979 to 1999, the CDC said.

Fatalities can spike with a bump in the heat index. Last July and August, 2001, 95 heat deaths were reported in Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas when temperatures soared past 105 degrees.

"It seems so obvious. But particularly for our elderly and our poor, it's not that easy," Dr. Michael McGeekin of the CDC said. "Sometimes they have no air conditioning in their homes or apartments. And sometimes they view the cost as too great, so they don't use the air conditioning."

KIDS 'N CARS, in a partnership with the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, now has Public Service Announcements (PSAs) available for TV stations to air.

For more information, please contact: KIDS 'N CARS, 918 Glenn Ave., Washington, MO 63090. Phone: 636-390-8266. Fax: 636-390-9412 or 415-789-9424. Website: www.kidsncars.org.

CompuServe Interactive Services, Inc., carried this story on the Internet recently. It was written by CNN. Com.

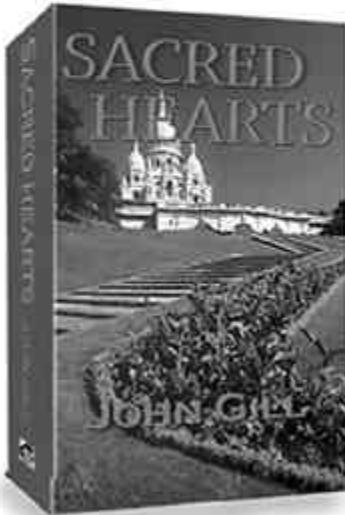
HOTLINE

New from local author



John Edward Gill

SACRED HEARTS



"The Papa Joe look-alike contests in Key West come to mind when reading Sacred Hearts. It is not that Gill looks much like Ernest Hemingway on the book-jacket picture, but that his writing style resembles Hemingway's so much.

Bill Townsend and Nicole Berman, the two main characters in the book, are lovers. Bill has a congenital heart condition, while Nicole has a nearly fatal automobile accident during the course of the story.

The action alternates between Paris and Long Island ... the physical settings are described in exquisite detail.

Gill, who is an English professor on Long Island and previously worked as a journalist and editor, has a great ability to write dialogue; he succeeds in telling nearly the entire story in this fashion.

In this novel no detail about physical locales is omitted."

--ForeWordreviews.com.

"The lean, bravery-in-the-face-of-doom dialogue is reminiscent of Hemingway and reinforces the gulf between dreams and reality."

--Literary Magazine Review

"Not to miss! John Gill's book exemplifies a strong talent for characterization and narrative. Timely for its social issues and at the same time fast, enjoyable reading. Gill follows a strong tradition. If Hemingway was not a mentor, he was clearly an inspiration."

--Kimberly Goff, Co-Chair, John Steinbeck Committee for the Steinbeck Writer's Program at Long Island University's Southampton Campus

All proceeds will go to Children's Rights

Available at your local library or online at johnedwardgill.com

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