



# Indianapolis CrimeWatch

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Website: <http://www.indy.gov/CrimeWatch/IMPDDistricts/EastDistrict/Pages/DistrictHome.aspx>

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## 7 Tips on Talking With Children about Violence

A lot of attention is given to the affects of violent movies, cartoons, and video games on children, but this isn't the only place they are exposed to these images. Increasingly horrifying and graphic pictures are shown daily in the news from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and other violence taking place around the world.

These images can confuse and frighten children and, similarly to overly violent movies and video games, frequent viewing of news coverage of traumatic events may cause children to become aggressive, desensitized to violence, and have less empathy for others. Although it's difficult to prevent children from being exposed to news coverage, parents and other adults can help children understand and cope with what they see.

### What you can do:

- Be available to talk with your child. Ask what your child knows about recent events and what questions and concerns he or she may have. Use open ended questions like, "What were people talking about at school today?" or "What are you worried about?" to encourage your child to talk to you.
- Talk about effective ways to handle, anger and arguments during a child's youngest years and continue through the teen years.
- Stress respect for self and others, describe how you have settled arguments and other conflicts without violence and teach children not to use words that can hurt others.
- Answer your child's questions. Offer simple explanations to questions your child asks and be prepared to repeat information, as it may be confusing to him or her. Remember that each child develops differently and what may be appropriate to say to one child may not be for another.
- Limit the violent and traumatic news coverage your child watches. When you do allow your child to watch the news, watch with him or her and offer explanations of what you see. When you can, give examples of positive actions taking place.
- Emphasize the importance of tolerance and respect for diversity. Explain that most people in the world are kind and that it is important to treat people with respect.
- Be a good listener. Just being there for your child provides reassurance and comfort.