

# Too Good for Violence Home Workout

For Parents and Kids

Grade 1

**Dear Parents,**

Our class is beginning a program called Too Good For Violence, a violence prevention/character education program developed by the Mendez Foundation. This program teaches peaceable attitudes and life skills through activities, stories and songs.

In Too Good For Violence for first grade, children learn to appreciate their differences and to treat others the way they would like to be treated—with kindness and respect. They learn how to make friends, express their feelings and solve conflicts peaceably.

From time to time you will receive “Home Workouts,” that reinforce and extend at home what your child is learning at school. By sharing these activities together, you will help your child develop character and learn important skills that will help your child get along well with others and resolve conflicts in peaceful ways.

You will also receive helpful parenting and prevention information.

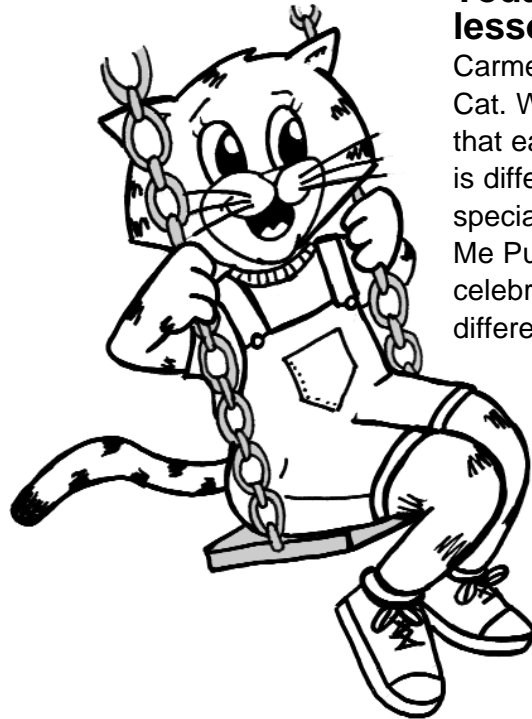
Thank you for your interest and help in teaching the skills to help us all live peacefully. Being responsible for a child is the most difficult and, at the same time, most joyous and rewarding of experiences. As parents and/or caregivers you have the opportunity to guide the growth and development of a young life in a positive direction. What a tremendous responsibility! I wish you well in your journey to become the best parent you can be.

Sincerely,

## ***Bullying is a problem in schools throughout the world....***

It begins when children are very young, and if it isn't stopped, it can have destructive effects that last a lifetime. In its early stages, parents and teachers often mistake bullying for rough and tumble play. If you suspect that your child is the target of bullying, please contact the school. Some signs that your child may be suffering from bullying are:

- Withdrawn behavior
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Money that disappears
- Moodiness
- Torn clothing
- Bedwetting
- Bruising or other physical injuries
- Change in eating habits









**Today in our lesson** we met Carmen the Cool Cat. We learned that each person is different and special. We made Me Puppets to celebrate our differences.

*“Parenthood—the art of bringing up children without putting them down.”*

*Unknown*

In our first lesson, we met Carmen the Cool Cat. Carmen will help us to learn about respecting differences, making friends, helping and problem solving.

Today, Carmen helped us to see how wonderful it is that each of us is unlike any other. You can reinforce this lesson at home by doing this activity together. Think of some people—friends or relatives, for example—who are very different from each other. Write their names in the blanks below. Talk about some interesting ways that these people are different. With your child, list the different foods they like to eat, clothes they like

#1	#2
Likes to eat...	Likes to eat...
Likes to wear...	Likes to wear...
Likes to play...	Likes to play...
  	  

# Resources

## **Books for You**

*What To Do...When Kids Are Mean to Your Child* by Elin McCoy. Readers Digest,1997. This book from the Reader’s Digest Parenting Series provides solutions to meanness from experts, parents and kids from ages 5 to 13.

## **Wonderful Websites**

National School Safety Center: [www.schoolsafety.us](http://www.schoolsafety.us)

This site provides information about preventing school crime and violence.

Mendez Foundation: [www.mendezfoundation.org](http://www.mendezfoundation.org)

This site is produced by the Mendez Foundation, the developers of *Too Good For Violence*. This site has information on drug/violence prevention and wellness. You may order Mendez products such as Carmen puppets, CDs, and shoelaces by visiting the on-line store.

**Too Good for Violence**  
**Home Workout**  
*For Parents and Kids* **Grade 1**

Today we learned that everyone's feelings are important. We also learned that people may feel differently about the same situation. Something that causes one person in your family to feel happy, for example, may cause someone else to feel nervous or worried. You can help your child to develop a greater awareness of others' feelings by playing a game called "Let the Cat Out of the Bag" with your family.

Cut out the cat cards below. Place the cat cards in a bag. As your family sits together, have one person at a time take a cat card from the bag, read the sentence and complete it with a feeling. Give everyone in the family a chance to say how he or she would feel about each situation. Explain that people are different, and everyone's feelings are important.



**When I have to go to bed, I feel...**



**When I do my jobs at home, I feel...**



**When someone teases me, I feel...**



**When someone calls me names, I feel...**



**When someone says, "I love you," I feel...**

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We are learning that being a friend means treating others the way we would like to be treated with caring, kindness and respect. It is important to treat family members the same way.

Once or twice a month, have a special friendship night for your family. Have each family member write two Family Friendship Facts. These are compliments—very specific things you like or appreciate about each person in the family. With the whole family gathered together, read the Family Friendship Facts aloud and then give them to the appropriate family member. Children enjoy keeping their Family Friendship Facts in a jar or pasting them on a poster in their room. What a great way to build the spirit of friendship and appreciation within the family!

**Family Friendship Fact:**

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**Family Friendship Fact:**

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**Family Friendship Fact:**

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**Family Friendship Fact:**

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**Family Friendship Fact:**

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# Too Good for Violence Home Workout

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Today we learned a cheer that helps us to stop and think when we feel angry. The cheer helps us to keep our classroom a peaceable place. We can use this cheer on the playground and at home, too. It is called "The STOP Song Cheer."

When Carmen feels angry, her hair stands up on her back. She starts to hiss. Those are her body's warning signals that it is time to stop and think.

Tell your child about your body's warning signals. Ask your child about his or her own warning signals. When our warning signals let us know that we feel angry, we can use "The STOP Song Cheer" to help us manage our anger.

The cheer starts with the ssssss sound. It goes like this:

**Ssssstop! Stop right now!**  
**Tell yourself, "Calm down."**  
**Open your fists. Count to ten.**  
**Pause 'til you can think again.**



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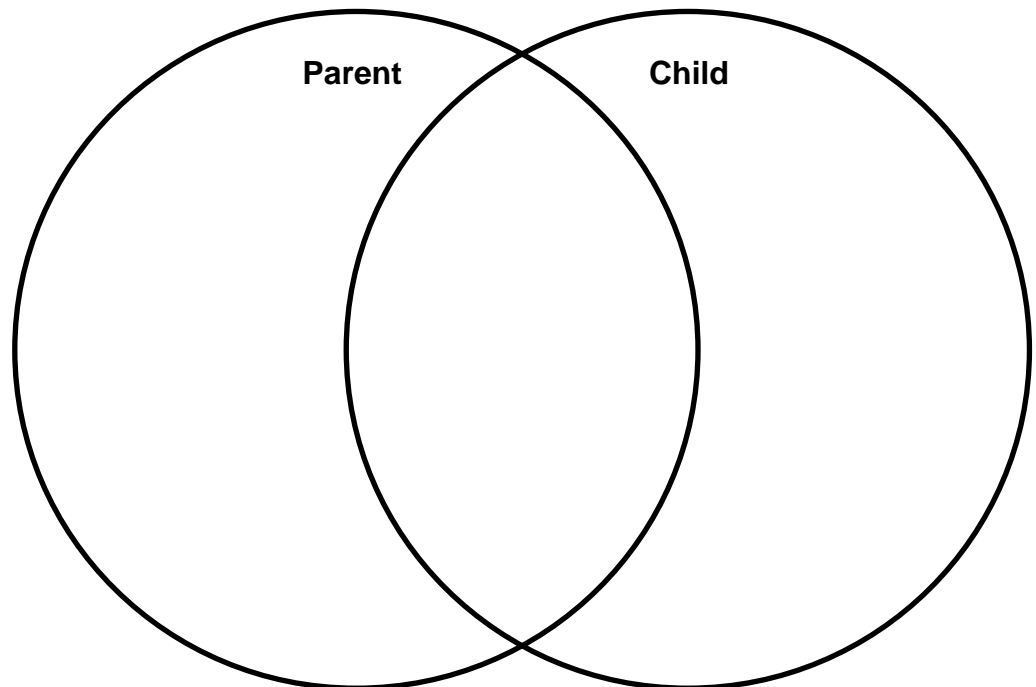
We are learning to appreciate our differences. Today we learned that some people can't listen with their ears, and some people can't see with their eyes, but they listen and see in different ways. Some people have different ways to speak and read.

When we first meet people who do things differently, we may not understand, but as we get to know them, we find out how interesting differences can be. We also find out that in spite of our differences, we are the same in many ways. We all have feelings, for example, and we all want to belong.

You can help your child to appreciate differences. Ask your child,

- *How do you feel when you are with people who are different from you?*
- *Is it okay for people to be different, or would it be better if we were all the same?*
- *How can we let all people know that we care about them?*

Even family members who are the same in many ways, are also different in many ways. Discuss with your child some ways that the two of you are different, and list them in the outer circles of the diagram below. Discuss some ways that the two of you are the same, and list them in the shared section of the diagram.



**I'm glad we aren't all copy-cats.  
I like being one-of-a-kind!**

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We have been learning to make our classroom a peaceable place by solving our problems peacefully. We use "The Problem-Solving Song" to help us decide what to do when we have a problem or conflict with another person.

You can help your child to develop problem-solving skills by singing the song together. Ask your child to show you how to do the motions with the song, and sing it to the tune of "Heads and Shoulders, Knees and Toes."

**What's the problem?**

*Stand with both arms raised, palms up, as if asking a question.*

**Do you know? Do you know?**

*Turn your body to look at different family members.*

**What's the problem?**

*Stand with both arms raised, palms up, as if asking a question.*

**Do you know? Do you know?**

*Turn your body to look at different family members.*

**Think, think, think**

*Tap, tap, tap the side of your head with your index finger.*

**Of different things to do!**

*One at a time, hold up three fingers.*

**Now choose the one that's best for you!**

*Clap and then raise arms in a "Yes!" gesture.*

In order to learn problem-solving skills, children need to practice often. By using problem-solving skills at home, you and your family can make your home a peaceable place.

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## Children in the first grade are

- learning the fundamentals of friendship.
- learning how to share and be considerate of others.
- likely to choose playmates of their own gender.
- trying to feel confident in school.
- usually upset by teasing.
- still very self-centered.
- just beginning to learn to see things from someone else's point of view.

***The same motto holds true for this age as any other,  
"To have a friend, be a friend."***

*"There is no separation of mind and emotions. Emotions, thinking and learning are all linked."*

*Erick Jensen*

*"Character isn't inherited. One builds it daily by the way one thinks and acts, thought by thought, action by action."*

*Helen Gahagan Douglas, Congresswoman*

## **Complimenting your children for acts of kindness helps them to learn consideration for others.**

A child who develops empathy and concern for others is much less likely to commit acts of violence. There is nothing that encourages a child more than his/her parents' approval. The right word at the right time can help your child to strengthen his bond to you and sort out appropriate behavior. Reward good behavior consistently and immediately by thanking your child and expressing your appreciation. Emphasize the things your child does right.



**Haim Ginott**, psychologist and author of *Between Parent and Child*, wrote these timeless tips for parents.

- Choose words carefully.
- Pause before speaking to children in stressful situations.
- Make sure that you're not making critical or demeaning remarks.
- Acknowledge your children's feelings—help them feel understood.
- Set limits on behavior.
- Put a stop to misbehavior.
- Avoid threats and bribes.
- Be brief when laying down the law.
- Communicate unconditional love—separate the person from the action.

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## The Best Contest

Today we read a poem called, "The Best Contest." Ask your child to show you the poem and activity booklet we made. Read the poem and do the activities together. With your child, complete the dot-to-dot activity below. By doing these activities together, you will help your child to appreciate differences and to realize that all kinds of people deserve caring and respect.



# Resources

## Wonderful Websites

Free Spirit Publishing: [www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com)

Materials for parents, educators, teens and everyone else who cares about kids.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign: [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

The Campaign's goal is to teach adults how to make their community safer for kids through the prevention of childhood injuries.

Mendez Foundation: [www.mendezfoundation.org](http://www.mendezfoundation.org)

This site is produced by the Mendez Foundation, the developers of *Too Good For Violence*. This site has information on drug/violence prevention and wellness. You may order Mendez products such as Carmen puppets, CDs, and shoelaces by visiting the on-line store.