

Too Good for Violence Home Workout

For Parents and Kids

Grade 2

Dear Parents,

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

In *Too Good For Violence* for second grade, children learn to stop and think about what to do when they feel angry and how to express their feelings assertively. They also learn to share, listen, help and take turns.

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

Thank you for your interest and help in teaching the skills to help us all live in a peaceable place. 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,

Sending Messages to Your Child...

Research suggests that violence on TV, in computer games and in movies can harm children. As a parent, you can reduce the media's harmful effects on your child:

- Watch television or movies with your child. This way you can discuss what is happening.
- Turn off disturbing programs and discuss your reasons with your child.
- Limit the amount of television viewing. Select programs that are age-appropriate and set a maximum amount of time.
- Monitor the games your child plays on the computer or on video systems.
- Use a VCR to help you screen programs when you are building a video library.
- Encourage your child to be critical of the messages he or she encounters when watching TV, movies, or playing video games.

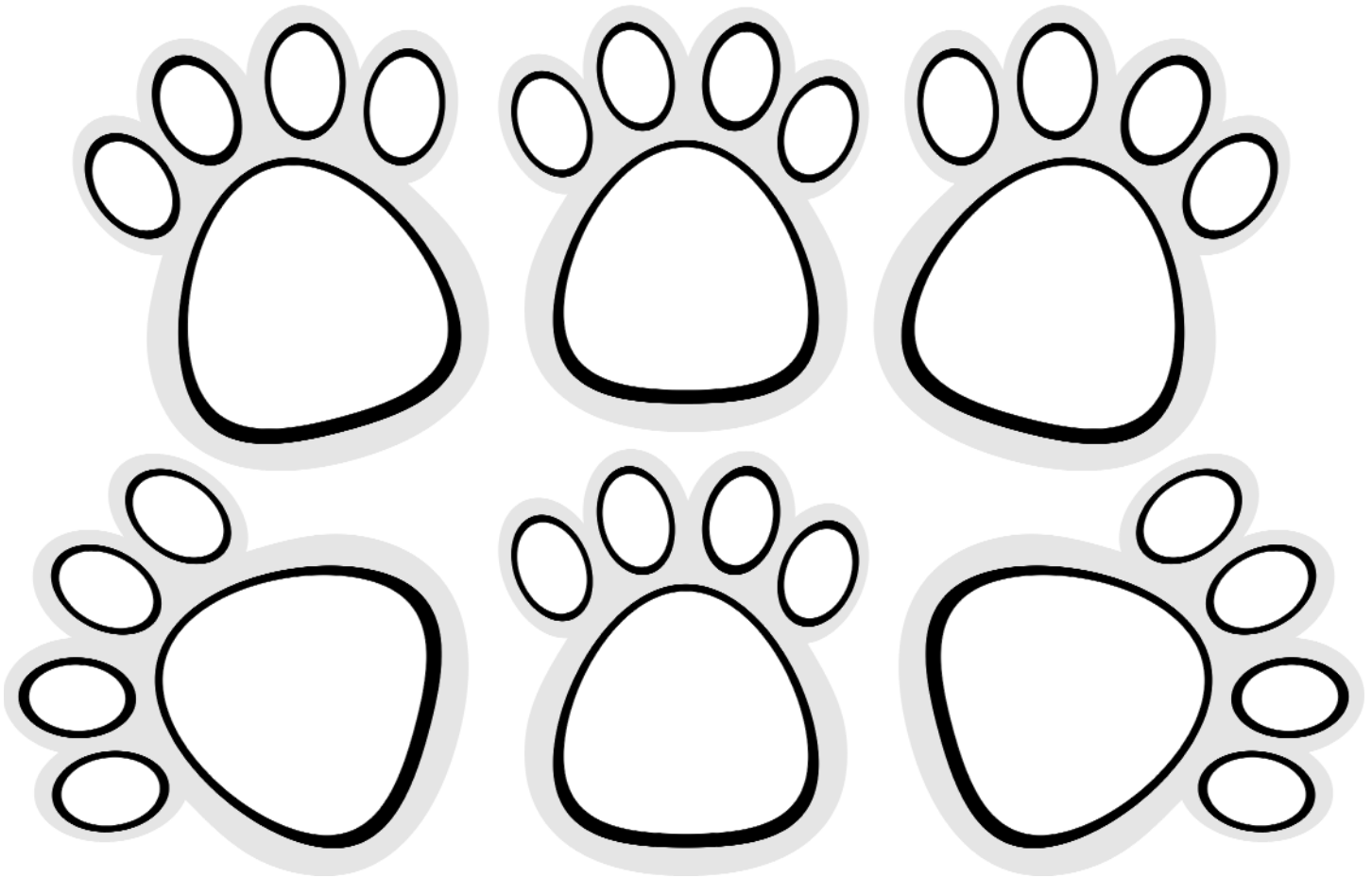
Today in our lesson we met Wagner the

Peaceable Pup.

We drew our footprints and started out on the trail to a peaceable place. We listed things we could do to make the world more peaceable: sharing, taking turns, saying kind things, helping each other, respecting differences and playing fair.



In the footprints below, help your child to write things you and your family can do to make your home more peaceable. Post this page on a wall or on your refrigerator so everyone can see the steps your family will take to create a peaceable place at home.



Resources

Wonderful Website

Mendez Foundation: www.mendezfoundation.org

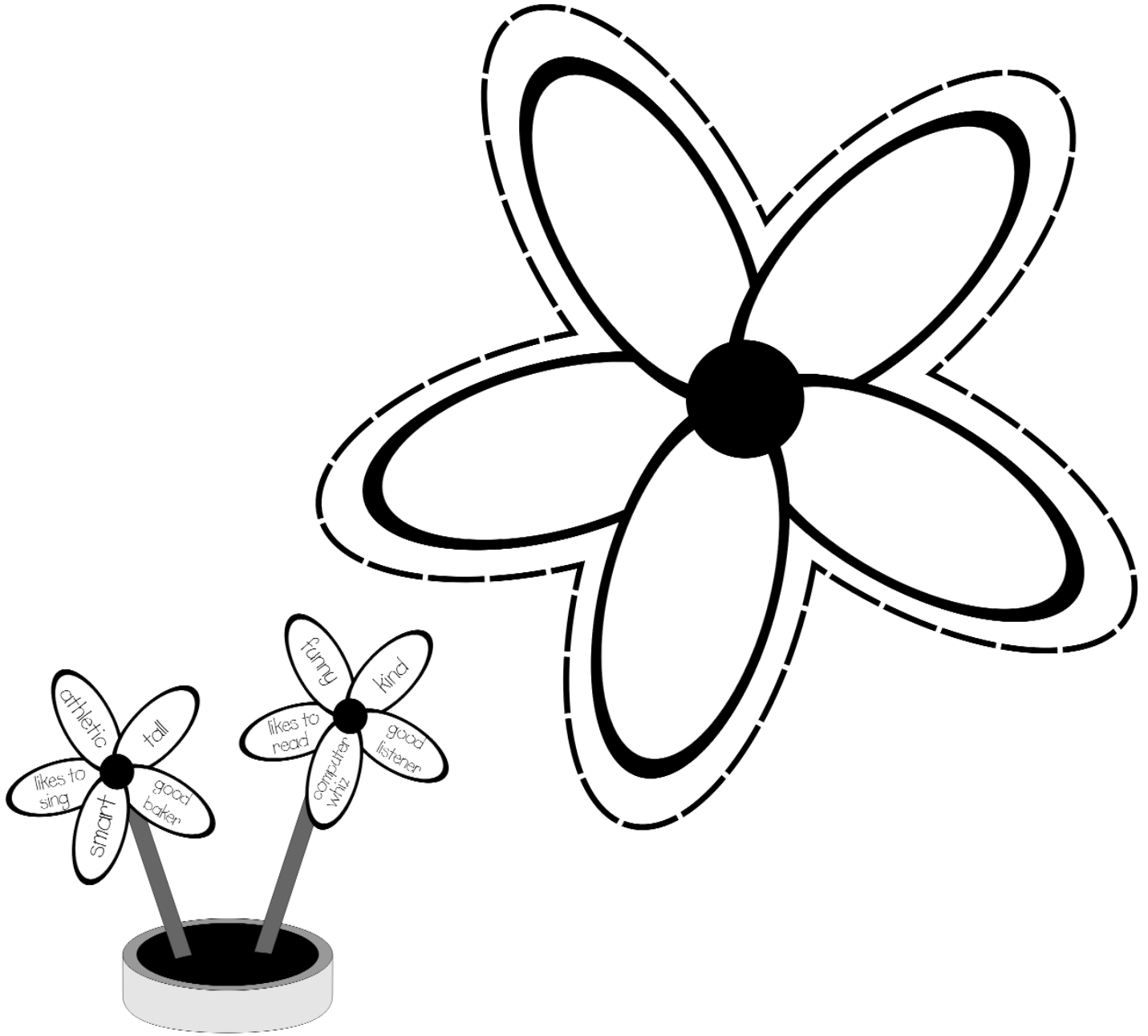
This site is produced by the Mendez Foundation, the developers of *Too Good For Violence*. This site has information on drug/violence prevention and wellness. You may order Mendez products such as Wagner puppets, pencils, T-shirts and stickers by visiting the on-line store.

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In our lesson today, we learned to appreciate our differences, because they are the things that make us interesting and special. Trace the pattern below to make a flower for each member of your family. Cut each flower along the dotted lines. Give each family member a flower. On the petals of their own flowers, have them write the qualities that make them special. Glue the flowers onto Popsicle® sticks and arrange them in a jar or vase. This is a fun way for your family to help nurture and cultivate those qualities that make each of you one-of-a-kind.



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Today we learned what to do when we have a “bone to pick” with someone else: use an I-message. Using an I-message sends a clear, honest message without blaming or name-calling. I-messages go like this:

I feel (name a feeling)

when you (name what the other person did).

I want (name what you want to happen).

Starting a message with “you” and blaming another person is **not** a way to get along peaceably.

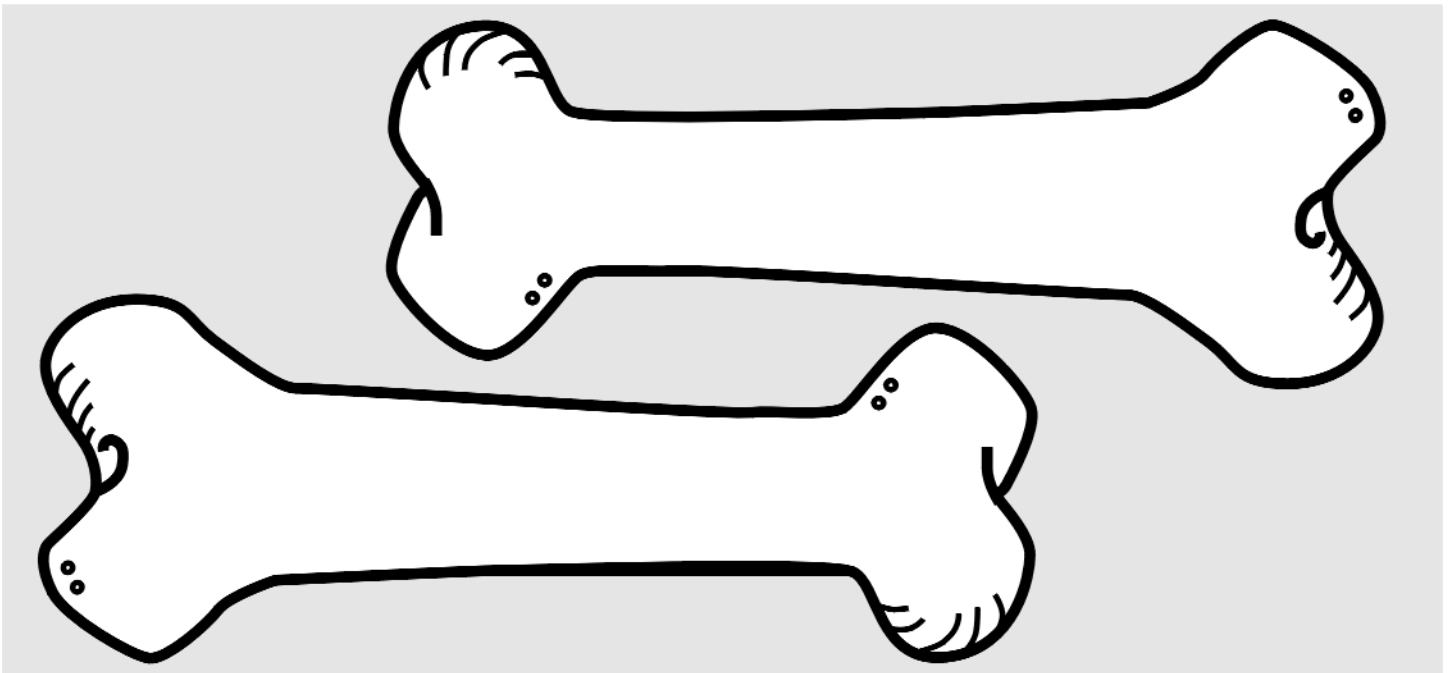
We are helping Wagner learn to use I-messages so that he can communicate well with others. Read the messages below. Cut out the I-messages and glue them onto Wagner’s bones so that he can remember to use them. Put the You-message in the trash can.

Remember, when you have a bone to pick, start out by saying, “I feel _____.”

A “I feel happy when you ask me to play in your yard.”

B “You are a dirty dog! Quit digging holes in my yard!”

C “I feel mad when you take my bone. I want you to give it back.”



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Wagner is learning what to say and do to live peaceably and show respect for others. You can help your child to learn peaceable words and actions by doing this activity together.

Read the descriptions beside the pictures on the left and the things Wagner could say on the right. Draw a line from each picture to Wagner's peaceable response.

Pictures:

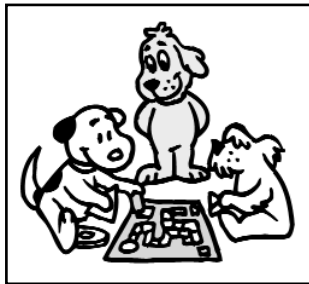
Wagner's Words:

Wagner spills another dog's milk. Wagner says...



"Hi, my name is Wagner.
What is your name?"

Wagner is watching some friends play a game. He wants to play, too. Wagner says...



"I'm sorry."

Wagner is meeting another dog for the first time. Wagner says...



"Let's take turns."

Wagner and another dog both want to play with the same ball. Wagner says...



"May I please play with you?"



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In our lesson today we learned that each person is responsible for exercising self-discipline and managing his or her feelings. "The STOP Song Cheer" helps us remember what to do when we feel angry. When we stop and think, we can solve our problems peaceably, without yelling or hurting each other.

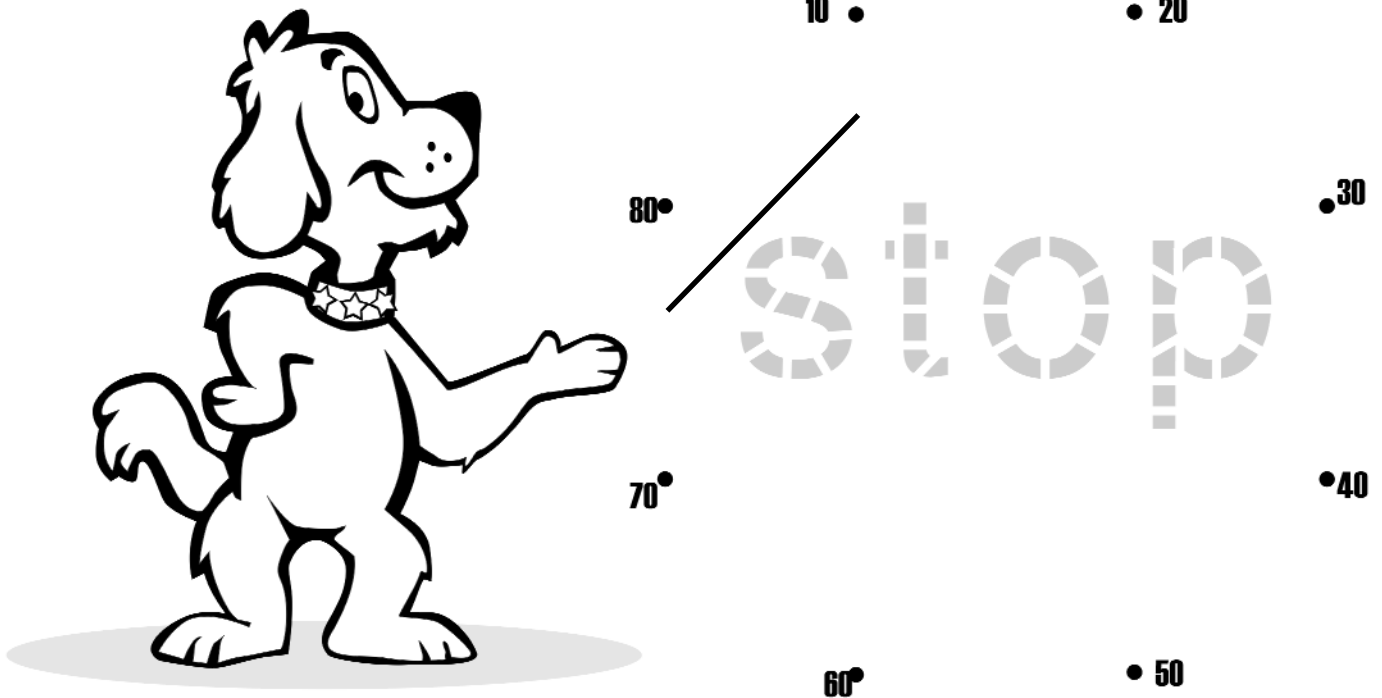
You can reinforce this important lesson by doing this dot-to-dot activity with your child. Count by tens and connect the dots to make a stop sign. Ask your child to teach you "The STOP Song Cheer" and say it together.

The STOP Song Cheer



S TOP! Stop right now!
T ell yourself, "Calm down."
O pen your fists. Count to ten.
P ause 'till you can think again!

To purchase a CD of "The STOP Song" which includes this cheer, visit the on-line store at the Mendez Foundation website: www.mendezfoundation.org or call (800) 750-0986.



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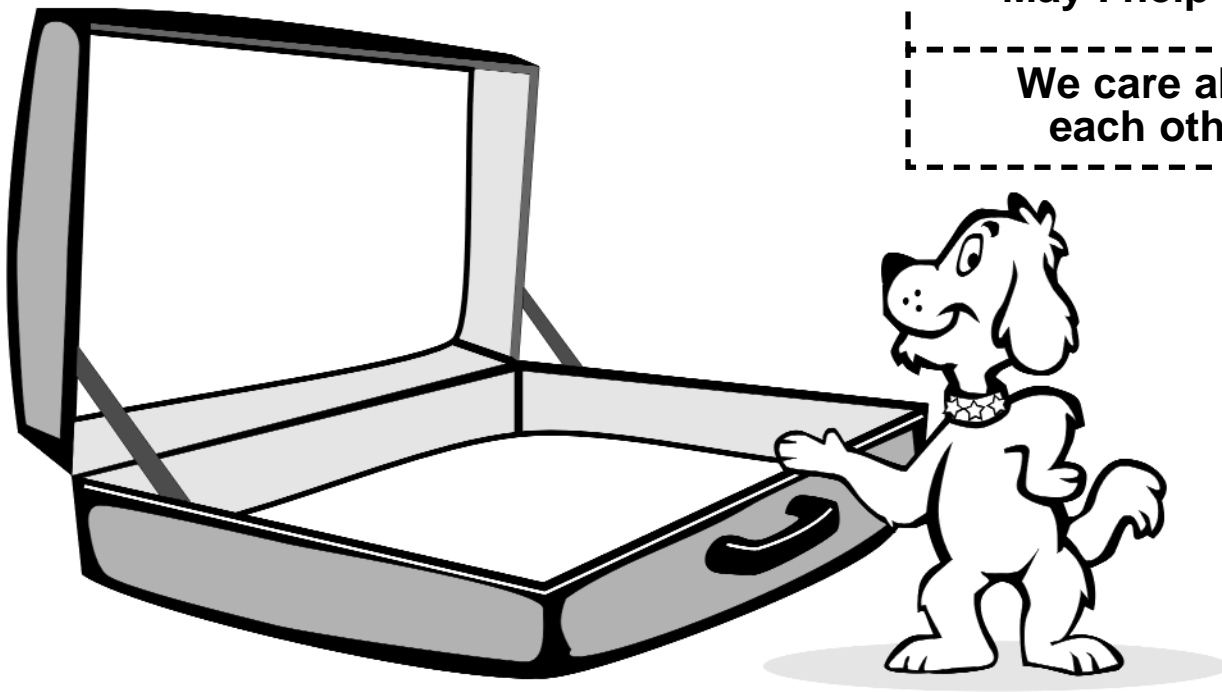
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We have been learning things to say to make our world a peaceable place. You can help your child to learn peaceable things to say and do by playing this game together.

Pretend that your family is planning to go to a peaceable place. You are packing your suitcase with words and actions that will help you to get along peacefully together. With your child, cut along the dotted lines to make cards. Place the cards face down. Take turns choosing a card. If the card describes peaceable words, glue it into the suitcase on this page. If the card does not describe peaceable words, throw it away.

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Thank you for listening. | Who cares? |
| You are lazy. | I will share with you. |
| I like your smile. | You never listen. |
| Shut up. | What do you think? |
| | May I help you? |
| | We care about each other. |





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According to the American Psychological Association, the tendency toward violent behavior can sometimes be observed in children at early ages. The experts say that violent behavior in a child at any age needs to be taken seriously.

We need to look at our loved ones and see if they are at risk. Certain behaviors do signal an increased probability of violence, but these behaviors do not mean that the child will commit a violent act. Certainly we can watch for these warning signs:

- Loss of temper on a daily basis
- Frequent physical fighting
- Carrying a weapon
- Planning to commit acts of violence
- Enjoying hurting animals
- Increase in risk-taking behavior
- Vandalism or property damage
- Talking about plans for hurting others

Anyone who recognizes these warning signs in their children or in themselves should get help from a counselor, teacher, psychologist, or clergy. According to the American Psychological Association, violence is a learned behavior, and it can be changed.

General Tips for Violence Prevention for Parents:

- Teach your children to speak with an adult they trust if they see anything that appears dangerous.
- Participate in parenting classes that are offered in your community, at school, or at a local youth center.
- Take an active part in your child's school life—go over homework, meet teachers and attend functions at your child's school.
- Provide supervision in off-school hours for your children.
- Share ideas for school safety with the principal and work with the school to develop a safe school plan.
- Model and teach standards of right and wrong.
- Make clear rules and enforce them firmly and consistently.

Adapted from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Research, Portland, Oregon

“Where will our country find leaders with integrity, courage, strength—all the family values—in ten, twenty, or thirty years? The answer is that you are teaching them, loving them, and raising them right now.”

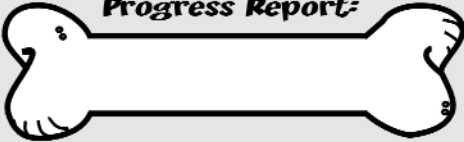






—Barbara Bush

“When Thomas Edison was working on improving the first electric light bulb, he handed the finished bulb to a young helper, who nervously carried it upstairs, step by step. At the last possible moment, the boy dropped it—requiring the whole team to work another twenty-four hours to make a second bulb. When it was finished, Edison looked around, then handed it to the same boy. The gesture probably changed the boy's life. Edison knew that more than a bulb was at stake.”

—James D. Newton
The Best Things Said about Parenting,
by Bill and Nancie Carmichael

Family Progress Report

Today in the last lesson of *Too Good For Violence* for grade two, we talked about all the things we have learned. Our class has come a long way! From time to time, talk together about the progress your family has made on the way to making your home a peaceable place. A chart like the one below can help your family to stay on track and remind you of how far you've come! Write your family name in the bone and fill in the chart together. Place a star in the appropriate column in each row.

|  Our Family's Progress Report: |  Needs Practice |  Good Job |  Great Job! |
|---|--|---|--|
|  Gets along well with others | | | |
|  Knows how to pause when angry | | | |
|  Uses I-messages | | | |

Resources

Books for You

Playground Politics: Understanding the Emotional Life of Your School-Age Child, by Stanley I. Greenspan, M.D. Addison-Wesley, 1993. Dr. Greenspan is a psychologist who describes the stages of emotional development in children from the ages of five to twelve. He gives parents advice on handling it all.

Recommended Reading

Carmen and Wagner Make Friends, by Neal Starkman. Mendez Foundation, 1998. This colorful picture book features Carmen and Wagner, stars of *Too Good for Drugs* and *Too Good for Violence*. Reading it with your child is a wonderful way to reinforce what your child is learning in school and a great way to connect. To order, visit the on-line store at www.mendezfoundation.org or call (800) 750-0986.

Wonderful Websites

Kids Health: www.kidshealth.org

Kids Health is a reliable website that provides up-to-date health information for children ages birth through adolescence. It gives information and tips on how to keep children healthy and safe.

Mendez Foundation: www.mendezfoundation.org

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