

Taking Back the Streets & Sidewalks: Safe Routes to School & Violence Prevention



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- 
- Safe Routes to School programs protect kids from crime & violence
 - Potential to partner more with violence prevention advocates, with benefits for both groups
 - Lessons for Safe Routes to School in communities with high violence

What's the Problem?

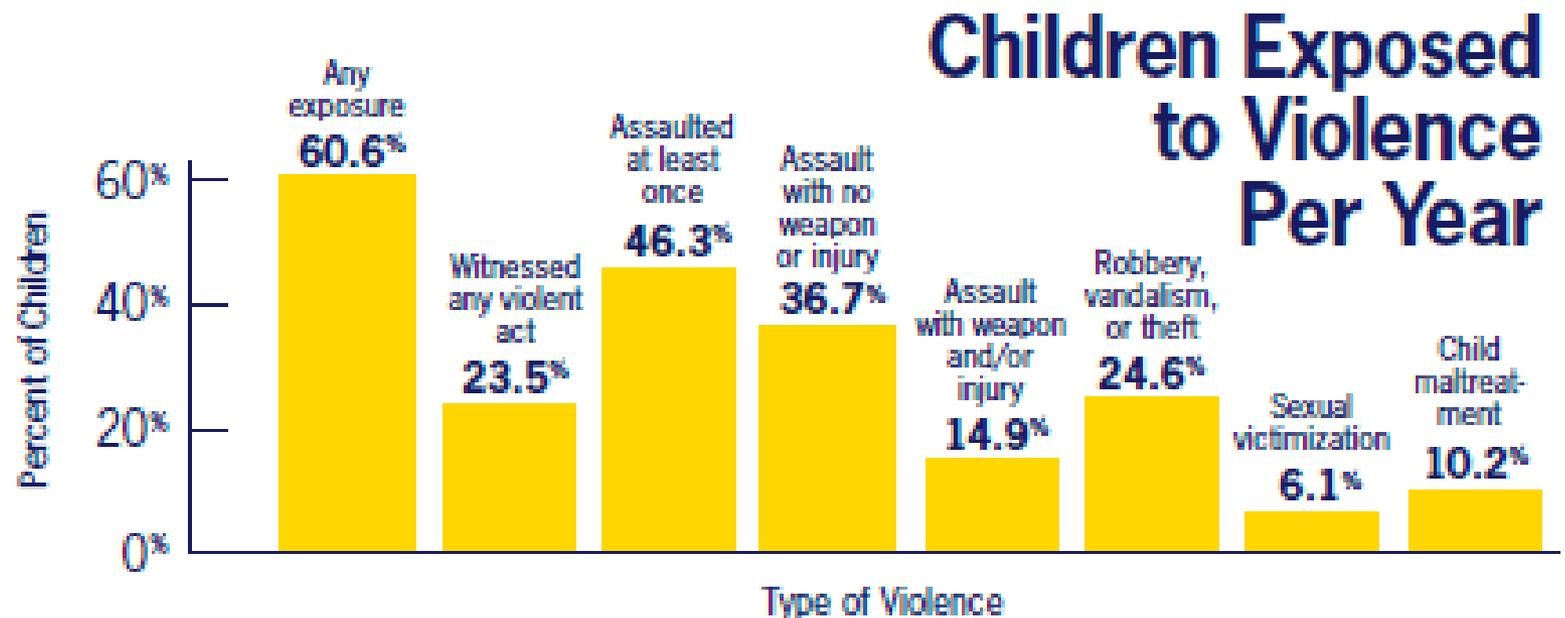
Crime and Violence on the Way to
School

Crime & Violence and the Trip to School

- Bullying
- Street harassment & sexual assault
- Physical assault & robbery
- Gang activity
- Police harassment



Overview of Children's Exposure to Violence

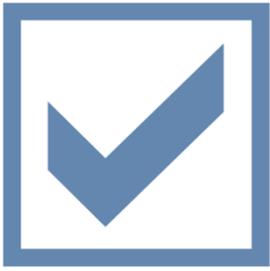


David Finkelhor et al., "Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey,"
Juvenile Justice Bulletin, October 2009



Research shows





Research shows

46% 
of children and adolescents were
assaulted at least once in the past year



Effects of Exposure to Violence

- Physical injury
- Disability
- Death
- PTSD
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Increase in risky health behaviors
- Decrease in healthy practices
- Less physical activity
- Obesity and other health consequences
- Lower academic performance (due to missed school as well as reduced ability to concentrate & learn)
- Damage to community social fabric
- Damage to economic opportunities

Factors that Affect Likelihood of Violence

- Protect from specific incidents
- Safety net



Risk Factors

INDIVIDUAL

- negative family dynamics
- missing school, academic failure
- mental illness
- unemployment
- use of drugs and alcohol
- incarceration and re-entry
- high exposure to media violence
- experiencing or witnessing violence

COMMUNITY

- poverty and economic disparity
- discrimination and oppression
- high rates of incarceration
- few economic opportunities; low levels of community participation
- low access to services
- prevalence of firearms
- prevalent sales of alcohol and drugs
- high rates of absenteeism, illiteracy, and academic failure
- unstable and substandard housing conditions
- traditional gender socialization

Resilience Factors

INDIVIDUAL

- positive attachments and relationships
- economic capital
- positive school climate
- meaningful opportunities for participation
- good physical and mental health
- social capital
- artistic and creative opportunities
- emotional and cognitive competence

COMMUNITY

- health-promoting, well-maintained built environment
- stable housing
- strong youth programming
- high-quality services and institutions
- positive ethnic, racial, and intergroup relations
- positive media and marketing
- stable economy
- positive community involvement

The Upshot

- The vast majority of kids and youth experience some level of exposure to violence
- Low income kids and kids of color are more likely to be exposed, be victims of violence, and experience more severe violence
- Exposure to violence has serious, wide-ranging effects
- **By supporting resilience factors, we can reduce the amount of violence and its effects**

**Working Together
Toward Solutions**

What Can Safe Routes Offer?

- Specific approaches that protect kids during distinct vulnerable time periods every day
- A contribution to a comprehensive approach to community safety
- Interactions with caring adults; decreases to absenteeism
- Contributing to social cohesion and community well-being
- A source of funding for efforts to reduce violence on the route to school

Safe Routes to School strategies

- Walking school buses
- Corner captains
- Safe havens
- Safe passages programs



Other Approaches

- Other youth programs
- Community oriented policing
- Crime prevention through environmental design
- Broader community

| Strategy | Connection to Six E's* | Level of Prevention | Key Implementation Partner(s) along with Routes to School and Public Health |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Safe Routes to School Basics | | | |
| Walking School Bus | Encouragement | Secondary | Schools, Parents |
| Corner Captains | Encouragement | Secondary | Schools, Parents, Community Organizations, Bus |
| Safe Havens | Encouragement | Secondary | Businesses, Community Organizations |
| Safe Passages | Encouragement, Education, Enforcement | Secondary | Schools, Parents, Community Organizations, Businesses, Law Enforcement |
| Programs Beyond the School Trip | | | |
| | Encouragement | Primary | Schools, Community Organizations |
| | Education | Primary | Schools, Community Organizations |
| | | | Community Organizations |
| | | | ment, Community Orga |



Takeaways



- Safe Routes to School resources & know how can benefit existing violence prevention efforts
- Understanding dangers and violence prevention can make Safe Routes to School programs more effective
- Collaborate for safer kids and healthier communities



Report

Available in
early July





Safe Routes
to School
**National
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