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What Can I Do

To Support Children and Youth in My Neighborhood Community

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As a community member or neighbor, you might not know how to support children who are experiencing stress and violence – but would like to enrich your neighborhood to be a safe place for children to grow, learn and play. Research tells us that when neighborhoods are connected - when residents experience a sense of place and belonging – safety is promoted and violence can be prevented. Here are some ideas that promote safer neighborhoods. Remember...even something small can be the start of something big!

- Spend time outside on your porch, in your yard, in the space in front of your apartment or home - be a safe and visible neighbor. Say hello when children and families pass by.
- Get to know the children on your block. What are their names and how old are they? If you see them in an unsafe situation, pay attention and decide how to be a supportive bystander. Should you speak with their parents or them? Do their parents need a phone number to a local resource? If you don't know what to do, call a relevant local agency and ask for advice, or connect with other neighbors. Example: "I saw Tina out last night at 2am when I was letting my dog out. I think she's only 12. Do you know if her parents have rules about her curfew? I want to be supportive in case she was in an unsafe situation." OR "Hey, Tina. Do your parents (use their names if you know them) know you are out right now? Do you need help?"
- Advocate with your neighborhood association for features that create safer, more connected neighborhoods: more street lights, more green spaces or trees, safe places to play like basketball courts and playgrounds.
- Attend the neighborhood events in your community and get to know people. If your neighborhood doesn't have local events, think about the ones you would like to start! Celebrations of culture, food, and holidays can be positive experiences for children and youth. Even a small block party can be a great community experience.
- Consider hosting a small library in front of your home or apartment, with children's books and young adult literature to be shared and exchanged.
- Pick up litter and trash on your street
- If there is a community garden in your neighborhood, consider growing flowers or vegetables and share with your neighbors if you can.
- If you have children who attend your neighborhood school (this is great for creating connected neighborhoods!), try walking them to school once in a while if you can. Encourage connection with neighbors by saying hello and introducing your children.
- If you walk your dog in your neighborhood, notice your neighbors and say hello, pay attention to new things.

Be an adult who cares.

