



# Too Good for Violence Home Workout

For Parents and Kids

Grade 4

**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 and stories.

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 get along well with others and resolve conflicts in peaceful ways.

Thank you for your interest and help in teaching the skills to help us all live without violence. 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,

**“Yes, we are all different. Different customs, different foods, different mannerisms, languages, but not so different that we cannot get along with one another... If we will disagree without being disagreeable.”**

— J. Martin Kohe

## Relationships Make a Difference

Warm family relationships help to protect children from violence and many other risky behaviors. To build healthy relationships in your family:

- Tell your children you love them.
- Show affection every day with a hug, a kiss or a touch.
- Make time for your family to play together.
- Meet your children’s friends – positive influences from friends are important.
- Reward your children for good behavior and for jobs they have done well.
- Set clear rules for behavior.
- Monitor your children’s activities.
- Teach that there are consequences for inappropriate behavior.

*From the Virginia Department of Health and the Children’s Safety Network*

## Something important...



It is important to discuss within your family how we can reduce violence in our communities and in our lives. In discussions with your children, remind them of things they can do to help reduce violence and reduce their chances of becoming involved in an incidence of violence. Some suggestions are:

- Use words to settle arguments and conflicts.
- If others are arguing, don’t stand around and watch. Sometimes an audience makes the conflict get louder and stronger.
- If you see someone in school being bullied, report it to an adult in the school.
- Report any crime to parents or school authorities.
- Hang out with friends who are against violence and drugs.
- Don’t use alcohol or other drugs.
- Set a good example for younger children so they can learn how to avoid drugs and violence.

In our first lesson, we talked about how we wanted to live peaceably with one another. We also discussed conflict and how conflicts happen all the time. The idea is to learn to solve conflicts peacefully. Within your family, talk about how you can solve conflicts and list some possible ways of dealing with a conflict. List those that are peaceful and those that are not peaceful. See how many you can think of as a family together.

## **Ways of Dealing With a Conflict**

<b>PEACEFUL</b>	<b>NOT PEACEFUL</b>
<i>talk it over</i>	<i>yell</i>

Discuss ways of solving specific conflicts in your family using peaceful ways of responding. Each family has certain conflicts that may come up more frequently. See if you can think of ways to solve these conflicts peacefully.

# Resources

### **A Book for Parents**

*And Words Can Hurt Forever*, by James Garbarino and Ellen deLara. Free Press, 2002. How to protect adolescents from bullying, harrassment, and emotional violence.

### **To Read With Your Child**

*Bullies are a Pain in the Brain*, by Trevor Romain. Free Spirit Publishing, 1997. A serious yet humorous guide to dealing with bullies.

### **Wonderful Websites**

Safe Child Home Page: [www.safechild.org](http://www.safechild.org)

This helpful site addresses all types of safety issues, giving practical ideas and information. It has specific areas devoted to bullying. Parents and teachers can find information on bullies and children who become targets of bullies.

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 T-shirts and pencils by visiting the on-line store.

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In our *Too Good For Violence* lesson today, we learned to listen respectfully to others' opinions. We practiced paraphrasing (restating what the other person said in our own words) before stating our own opinions. Restating or paraphrasing shows the other person that we understand and respect their point of view, even if we disagree.

You can help your child to learn this important skill by playing a game called Paraphrase Passport. The passport below will be your ticket to talk.

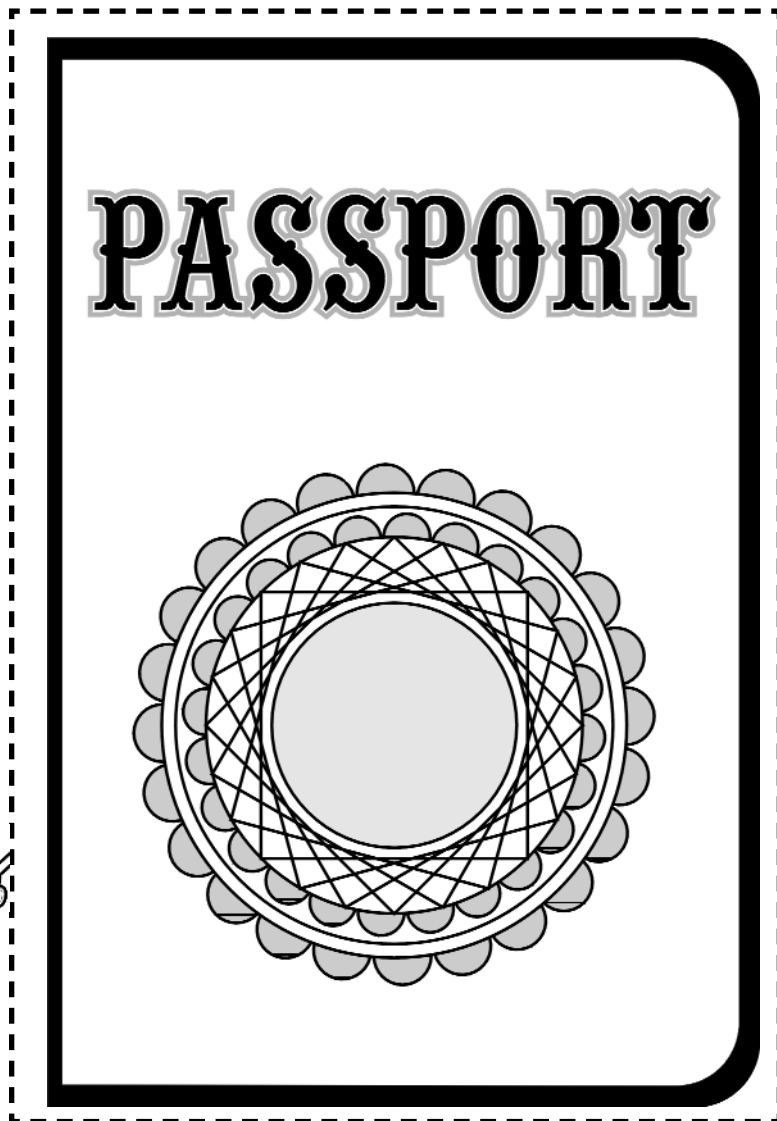
Choose a topic on which you have different opinions. Some possible examples are given below. While holding the passport, Speaker 1 should take a stand on the topic while Speaker 2 listens respectfully. Before expressing a different opinion, Speaker 2 must paraphrase (restate) Speaker 1's opinion. If the paraphrase was correct AND respectful, Speaker 1 should pass the passport to Speaker 2, who may then express a different opinion.

1. Schools should not have windows because...
2. Girls and boys should go to different schools because...
3. Students should be paid for making good grades because...

***No interruptions,  
put-downs or  
eye-rolls, please!***



*Cut this passport out  
along the dotted line.*



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Today in our *Too Good For Violence* lesson, we talked about communication roadblocks: **blaming, threatening, name calling** and **exaggerating**. In a conflict, these common roadblocks can keep you from reaching a solution. You can help your child learn to avoid these roadblocks by doing this activity together.

Read the conflict below and identify the roadblocks together. Draw a line from the statement to the communication roadblock(s) that are keeping the two brothers from solving the problem.

## The Conflict

**Nathan and his brother Tony like different TV shows that come on at the same time. Their family has one television and one VCR.**

**NATHAN:** I want to watch Rollo Raiders tonight. You ALWAYS hog the TV. You NEVER let me watch the shows I like.

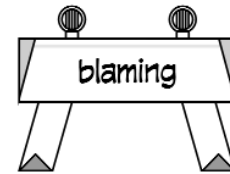
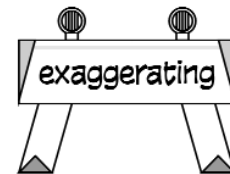
**TONY:** No, we're watching the Shorty Stone Show. If you change the channel, I'LL SMASH YOUR FACE.

**NATHAN:** You IDIOT! If we fight about it, Mom won't let us watch anything. That's what happened last week!

**TONY:** Don't blame me. It's YOUR FAULT Mom wouldn't let us watch TV last week. YOU STARTED IT!

**MOM:** Boys, I want you to settle this conflict peacefully. That means no yelling or fighting. If you talk it out together, I'm sure you can find a way to solve your problem.

**Which Roadblock is in the way of a solution?**



*On the back of this page, rewrite the story to help the brothers get from the problem to a solution that works for both of them. Remember to avoid the communication roadblocks!*

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In our *Too Good For Violence* course, we are learning how conflicts escalate, or grow larger, and how they de-escalate, or become smaller.

Conflicts start small, but when people raise their voices and show their angry feelings in their faces and bodies, conflicts begin to escalate. When people call each other names, push and shove, hit or threaten to use weapons, conflicts get even bigger and more dangerous.

It is important to de-escalate a conflict, or to cause it to get smaller and calmer, *before* it gets big and dangerous. You can help your child remember how to de-escalate a conflict by working together to complete the word puzzle below. Unscramble the words below the blanks to complete the sentences that show you ways to de-escalate a conflict.

## The Conflict De-escalator J U M B L E

To de-escalate a conflict, \_\_\_\_\_ your voice.  
(1. rolew)

\_\_\_\_\_ your face and \_\_\_\_\_.  
(2. larex) (3. doby)

Call the other person by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(4. anem)

Use I-\_\_\_\_\_.  
(5. gasseems)

De-escalating usually keeps a conflict from getting \_\_\_\_\_.  
(6. swero)

Start de-escalating while the \_\_\_\_\_ is small.  
(7. focclint)

Answers : 1. lower 2. relax 3. body 4. name 5. messages 6. worse 7. conflict

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In our Too Good For Violence lesson today, we discussed strategies for dealing with a bully. You can help your child by brainstorming safe and effective things to do and say if someone bullies him or her. Encourage your child to report bullying.

Each sentence below tells about a bullying behavior. Read each sentence with your child and talk about what the target could do or say. On the lines after each sentence, write an effective, non-violent response. The strategies we learned today include:

- Try to be their friend.
- Tell them to stop.
- Ignore them.
- Avoid them.
- Tell a parent or teacher.



Alex threw Joey's books into a mud puddle three days in a row.

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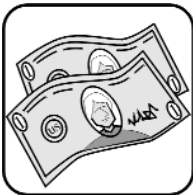
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Whenever the teacher wasn't looking, Ricardo grabbed Dan's sandwich and took a bite.

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Roland told Jenny that if she didn't hand over her lunch money, she'd be sorry.

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Ask your child to name two trusted adults he or she can talk to about bullying.

1.

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2.

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**Role play what to do if your child is a target of bullying:  
stay calm, stand tall and speak up!**

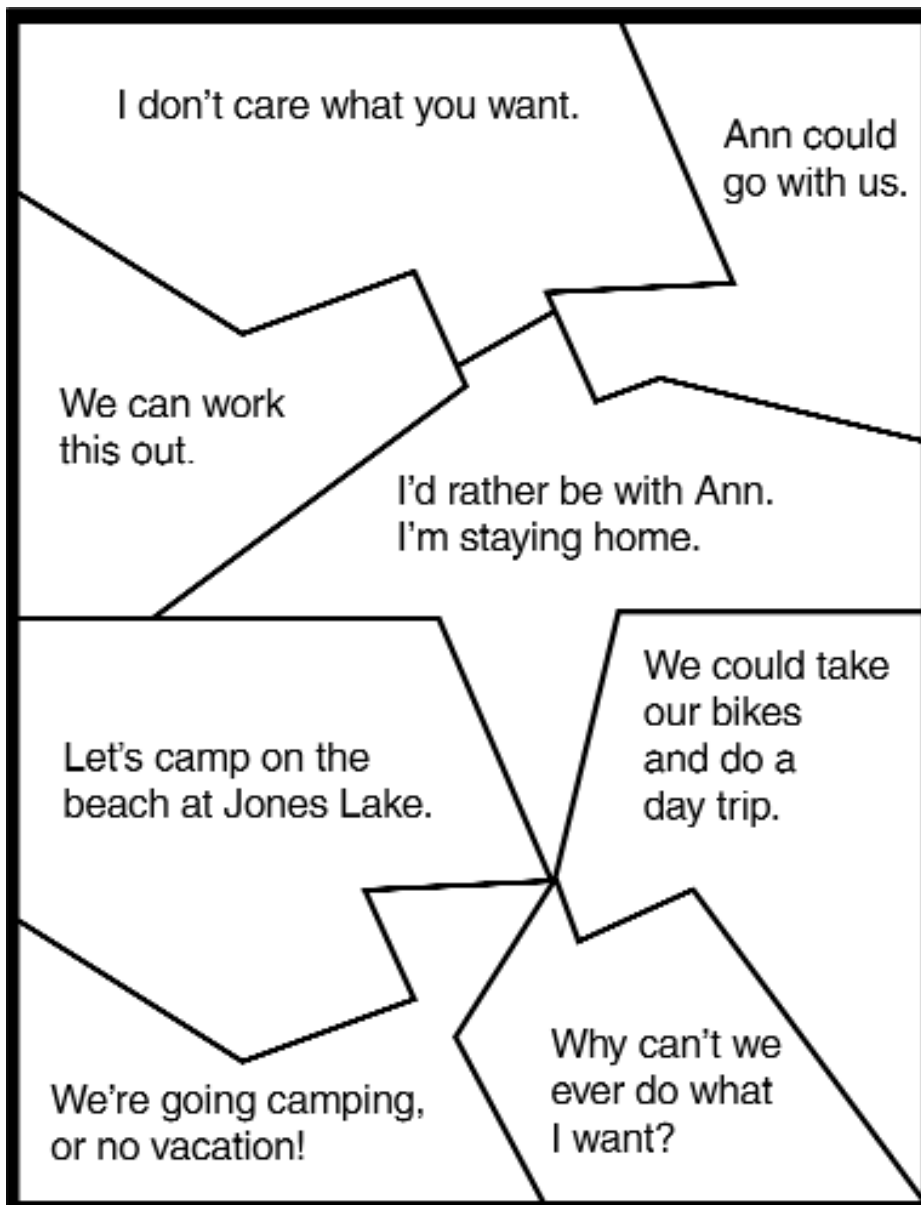
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*In our Too Good For Violence lesson today, we discovered that cooperating makes it easier to solve conflicts, while competing makes it harder. You can help your child to learn this important skill by doing this activity together. Read about the family conflict. Cut out the puzzle pieces. Read the statement on each puzzle piece. Throw the competitive statements away. Use the cooperative statements to complete the puzzle. When completed, the puzzle forms a square.*

The Kings had a conflict about their family vacation. Dad wanted to go camping. Mom wanted to go to the beach. Tom wanted a biking trip, and Sue wanted to be with her friend Ann.



***When you have family conflicts, instead of competing against each other, cooperate to solve the problem!***

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## Things Families Can Do to Help Schools Stay Safe

- Inform the school of potential problems.
- Encourage children to report threats, bullying or harassment.
- Volunteer to help supervise at school and school-sponsored events.
- Establish a positive culture.
- Learn about and report warning signs of violent behavior.
- Participate in school safety councils.
- Visit your child's school often.
- Model peaceful conflict resolution at home.

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*Todo el mundo sonríe en el mismo idioma.*  
(All the world smiles in the same language)  
**A Mexican Proverb**

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## 10 Ways to Help Children Deal with Anger

1. Encourage children to “use their words” to express their feelings. If a child expresses anger disrespectfully, say, “It’s okay for you to be angry with me, but it’s not okay for you to talk to me that way.”
2. Show children that you’re listening and that you understand by repeating some of what they said: “It sounds like you feel angry that I won’t let you see that movie.”
3. Discuss their reasons for feeling angry. Anger is a secondary emotion, often caused by hurt, disappointment, jealousy or frustration: “It’s frustrating when you aren’t allowed to do something you want to do.”
4. Let them cool off. Put a younger child in Time Out, and suggest that an older child take time to calm down.
5. Recommend exercise to use up anger energy.
6. Have them take a deep breath.
7. Suggest ways to relax, like a warm bath or quiet music.
8. Distract them.
9. Suggest they draw a picture or write a letter to express their feelings.
10. Share some ways you have learned to handle your own anger.



Adapted from *Bullies & Victims*, by Suellen and Paula Fried



*“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”*  
*Benjamin Franklin*

Observing conflict in a variety of situations helps kids to think about the choices they have in handling their own conflicts. While watching TV with your child, talk about the conflicts you see. Together, fill in the chart below.

## Really Watching Your TV

Program Title \_\_\_\_\_

WHO is involved in the conflict?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT is the problem?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WHEN did the conflict happen?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HOW could they have handled it differently?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WHERE did the conflict happen?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HOW would that affect the story?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Resources

### **A Book for Parents**

*Emotionally Intelligent Parenting: How to Raise a Self-Disciplined, Responsible, Socially Skilled Child*, by Maurice J. Elias, Steven E. Tobias and Brian S. Friedlander. Three Rivers Press, 2000.

### **To Read With Your Child**

*How to Handle Bullies, Teasers and Other Meanies: A Book That Takes the Nuisance Out of Name Calling and Other Nonsense*, by Kate Cohen-Posey. Rainbow Books, 1995.

### **Wonderful Websites**

Violence/Kids/Crisis: [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

On this website, the National PTA gives violence prevention tips for parents and children to use at home, at school and in the community.

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

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