

THE #TEACHEARLY PLAYBOOK

Help the young men in your life build healthy, non-violent relationships by teaching them early about the importance of respect, particularly for women. In this playbook you'll find tips, facts, and teachable moments to help you talk about healthy relationships with the kids in your life.

Maybe you don't think it's necessary to talk about it. We often hear, "well, I'm not violent, so I never thought to have a conversation with my kids about what a healthy relationship looks like." What's important to remember is that young people are getting messages on what to think and how to act all the time—from you, their peers, the media, other adults in their life, and more.

Talking about respect for women is important and will build a solid foundation for positive attitudes and relationships in the years to come.

Let's get started!



Top Ten Plays for Teaching Kids and Teens that Violence Never Equals Strength

1. TALK OPENLY.

Encourage open, honest, and thoughtful reflection about relationships. Allow kids—especially boys—to express their ideas and expectations for the relationships in their life. Be careful not to dismiss their ideas as “wrong” or “childish.” Rather, encourage dialogue—this will help them come to their own understanding through your guidance.

2. TAKE A CLEAR STAND.

Make sure young people know how YOU feel about disrespect, use of abusive or inappropriate language, controlling behavior, or any forms of violence. If you were exposed to violence as you were growing up, try to recognize how that might be affecting your relationships. Know that there are resources available to help you heal and overcome some of the negative things you may be feeling.

3. BE SENSITIVE BUT FIRM.

We know raising kids isn't easy—especially when it comes to helping him or her navigate their way through relationships. To be effective, you will need to prepare, not scare, kids about the relationships they may encounter. Respect differences of opinion and realize that the decisions you make will sometimes be unpopular with them. But, remember that they're always watching you—even if you don't realize it.

4. UNDERSTAND THE PRESSURE AND THE RISKS THAT TEENS FACE.

Preteens and young teens, in particular, face new and increasing pressures about sex, substance abuse, bullying and dating. While they may not express it, young teens want to have their parents and role models take the time to listen—and help them sift through situations that they face.

5. MAKE THE MOST OF “TEACHABLE MOMENTS.”

Use television episodes, movies, music lyrics, news, sports heroes, or the experiences of friends to discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships. If a professional athlete is found guilty of abusing a woman, for example, take the time to reinforce the message that even famous people are responsible for their actions.

Top Ten Plays for Teaching Kids and Teens that Violence Never Equals Strength

(continued from page 1)

6. **KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'BYSTANDER' AND 'UPSTANDER.'**

Teach young people how to speak up when they see or hear something that's not ok. They may defend their silence by explaining that they don't want to be a "snitch" or get involved. Explain that there are often safe ways to call out bad behavior, and that the lack of action can sometimes lead to even greater dangerous outcomes and abuses.

7. **ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE.**

Conversations about relationships do not need to focus solely on risky, negative behavior. Take time to give positive feedback, too, when they make healthy choices in their dealings with friends and family.

8. **YOUR LANGUAGE MATTERS.**

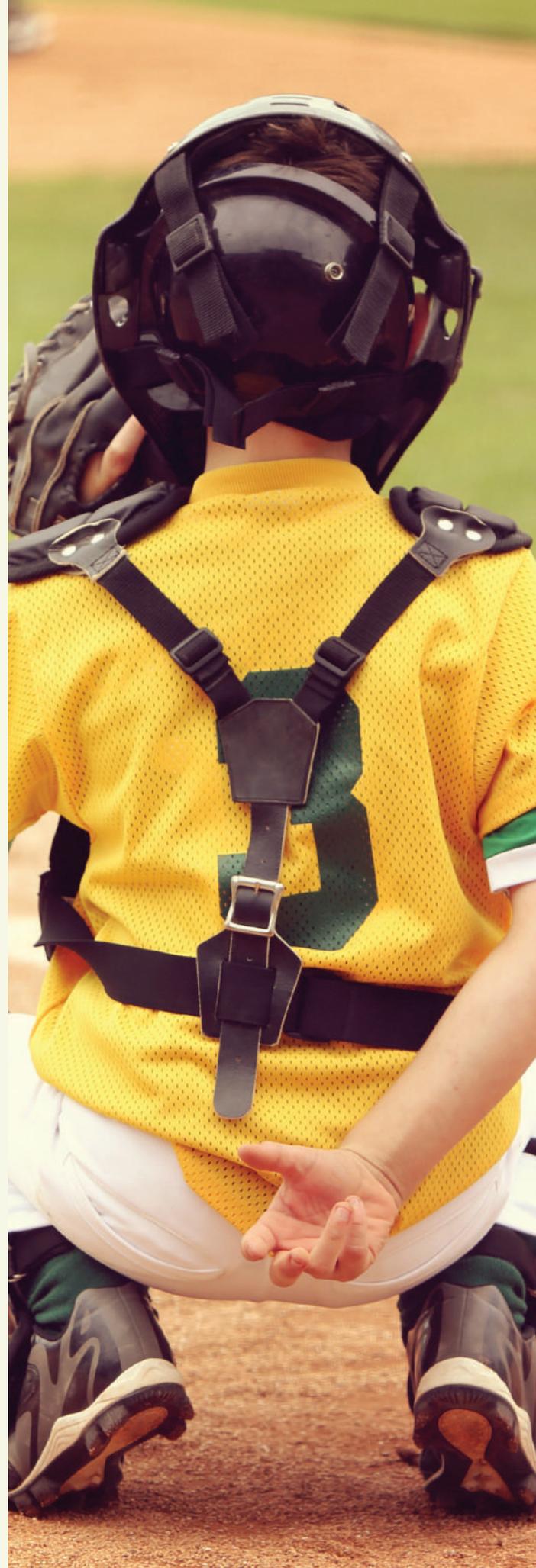
If kids hear you using slang or pejorative terms to describe women (e.g., babes, bitches, etc), they are very likely to model your behavior and your vocabulary. Put-downs and derogatory jokes may seem harmless, but in the grand scheme of things, they're not. Do your best to respect women and girls with language that is empathetic, positive, and appropriate.

9. **NO MEANS NO.**

Pressuring someone to do something they don't want to do is not ok. This applies to both in-person situations, as well as digital correspondence. Teach young people that forcing someone to send provocative, embarrassing, or nude photos is wrong.

10. **BE PREPARED TO MAKE MISTAKES.**

You will make mistakes. Accept that, but continue to help young people make responsible, smart choices while trying to maintain that delicate balance of being sensitive, but firm.



So what's the difference between healthy and abusive relationships?

Healthy, Respectful Relationships

- Based on equality and mutual respect.
- Power is balanced.
- While there may be conflict, there is no fear, no threats, and no violence.
- Each partner feels accepted; has opinions, friends, and interests; and is free to pursue activities outside the relationship.

Unhealthy, Abusive Relationships

- Characterized by hurtful and violent behaviors, intimidation, and coercion.
- One partner wants to make all the decisions and is demanding and controlling.
- Threats as well as physical and sexual assaults, even when they occur infrequently, keep the victim fearful of potential violence.
- Over time the victim loses self-confidence and supportive relationship with friends and family.



Tips for Continuing the Conversation

Parents, caregivers, and mentors often express discomfort about broaching these topics with their 11- to 14-year-olds because they don't think their children are ready for these conversations. Some say they are waiting for their children to bring up these issues.

The truth is, you may be waiting a long time or it may never come.

It helps if you can find the right language to have proactive conversations about healthy relationships, creating a comfort level.

Here are some questions and conversations starters for talking to kids and teens about violence:

- What does an abusive relationship look like or sound like to you? What about positive and healthy ones?
- Have you ever worried that a friend of yours is being treated badly in a relationship?
- Have you ever been in a similar situation?
- What would you do if you felt uncomfortable, controlled, pressured, or threatened?

Here are some suggested talking points:

Abuse or violence in a relationship doesn't just mean physical abuse. It can include using hurtful language, or even technology to control, pressure or threaten someone. It's NEVER okay for anyone to use pressure, control or threats in a relationship.

In a healthy relationship there should be respect, safety, support, individuality, fairness and equality, acceptance, honesty and trust, communication and - it should be fun.

If you ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe in a relationship, there are people who care and can help like me (or another trusted adult like a teacher or counselor).

If you ever see abuse or hear that it's happening to a friend, please let me know—or tell another adult you trust immediately.

Warning Signs of an Abusive or Unhealthy Relationship

Don't fool yourself. Both middle school and high school kids are experiencing a variety of physical and emotional changes during this time of their life, but they may not want to tell you about it.

Do your part—know the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship. Be on the lookout if your child displays any of these potential signs:

Do you notice the young person in your life:

- Spending less time with family and friends?
- Excessive text messaging, phone calling, emailing or visiting with their boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Giving up things that used to be important to her/him?
- Have declining grades or missing school?
- Being pressured by a girlfriend/boyfriend about what to do, where to go, or what to wear?
- Worried about upsetting her/his boyfriend/girlfriend?
- Apologizing or making excuses for her/his boyfriend's/girlfriend's behavior?
- Has injuries he/she tries to cover up or can't explain?





If your teen isn't ready to openly communicate with you about his or her relationship, let him or her know there are confidential resources and trained individuals available to answer questions and help avoid unhealthy relationships. Pass on the information below, but let your teen know you are always available to talk.

Love is Respect

866-331-9474

866-331-8453 TTY

www.loveisrespect.org

**National Domestic
Violence Hotline**

800-799-SAFE (7233)

800-787-3224 TTY

www.ndvh.org

**Rape, Abuse & Incest National
Network (RAINN) Hotline**

800-656-HOPE (4673)

www.rainn.org

If at any time you feel that you or your teen are in immediate danger, call 911.



A special thanks to our partners

