



## Deprived backgrounds

**Pupils coming from violent and dangerous families**



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### Classroom-based tips (focus on instructional methods)

1. Create a safe and low-stress environment that promotes respect, and helps any pupil exposed to domestic violence feel secure and appreciated in the school context.
2. **Teach and reward non-violent conflict-resolution and cooperation.**
3. **Establish simple rules and routines so that pupils exposed to domestic violence know what to expect.** For example, give advance notice of upcoming lessons, events or activities that may touch on difficult experiences.
4. **Provide positive experiences and activities to promote security, self-esteem and learning;** assist pupils to recognise their strengths and to experience success.
5. **Repeat information as needed in a calm manner.**
6. **Use cooperative learning strategies** that allow for more immediate feedback, occasions to share, and small group learning opportunities.
7. **Allow pupils to naturally express themselves** through talk, play and written assignments.
8. **Give straightforward explanations where possible for things that may trigger worry or anxiety,** such as sirens, or the presence of police in school.
9. **Increase positive connections to school.** For example, try to find a match between pupils' interests and strengths and the course you are teaching through a special assignment or class project.

[Reference: Baker, L., Jaffe, P., Ashbourne, L., Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, A Teacher's Handbook to Increase Understanding and Improve Community Responses, Sponsored by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, 2002, p. 11]



### School-based practical tips (focus on instructional methods)

#### Community

**Build relationships** with shelters, legal advocacy programs, counselling services, police services and NGOs dealing with domestic violence protection and prevention. This way, the school can provide accurate information to families about possible solutions to the situation faced at home.

## Educational visits / field trips / camps / school exchanges / trips abroad

**Organise school activities and programs** that provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for pupils facing violence at home

## Other: Family Counselling

**Organise counselling programs** that range from vocational skills training to substance abuse counselling.

## Other: Assessment of Individual Pupil's Needs

**Diagnose and assess a variety of issues or conditions**, including academic, learning, behaviour, health, and social adjustment problems.

## Parents / Parents Associations

- 1. Inform all staff, pupils and their families of the law(s) and relevant procedures that the school is obliged to follow** in case it is detected, suspected or reported that a child or children attending the school experience violent behaviours at home. Implement these procedures whenever necessary.
- 2. Organise counselling programs** that range from vocational skills training to substance abuse counselling.
- 3. Arrange meetings between the parents and specialised staff** such as school psychologists to discuss pupils' progress and to tackle any problems they are facing in their development.
- 4. Build relationships** with shelters, legal advocacy programs, counselling services, police services and NGOs dealing with domestic violence protection and prevention. This way, the school can provide accurate information to families about possible solutions to the situation faced at home.

## Safety

**Organise school activities and programs** that provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for pupils facing violence at home.

## School Celebrations / Events / Activities

**Organise school activities and programs** that provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for pupils facing violence at home.

## School projects

**Organise school activities and programs** that provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for pupils facing violence at home.

## Pupil Support

1. **Create a safe, supportive school climate**, for example by setting school-wide behavioural expectations and values, positive interventions and support mechanisms, and psychological and counselling services.
2. **Inform all staff, pupils and their families of the law(s) and relevant procedures that the school is obliged to follow** in case it is detected, suspected or reported that a child or children attending the school experience violent behaviours at home. Implement these procedures whenever necessary.
3. **Organise school activities and programs** that provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for pupils facing violence at home.

## Teacher Professional Development

1. **Inform all staff, pupils and their families of the law(s) and relevant procedures that the school is obliged to follow** in case it is detected, suspected or reported that a child or children attending the school experience violent behaviours at home. Implement these procedures whenever necessary.
2. **Provide training for teachers**, such as educational psychology training related to the main difficulties that pupils belonging to violent families may encounter in their schooling.
3. **Diagnose and assess a variety of issues or conditions**, including academic, learning, behaviour, health, and social adjustment problems.

## Supportive Literature

**Domestic violence** refers to the abuse and/or assault of children or adolescents by their parents, or adults by their intimate partners. The term is used interchangeably with intimate partner abuse and inter-parental violence. Battering is often used to refer to domestic violence or frequent and severe abuse.

**Children exposed to domestic violence** “refers to children and adolescents seeing, hearing or being aware of violence against one parent figure that is perpetrated by another parent figure. It is used interchangeably with children living with violence.” (Baker, Jaffe, Ashbourne, Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, A Teacher’s Handbook to Increase Understanding and Improve Community Responses, p. 3)

### Domestic violence

- “occurs in all age, racial, socio-economic, educational, occupational and religious groups;
- occurs within an intimate relationship;
- typically involves repetitive behaviour including different types of abuse – physical assault, psychological, emotional and economic abuse, and abuse of children;
- is used to intimidate, humiliate or frighten victims as a systematic way of maintaining power and control over them;”

### Signs a pupil is having difficulties as a consequence of domestic violence:

- “physical complaints;
- tiredness;
- constant worry about possible danger and/or the safety of loved ones;
- sadness and/or withdrawal from others and activities
- low self-esteem and lack of confidence, especially for trying new things (including academic tasks);
- difficulty in paying attention in class;
- outbursts of anger directed toward peers, teachers or self;
- bullying.”

[Reference: L. Baker, P. Jaffe, L. Ashbourne, Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, A Teacher’s Handbook to Increase Understanding and Improve Community Responses, p. 9]

### Useful Websites

Domestic Violence and Violence Related Research Resources

<http://www.growing.com/nonviolent/research/dvlinks.htm>

Unicef Innocenti Research Centre Digest no 6 June-2000

<http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/pdf/digest6e.pdf>

Classroom Behaviour

<https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/the-effects-of-violence-on-academic-progress-and-classroom-behavior.pdf?sfvrsn=12>

The effect of family violence on children's academic performance and behavior:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2625936/>

State of Domestic Violence in the South of Europe:

<http://www.apav.pt/home.html>

Domestic Violence:

<http://www.domesticviolenceroundtable.org/effect-on-children.html>

### References

Baker, L., Jaffe, P., Ashbourne, L., 2002, Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, A Teacher’s Handbook to Increase Understanding and Improve Community Responses, Sponsored by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Crosson-Tower, C., 2003, The Role of Educators in Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect, CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT-USER MANUAL SERIES, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families Children’s Bureau Office on Child Abuse and Neglect

Crosson-Tower, C., 2002, When children are abused: An educator’s guide to intervention (pp. vii–viii). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon

Farrell AD, Bruce SE, 1992, Impact of exposure to community violence on violent behavior and emotional distress among urban adolescents. J Clin Child Psychology, 26:2. [PubMed]

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