

**Preventative Programs With  
Families:  
Adults and Children Together  
(ACT)  
Raising Safe Kids**



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# ACT RAISING SAFE KIDS (formerly ACT Against Violence)

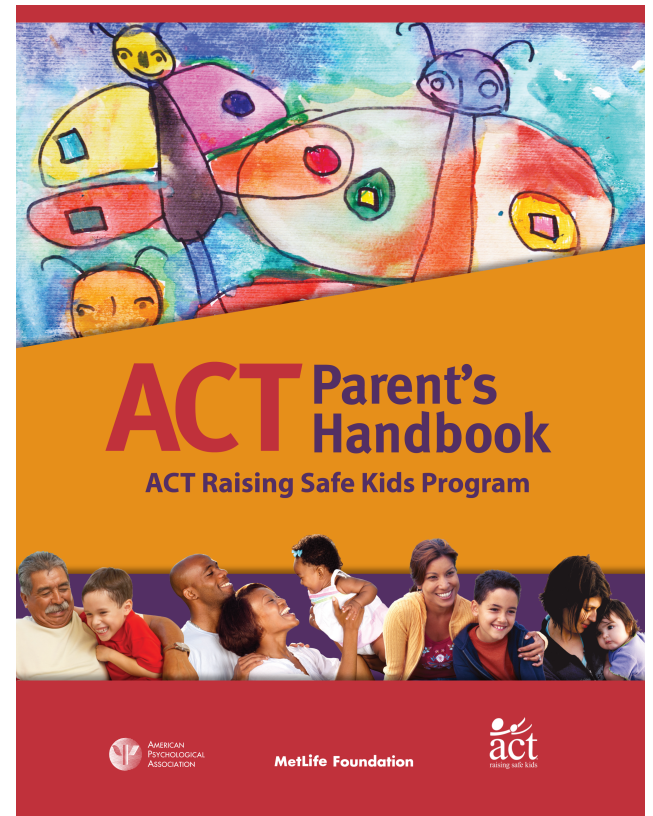
- Designed for parents and caregivers of children from **birth to 8 years old**.
- Created in **2001** by the American Psychological Association (**APA**)
- In partnership with the National Association for Education of Young Children (**NAEYC**)
- Represents more than 200 years combined research and experience about **raising young children**

# Program Rationale

- Violent behavior is largely **learned**—often early in life
- Violence **prevention** can be learned—starting early in life
- Adults shape the **learning environment** for young children
- Adults can learn how to **model and teach** young children constructive ways to cope with anger, frustration, and conflict

**ACT RAISING SAFE KIDS is an  
evidence-informed, primary  
prevention program.**

**And kids do come  
with instructions!**



# Improving Parenting Skills in 4 Critical Areas

- Child Development
- Anger Management
- Media Awareness & Literacy
- Discipline & Social Problem Solving

# One Program – Two Parts

## Parent/Caregiver Part

- 16 hour curriculum conducted over 8 weeks plus a pre-session orientation & evaluation survey
- Maximum 20 in a Group
  - Moms, Dads, Couples, Grandparents, Pre-School Teachers
- Easily adapted to schools, pre-schools, social service agencies, court appointed classes, prison inmates
- Available in English & Spanish



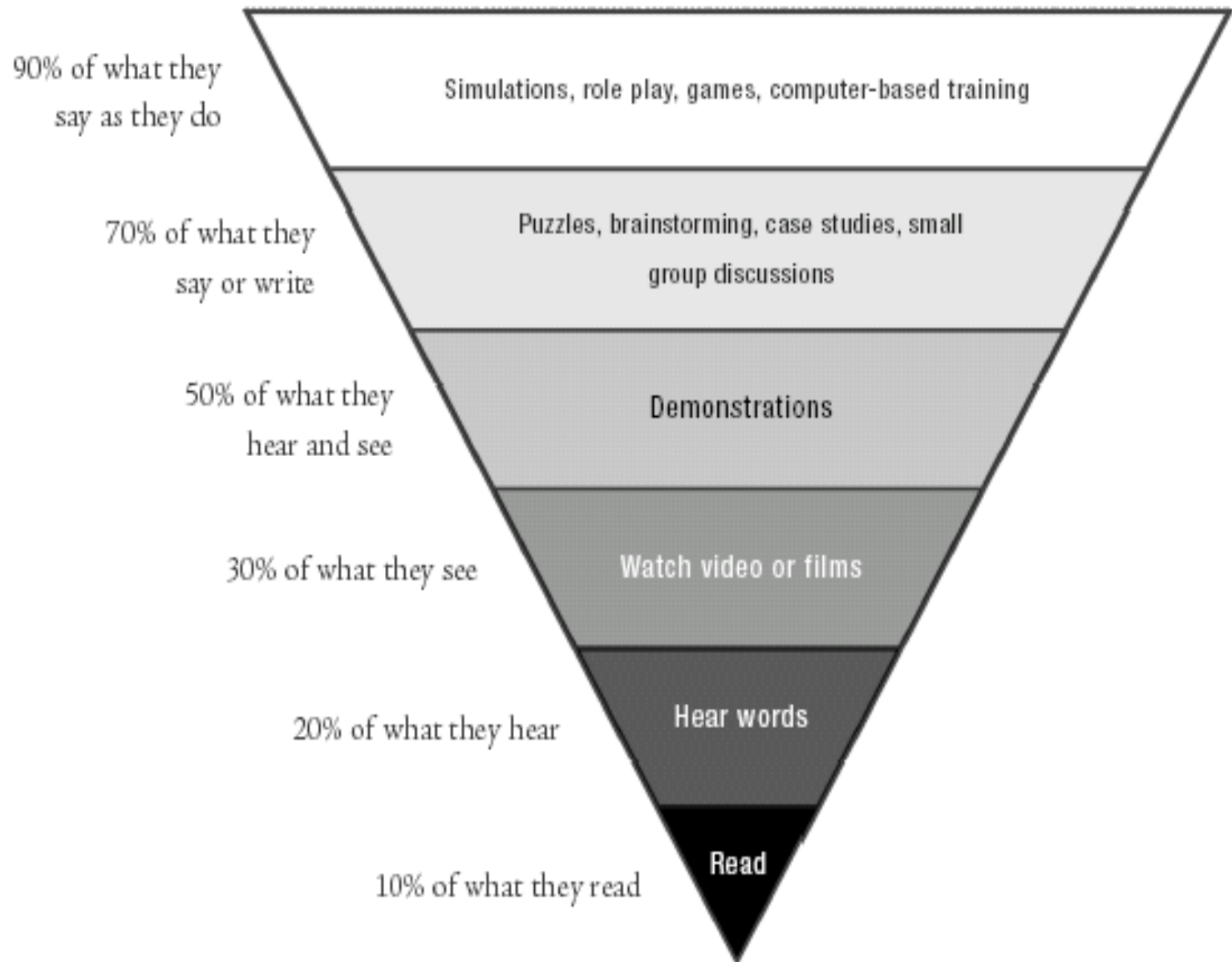
# One Program – Two Parts

## ACT Facilitator Part

- 14 hour workshop conducted over 2 days
- Maximum 20 in a Group
- Includes ACT Facilitator Manual, Parent Handbook, Children's Activity Guide, Motivation Interviewing Guide, booklets and DVD with reproducible materials
- Interactive learning, small groups, demonstrations, role playing
- Certification required



*People generally remember:*





## What are children's basic needs?

- o Feel safe, loved, nurtured, protected, accepted
- o Have strong stable relationship with parents
- o Have sense of trust in those who raise and care for them
- o Receive positive attention and love
- o Trust that basic physical needs will be met



# Why is it important to learn child development?

- ❑ To know what children can do and understand at different ages
- ❑ To better understand the reasons for the child's behaviors
- ❑ To learn what you can expect of a child

To be more realistic and calm down!



# How can children be involved with violence?



Aggressors



Witnesses



Victims

## Why Do Children Misbehave?

Because

- They are still learning
- They don't behave like adults
- They are exploring the environment and their limits



Typical children misbehave one third of the time!



## React is...

When we act  
based on  
feelings without  
thinking

## Respond is...

When we take  
time, calm down,  
think about the  
situation and  
what the best  
action is

## What are the forms of violence?

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect



# Roots and Consequences of Violence

act  
against violence

## How can children become aggressive?

Aggressive behavior, as any other behavior, is the result of a combination of individual factors and factors in the family, community, and society.

### Individual Factors

Temperament, biological genes, birth complications, attention deficit, exposure to mother's drug use

### Family Factors

Lack of parental supervision; being abused by parents; depressed parents; domestic violence; parenting style; access to arms; too many violent TV shows and video games

### Community Factors

Belonging to a gang; drug trade in the neighborhood; isolation; access arms; violence in the neighborhood; poor housing

### Societal Factors

Violence in the media; access to weapons; discrimination; poverty



# What to Do When You Are Angry

1. Think before acting
2. Calm down
3. Use the **RETHINK** Steps:





**R**ecognize what makes you angry.

**E**mpathize with the other person's feelings.

**T**hink of positive things about the situation.

**H**ear what the other person is saying to you.

**I**nclude "I" messages to tell how you feel.

**N**otice what happens to your body.

**K**ee your attention on the present situation.



# What Parents Can Do When Children Are Angry and Fight

1. Help children calm down
2. Help children express their feelings
3. Teach the IDEAL model
4. Teach by example

# The IDEAL Model

**I**dentify the problem and the feelings of everybody involved in the conflict.

**D**etermine possible alternative solutions.

**E**valuate the alternative solutions.

**A**ct, choosing the best solution.

**L**earn from what you did to solve the conflict.

# Why Are Children Spending So Much Time With Media?

- Allow time for parents to do chores
- Quiets children down; they are **safe**
- Parents have time for themselves
- Multiple equipment means fewer sibling hassles, and parents can watch their own shows



# Impact of Media Violence on Children

- Makes children more aggressive
- Increases fearfulness and mistrust
- Make children accept violence and be more tolerant of the suffering of victims
- Provides violent heroes for young children to imitate
- Creates more appetite for more viewing of violence and more extreme violence
- Makes disrespectful behavior an accepted way for people to treat each other



# Some Facts About Media Violence

- 60% of cartoons and children's shows contain violence
- Children are exposed to 20-25 acts of violence per hour on Saturday morning TV
- By the end of elementary school, they will have seen approximately 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence

# What Families Should Teach Young Children About Media

- What is **fantasy vs real life** on TV, computer and video games.
- Real-life **violence hurts** people.
- Heroes are **real people** helping others.
- Guns and knives used on **TV are not real**
- Real guns and knives can **hurt or kill people**.
- **Violence is never the best way to solve a problem**

# Parenting Styles

**Authoritative (Responsive Leadership)**

**Permissive**

**Authoritarian**

**Uninvolved**



# DISCIPLINE

- Is based on the idea that children will do better if they feel better
- Focuses on the desired positive behaviors
- Helps children to calm down and manage their anger
- Shows children positive alternatives

# PUNISHMENT

- Is based on the idea that children need to feel worse, pain, shame, or humiliated to learn how to behave
- Focuses on the negative behavior
- Controls behavior through power and fear
- Makes children angry, resentful, and aggressive

# Discipline

- From the same root word as **Disciple** – meaning to teach, guide, learn
- Be **fair and firm, set limits**
- Explain the **behavior you expect**
  - Teach actions have consequences
- Consequences may be **natural or logical**
  - Take away a privilege
  - Always stop fighting – comfort victim first
  - Time out or “Grounded” according to age
- Most important – **recognize GOOD behavior**

# Actions & Words

## Helpful OR Hurtful

- Long-term effects of harsh physical punishment
- Hitting or spanking your child sends a confusing message.
- It says it's okay to hurt someone you love in order to control them or solve a problem
- Repeated harshly over time it trains children to punish others with force.
- Hurts a child's body and mind

# Role Model – Think Like a Human Being

- Our parents are the first and most powerful teachers
- We are all human and make mistakes
- We want to be good parents and caregivers
- When you know better, you do better
- Use your own **BEST JUDGEMENT**
- Treat others the way you want to be treated
- Demonstrate empathy, tolerance, acceptance and respectful behavior

# Early Learning is Powerful

- Lead with Love and Limits
- Children need to feel safe and loved
- Children are people watchers
- When children are witnesses or victims of violence - the emotional scars can last a lifetime.

# Lead with Love and Limits

- Do you respond or react?
- Do you discipline or punish?
- Are your words & actions helpful or hurtful?
- Do you treat each child the way you would like to be treated?

# Perspective

- Role Model
  - Respect - Responsibility - Integrity
- Have a vision of the adult you want your child to become
  - Mentally & physically healthy, educated, productive, law abiding citizen

# ACT

## Teaches parents to

- Raise Safe Kids
- Build Strong Families



**Have a Stable Nurturing Home**





WE **act**

TOGETHER TO BUILD  
SAFE & STRONG FAMILIES

ACT RAISING SAFE KIDS PROGRAM



# Websites

- *MelissaInstitute.org*
- *TeachSafeSchools.org*
- *LitDiet.org*
- *ActAgainstViolence.org*

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