

SAFETY

School Safety: What Parents Can Do to Help

NewsUSA

(NU) - While your child's school may have been spared from any headline-catching, violent incidents, chances are that less dramatic acts of hostility, such as bullying and harassment, occur there every day.

Most schools have programs to prevent violence and help keep students safe. But safety precautions shouldn't stop there. As a parent, you also can take specific actions to improve school safety.

To raise awareness of school safety and security issues, the National Crime Prevention Council, best known for its 25-year-old beloved icon, McGruff the Crime Dog, developed the Be Safe and Sound initiative in collaboration with National PTA. This effort, funded by the Allstate Foundation, Assa Abloy Group and the Security Industry Association, provides advice that parents, community members and educators can use to help make school a pleasant environment for all children.

The National Crime Prevention Council provides the following tips for parents.

- **Listen and talk to your child regularly.** Communicating with your child on a number of topics related to school, friends and his or her interests can give you valuable insight. Talk to your child about violence and how to solve problems.

- **Set an example.** Show your child that you can settle conflicts peacefully and nonviolently. Also, show your support for school policies and rules. If your child feels a rule is wrong, explain how the



rule can increase school safety.

- **Work with others.** Join a parent, school or neighborhood association to discuss problems with violence in the community. Work together to find solutions and ways you can provide support to the schools in your community.

The National Crime Prevention Council provides tools for parents as part of its Be Safe and Sound initiative. The "Caregivers' Guide to Safety and Security," for example, outlines what parents can do to improve school safety and security. It contains an overview of school safety and security guidelines, an assessment checklist and advice and tips on advocating for change at their children's schools.

Another resource, the "School Safety and Security Toolkit: A Guide for Parents, Schools, and Communities," assists parents and community members in working with school administrators and policymakers to help make schools as safe as possible.

To learn more about the Be Safe and Sound initiative, visit www.ncpc.org/besafe.