



PTSA BOARD 2010-2011

President: Shelly Brandis

Vice-President: Heather Justham

Secretary: Andi Krizan

Treasurer: Jay Justham

JOIN LINCOLN PTSA TODAY!

One Member \$6.00

Two Members \$11.00

Three Members \$15.00

Pick up a membership from at school or print one from the web at lincolnptsa.org

Our *THANKS* to everyone who participated in the fall fundraiser.

The money earned will be used for school events and to help fund field trips.

Remember Market Day is a great way to support PTSA and Lincoln.

**REFLECTIONS PROJECTS WERE DUE DECEMBER 3RD.
Questions about Reflections contact Andi Krizan.**

FYI – From National PTA:

Safeguarding Your Children from Bullying, Gangs, and Sexual Harassment

Helping Children Deal with a School Bully

Bullying is often considered a "kids will be kids" problem. According to the National School Safety Center, however, bullying has become a pervasive and serious form of harassment in many schools. Dr. Dan Olweus, a professor of psychology and leading expert on bully-victim problems, reports that one child in 10 is regularly attacked either verbally or physically by bullies. Elementary school-age children are the most frequent targets of bullying by older students. The best way to safeguard your children from becoming a victim of a bully is to teach them how to be assertive. This involves encouraging your children to express their feelings clearly, to say no when they feel pressured or uncomfortable, to stand up for themselves verbally without fighting, and to walk away in more dangerous situations. Bullies are less likely to intimidate children who are confident and resourceful.

Tips for Helping Children Deal with Bullies

- Teach your children early on to steer clear of youth with bullying behavior.
- Teach your children to be assertive rather than aggressive or violent when confronted by a bully. Instruct them to walk away and get help from an adult in more dangerous situations. Practice various responses with your children through role-playing.
- Teach your children to never defend themselves from bullies with a gun or other weapon.
- Keep communication lines open with your children. Encourage your children to share information about school and school-related activities.
- Pay attention to the following symptoms that may indicate your child is being bullied: withdrawal, abrupt lack of interest in school, a drop in grades, or signs of physical abuse.
- If your child is a victim of bullying at school, inform school officials immediately. Keep your own written records of the names, dates, times, and circumstances of bullying incidents. Submit a copy of this report to the school principal.
- Respond to your children's concerns and fears with patience, love, and support.

Teaching Children How to Avoid Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of violence that encompasses a wide range of offensive behaviors. These include touching, pinching, grabbing, and patting; comments about one's body; degrading graffiti on walls and bathrooms; sexual remarks, gestures, and jokes that demean others; passing obscene notes; and spreading rumors. Peer-to-peer sexual harassment is one of the most widespread forms of violence in schools today. A recent study conducted by the American Association of University Women reported that 81 percent of girls and boys have experienced unwanted sexual advances. Because many of these behaviors are dismissed as flirting, few students report incidents of sexual harassment to teachers or parents. Young harassers learn their behaviors from adults, peers, and the media. Parents can model and teach their children to respect the rights, bodies, and property of others, and to reject gender stereotypes that say boys are expected to be dominant and aggressive while girls are expected to be passive and submissive.

Tips for Avoiding Sexual Harassment

- Talk with your children about the difference between flirting and sexual harassment and give examples of each. Make sure your children understand that sexual harassment is a form of violence and that it is illegal.
- Be alert to any of the following symptoms in your child: chronic anxiety, concentration problems, withdrawn or depressed behavior, insomnia, body image problems, fear of going to school, or wanting to drop courses. Discuss concerns with your pediatrician, family practitioner, religious leader, or mental health worker.
- Encourage your children to tell you about any incidents that make them feel bad, embarrassed, scared, or uncomfortable. Keep a written record of the circumstances and submit a copy to the principal.
- Request to see a written policy on sexual harassment at your children's schools. If a school doesn't have a policy in place, work with other concerned parents and staff to establish one.
- Meet with the school principal to gain support for a sexual harassment prevention program in your child's school.
- If you report an in-school sexual harassment incident to school officials without getting results, contact your state department of education to file a formal complaint.

Protecting Children from Gang Influence

Gang activity and gang violence have become serious problems in urban areas and are rapidly spreading into suburban and rural communities as well. Gang members often engage in vandalism, theft, assault, and the sale of drugs in schools as well as in the community. As a result, many schools have become centers of violence and fear rather than safe centers for learning. Children and youth join gangs for a variety of reasons: the need to belong, low self-esteem, peer pressure, boredom, academic failure, and lack of employment. The American Psychological Association reports that gang members are as young as 9 and as old as 30, and males outnumber females by 20-to-1. However ominous the threat of gangs may seem, parents can prevent their children from joining. The support and nurturance children receive at home enable them to make good decisions and to find alternatives to gang involvement.



Tips for Protecting Children from Gangs

- Spend time with each of your children every day. Show affection and make them feel special and important.
- Contact your local police department to find out if any gangs are active in your community.
- Children are attracted to gangs by their offer of friendship and support. Start teaching your children early—from age 4 or 5—that gangs are dangerous and do not provide positive support or positive role models.
- Teach your children what to do if gang members approach them. The best response is to walk away and tell an adult.
- Know your children's friends and families and your children's whereabouts at all times. Set definite curfews for your children.
- Children with a history of academic failure are at high risk for gang membership. If your child has learning difficulties, work together with his or her teachers. Seek help from tutors and guidance counselors. Help your child with his or her homework.
- Be on the lookout for signs of possible gang involvement: change in a child's friends, change in dress habits (such as wearing the same color combination all the time), secrecy about activities, flashing hand signs, having income from unknown resources, having symptoms of alcohol and other drug use, and having a diminished interest in the family and school. If you notice these signs, contact your school principal or guidance counselor, juvenile justice workers, or law enforcement personnel.
- Keep your children active in sports, clubs, volunteer work, and family and community activities.