



UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

KEY MESSAGES

1. Violence against children is not inevitable. It can and must be prevented.
2. Every child has the right to a life free from violence. Violence against children can never be justified.
3. Children can make a valuable contribution to helping understand the violence they face and the damage it does to them. We need to listen and learn from them, and involve them in finding solutions.
4. The best way to deal with violence against children is to stop it before it happens by investing in prevention programmes. States must invest in evidence-based policies and programmes to address factors that give rise to violence against children, and ensure that resources are allocated to address the underlying causes.
5. While prioritizing prevention of violence, States and all sectors of society must also fulfill their responsibilities to protect children and hold accountable all those who put them at risk.
6. Violence threatens the survival, well-being and future prospects of children. The physical, emotional and psychological scars of violence can have severe implications for a child's development, health and ability to learn.
7. Violence against children knows no boundaries. It happens in every country and cuts across social, cultural, religious and ethnic lines.
8. Much violence against children is hidden. Often the abuse of children happens behind closed doors and is perpetrated by those the child is supposed to be able to trust — parents, family members and acquaintances. Children often suffer in silence, afraid to speak out for fear of retribution or shame.
9. All children are at risk of violence by the very fact that they are children. However, some children — because of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability or social status — are more vulnerable.
10. Violence against children goes beyond the purely physical. Abuse, neglect and exploitation are also forms of violence. Children say that discrimination and humiliation hurt them deeply and leave a scar.
11. Inflicting violence on a child, in whatever form, teaches that child that violence is acceptable and so perpetuates the cycle of violence. By preventing violence today, we help build a future where violence will no longer be tolerated.
12. Violence perpetuates poverty, illiteracy and early mortality. The physical, emotional and psychological scars of violence rob children of their chance to fulfil their potential. Multiplied many times over, violence against children robs a society of its potential for development, hindering progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.