

# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

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## PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME

*A Grounded Brief*  
DR. CHRISTIAN NANRY



## SAFE USE OF TOURNIQUETS

*WHAT EVERY PARENT  
NEEDS TO KNOW*

BY STEVEN SUND



## HOW MUSIC THERAPY CAN HEAL THE BODY AND MIND

BY  
SHANNON CROCKER  
AND  
KIM TAPPER

## DEE NEELY

NAVIGATING THE  
THIN BLUE LINE  
The Balancing Act  
of a Secret Service  
Mom

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# Welcome to *Parents with Preparedness Magazine*



As we make ready for the holiday season and prepare to bid 2023 goodbye, take the opportunity to talk about preparedness, at home and at school-it really is a gift of a lifetime. Stay safe.

**Kathleen Kiernan, EdD**  
FOUNDER [PWPORG.ORG](http://PWPORG.ORG)

Welcome to Edition 10 of Parents With Preparedness magazine, free of charge, easy to navigate with practical advice, designed to provide a resource for busy parents, educators, and caregivers in an increasingly complex world. Our authors are parents as well as practitioners who share their invaluable earned experience with a singular goal of helping others.

They take on the most difficult of issues including the continuing rise in active assailants; the challenges of being unhoused and disconnected; the uncertainties which surround the use of Artificial Intelligence-the “how-to” use a tourniquet and the soul-restoring quality of music.

We dedicated our Resource Guide to fire safety-in a season where the careless use of space heaters and unattended holiday lighting and holiday cooking(!) can end in tragedy. I am forever indebted to our authors, Governing Board, and Advisors, and our Creative Director who make this all possible.



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# Navigating the Thin Blue Line: The Balancing Act of a Secret Service Mom

By Dee Neely

Parenting is challenging regardless of your profession. A career as a Secret Service Agent adds extra complexity to the already demanding role of being a mother. The inherent dangers come with the profession and the fact that the career requires a certain amount of sacrifice and time. As a Mother and an Agent, I have had to navigate a unique set of challenges and rewards. To be clear, it is a remarkable balancing act! I would do both over again without thought or remorse. I love both!

Since childhood, I have always wanted to be a police officer. I also always knew I wanted to be a mother. I wanted a daughter. I had surmised that if I had a son first, I would have tried again until I had a daughter. I was blessed with my daughter on my first and only pregnancy. The timing of the pregnancy required strategic thinking, planning, balancing priorities, and multitasking.

As a female agent in a male-dominated profession, I surmised that becoming a mother would be a journey; however, choosing to become a mother was a no-brainer for me. The truth is, deciding when to get pregnant was a tough decision—it was akin to playing a game of chess. I took a strategic approach to prepare for what was to come. I needed to know the policies & the practices so I could anticipate any unforeseen issues with my career or pregnancy. I learned there were few policies, and the practices depended on where you were assigned & who your supervisor was at the time of the pregnancy or birth. I strategized my moves. I estimat-

ed the timing of my next promotion or assignment and planned several steps ahead. I had the foresight to decide that even if I became pregnant, I would not reveal it immediately because my career was as important to me as my impending pregnancy.

My daughter was born in October of 2003. That is the year I learned the art of juggling. Some may call it multitasking, but most days, I felt like there was so much to do as a mother and a special agent that I had shifted from the calculated moves of chess to throwing it all in the air and catching what I could. But that did not stop me. I kept forging ahead using my calendar and agenda to keep abreast of everything. Then, a male leader in the office who wasn't my direct supervisor asked me, "So you think you can be an agent and a mother?" The nerve! My answer is, "I am a mother and an agent."

Truth be told, those words got under my skin. They made me work harder both at home and at work. I took on various extra responsibilities of childcare...swimming lessons, dance lessons, volunteering at school, etc. At work, I found myself volunteering for tough or unexpected assignments, working midnight shifts, acting undercover, whatever it took to prove that I could be a mother and an agent and do it all flawlessly. I never wanted anyone to question my commitment to my job or my duty to uphold my oath to the Constitution of the United States. I needed to prove that I could do it all.

Then, I had an epiphany. That supervisor would have never asked a male



agent if he could be a father and an agent. Instead, his fatherhood would have been applauded, and he would have gotten pats on the back for doing his part at home and work. As a woman in a majority-male domain, I knew that some men were still of the mindset that I should not be there. To those people, it would never matter how hard I worked or how good a job I did. I was not part of the Good Ole Boys Club and never would be. So, I let my inner Wonder Woman come out as I deflected those non-lethal words and thoughts away from me. I did not allow them to wound or hinder me.

Mother will always be my most important title. When the guilt of my profession weighed heavy on me, I would ask my daughter what she thought of my chosen career. Both her parents were in federal law enforcement, so I wanted to know what that was like for her. She once answered, "I thought it was cool. I don't feel like I missed anything because I got to do many things other kids didn't have the privilege of doing. Although you traveled the world, there were many times I went with you. I remember traveling to several countries after your assignments to tour that country as a family. I loved visiting the White House! Remember when President Obama returned from a trip and waved at me when he got off the helicopter? And you took many of my friends on trips, too, always trying to make it about education and fun. Plus, all the teachers loved for you to come to career day as much as us kids. Everyone thought it was cool that my Mom was a Secret Service Agent!"

I was still juggling and had not dropped the ball, but I was missing balance. I made so many sacrifices trying to be everything to my child and my chosen profession that there was little time for me. I was deficient in time management and allowed little time for myself. I did not set boundaries to ensure that my family, friends, career, marriage, and I received the attention we all deserved. Upon that realization, I began to plan and organize my priorities. I became the queen of the to-do list and began delegating some tasks to others.

More importantly, I learned to balance motherhood and career. I built a



robust support system. I realized that while the numbers were few, there were other mothers on the job who could support me on my journey as an agent mom. I prioritized self-care - I had been caring for my daughter and mother, so I often neglected to pamper myself. I started running as a hobby and ran a marathon. I maintained open and honest communication with my family, colleagues, and managers and set realistic goals. I did not stress when everything on my to-do list was not done. I was open and honest with my supervisors, team, and family about my personal and career aspirations and asked for their support. I let go of perfection. As an agent or mother, I realized that it is an impossible feat. Once I embraced those realities, I focused on being the best at each role. I found the right balance between motherhood and career. This journal is personal, and it is what I make it. I celebrate my achievements, sing loud and off-key, dance like nobody's watching in a room full of people, and give myself grace. 💖

## About The Author



Dee Neely is the Corporate Security Programs Program Manager for Delta Air Lines. She manages the Executive Protection Program, Special Events Security, Travel Security, and the Active Aggressor Plan & its corresponding Learning Management System. She leads risk mitigation strategies based on current and historical intelligence and employs strategic oversight over Delta-operated facilities to ensure facility protection. Dee is also a member of the DEI Council and the Employee Wellbeing Team.

Dee Neely is also an instructor for the Naval Postgraduate School -Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS), where she co-leads the Emergence Program. Ms. Neely provides instruction to security and public safety professionals early in their careers. She explores emerging trends worldwide and challenges program participants to devise strategies for assessing and managing those trends in their respective professions. She encourages critical thinking, analysis, and evidence-based research. Ms. Neely inspires ideas for change and encourages participants to become leaders even if they are not in supervisory positions.

Ms. Neely's visionary leadership throughout her career has proven her value through reaching exceptional levels of achievement. She has an outstanding history with over 30 years of government experience, 28 years of which were with the United States Secret Service in various roles across several divisions for both the Executive and Legislative branches. Ms. Neely was detailed to the FBI's Atlanta Division Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) for two (2) years, where she partnered with federal, state, and local law enforcement officers to arrest criminals and defend the nation against terrorism.

Ms. Neely retired from the Secret Service as a Supervisory Special Agent, where she achieved comprehensive experience in security operations, public safety, investigations, law enforcement, protective intelligence, field operations, and Presidential-level protection. Ms. Neely is a thought-leader who served as a training coordinator who taught and briefed colleagues, law enforcement, academia, and businesses on security, protection, intelligence, and law enforcement statutes.

Ms. Neely continues to be a multifaceted leader who advocates diversity and inclusion. She is a trained Certified Public Information Officer (PIO) and Certified EEO Counselor. She holds a Top-Secret (T.S.) / Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) security clearance and maintains a strong presence in community service and in organizations for professional development and engagement. Ms. Neely is a member of the Citizens Police Advisory Council in her county, where she serves as a liaison between the Police Department, county citizens & leaders. In this role, she reviews policies, programs, & laws to improve understanding & communication between the police and the community.

Ms. Neely received her formal education at the University of Maryland, where she earned her B.A. in English. She earned her MBA from the University of Phoenix, Northern Virginia Campus. She graduated with an M.A. in Security Studies (Homeland Security and Defense) at the Naval Postgraduate School, Center for Homeland Defense and Security.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO TO *REDUCE THE RISK* OF SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

By Christopher Cleary, Ph.D.

Seeing news reports of mass murders occurring in schools is devastating. A recent USA Today article reported that school shootings have reached an all-time high for the second year in a row. Hearing the details of another young person resorting to mass violence causes us to experience several emotions, including sorrow for the victims and their families and anger that these horrific incidents keep occurring. We should not have to fear for the safety of children while they are at school, and we should not feel helpless in the effort to reduce school shootings. Emotional reactions to tragedies are understandable, but fear and anxiety are often wasted energy unless we can channel them into constructive action. Working together, we do have the ability to improve the level of safety in schools. We can take a few reasonable steps to help prevent tragedies.

I must start by saying that the likelihood of a mass-shooting occurring in your child's school is remarkably low, but



despite the odds, mass-shootings do continue to plague our nation. The way to fix the problem is to understand it and then take steps to stop it from occurring or at least lower the number of incidents. Here are some positive, constructive actions that we can take to reduce the likelihood of shooting events happening in schools.

The first step is to improve our understanding of the problem. The students who have committed prior mass shoot-

ings did not start out evil. Most were normal kids who, for various reasons, progressed along a path toward violence and ultimately followed through on their heinous crimes. In a study of past school shootings, the Federal Bureau of Investigation found that the shooters had a variety of motivations for their actions. Some more common motivations were desire for revenge, attention, or recognition, or because they felt bullied or persecuted. Regardless of their motivation, most previous school shooters had done things to make their intentions known prior to the shooting.

Pay attention to the warning signs. Researchers who study the incidents of mass school shootings have found that, in the majority of cases, past perpetrators had provided certain warning signals about their intentions before they resorted to violence. The warning signals were often ignored, misinterpreted, or mishandled. Past shooters have often revealed their intentions through ultimatums, innuendo, predictions of future harm, or by making specific or generalized threats. In many cases, the threats

*"If you see something, say something."*



were revealed to a third party.

If you see something, say something. Preventing school shootings does not fall solely on schools, nor does it fall solely on the police or the parents. The only way to make an impact and reduce the threat is to accept that we all have a role. Parents, teachers, relatives, neighbors, or friends may sometimes recognize when a child's behavior becomes concerning. When we become concerned, we are responsible for promptly reporting the concerning behavior to the school or the police. Deciding to report your concerns about a child may not be an easy decision. We may not want to get involved or get the child in trouble, or we may convince ourselves that our concerns are likely unfounded. We may fear having the child resent us or fear losing their parents as friends, but we must report those behaviors to the school or the police so they can take steps to determine if the child does need intervention. The stakes are too high to ignore. Just imagine if a tragedy did occur and we had the chance to prevent it, but we did not make our concerns known. Once concerns about a student are reported to either the police or to school administrators, they should begin the student threat assessment process. The school and police should work together with psychologists or social workers to determine if the child does or does not present a possible danger to themselves or to others. If the threat assessment team decides the child may present a potential danger to themselves or others, the intervention must begin immediately. Intervention before any criminality is in everyone's best interest.

Ensure that your school and your police agency are cooperating and working together to prevent tragedy. Attend public forums to speak with your school administrators and with your local police administrators to make sure that they have a good working relationship, that they communicate regularly, and that they share the common goal of providing intervention before any criminal activity. The mere fact that they participate in the threat assessment process does not necessarily mean they are in full cooperation. Schools have traditionally preferred to manage discipline problems internally and would only notify the police when the arrest of a student was unavoidable. At the same time, police agencies concentrate most of their efforts on making arrests after crimes are committed and may not invest a lot of resources in preventing violence in schools. The rising death toll from schools has made those practices unsustainable. These two crucial parts of the student threat assessment process need to work seamlessly together with the common goal of preventing violence and providing intervention to children who might be on the path to violence.

If further investigation by the threat assessment team indicates that the child may be on a path toward self-harm or violence to others, the threat assessment team must work together to get that child help and avoid a potential tragedy. The police should immediately go to the child's home and enlist the parent's cooperation to ensure the child does not have access to weapons. If the child or their parents seem unwilling to follow through with counseling, the schools should mandate that the child gets psychological or emotional care to re-enter school.

The threat assessment process should not end there. The school faculty and the police must continue to monitor the student's progress and watch out for any further warning signals. Once again, this will take serious commitment from both entities, but the stakes are too high for anything less. It might seem that school administrations and police agencies are unyielding monoliths, but they each do their best to be responsive to the needs of the public. Public meetings are an effective way to be heard and let them know the level of commitment you expect. This problem requires a whole-of-community response; we must all do our part. 🍷



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**C**hristopher Cleary is an Associate Professor in the Division of Criminal Justice and Homeland Security at St. John's University in Queens, New York. Before working at St. John's, he served for over 29 years as a member of the Nassau County Police Department. He retired in 2015 at the rank of Deputy Chief.

He has a Master's degree in Homeland Security Strategies from the United States Naval Postgraduate School and a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from Nova Southeastern University. His doctoral dissertation focused on reducing school shootings through the effective use of the student threat assessment process.





# Parental Alienation Syndrome

## *A Grounded Brief*

By Dr. Christian Nanry



**P**arental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) now more commonly known as Parental Alienation, is an often misunderstood and overlooked subject for parents and nonparents. PAS originated as "a term coined in the 1980s by child psychiatrist Dr. Richard A. Gardner, occurs when one parent attempts to turn the couple's children against the other parent." Later, in its evolution, the word syndrome was removed by the medical community and is no longer a part of the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). The American Psychological Association or the World Health Organization has not recognized Parental Alienation. Many journalists and scientists have vehemently criticized it as a reputable form of treatment or its admissibility in court proceedings. Parental Alienation can also be designed to enter the court system for custodial posturing.

Dr. Gardner graduated from Columbia University and the SUNY Downstate University Medical Center. He was a psychologist known for his work with children and child custody cases. Despite numerous publications, the scientific community challenged Dr. Gardner's assumptions and findings. Doctors and researchers have worked independently of his originating work to validate Parent Alienation's existence. Authors for the American Bar Association have published works on Parental Alienation and its impact on the legal system. The published literature takes the position that Parental Alienation is not a recent phenomenon but one that manifests historically. Indoctrination is amongst the terminology being used in place of Parental Alienation.

Depending on the jurisdiction will determine the depth of Parental Alienation in the family court system. Traditionally, in Parental Alienation situations, court proceedings and rearing can alienate one parent unintentionally. This situation is presented linearly, binding one parent in court motions and petitions. The courts often follow pre-existing procedures utilizing court experts in child protection services and attorney's ad litem. Certain external programs that use the concept of Parental Alienation for treatment can be directed or recommended by the court. To this end, some parents can feel powerless by this rudimentary process.

Parents caught in a Parental Alienation relationship need to be aware of preventative, in-action, and educational measures. No one wants to talk about these situations, and we all hope life does not lead us down these paths. But it does happen. Awareness of what Parental Alienation is and what it can invite is both responsible and appropriate. Here are some measures which can be taken if Parental Alienation is occurring.

If you have the unenviable position of being engaged in a custody battle and think you are experiencing alienation, remain calm and grounded. Hire a quality attorney as soon as possible. Conduct a background check on the attorney to avoid unwanted relationships with anyone involved in your proceedings. Ensure you spend and continue to spend time with your child. Avoid making overt statements concerning the family relationship or dynamics. Maintain neutrality. Seek approved therapeutic interventions. Document everything. Keep a journal or a log of occurrences, meetings, and court activity. If the court asks about specific individuals representing a child in the pro-



ceedings, endeavor to evaluate the selection for any biases. A private investigator with a valued resume and reputation is invaluable. Educate yourself on the local laws and procedures of the court system. Do not hesitate to ask for transcripts and other court documents to assist you in future litigation. If civil rights violations are occurring, consult with your attorney. You may need to contact the next higher-level court in the legal system. Be organized and calm. Become informed of all the processes you may face and ask for clarification. Presentation is also important. Many family court cases are highly emotional, and presenting your side calmly and collectively can ease the burden of information.

Parental Alienation is controversial in research and practice. Courts are burdened with difficulties in decision-making concerning the welfare of children and the family unit. Parents should ensure they come from an informed position in instances of Alienation, and seek the proper mechanisms to minimize adverse effects and navigate the legal system.

This article is a culmination of open-sourced research and personal narratives from parents who have experienced Alienation. This is not legal advice; you should seek consulting from a licensed professional. ♡

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## About The Author



Dr. Christian A. Nanry is a law enforcement professional and military veteran since 1996. He has exercised concurrent legal jurisdictions in multiple states, military installations, and federal statutes. Dr. Nanry began his career in the United States Army with the Military Police Corps, and worked as a Special Reaction Team member and a Military Working Dog handler in the Republic of South Korea and several stateside assignments. Dr. Nanry was the 1998 Military District of Washington Soldier of the Year, a distinguished graduate of the 2000 Primary Leadership Development Course, and the overall winner of the 2000 ROK Military Working Dog Handlers Competition in Narcotics Detection.

Dr. Nanry joined the United States Marshals Service in late 2001 and was assigned to four locations across the United States. He has successfully conducted fugitive apprehensions, threat and breach investigations, international extraditions, and protected members of the federal judiciary. His protective experiences include the United States General Assembly, the Deputy Attorney General, and several Supreme Court Justices initiated from the Draft Leak. He was the lead agent for events such as Operation Rolling Thunder in Albany, NY and multiple high threat trials in New York City. Dr. Nanry completed numerous sensitive special assignments across the United States and overseas. His individual accomplishments have been officially recognized by former Attorney Generals and Directors of the United States Marshals Service.

Dr. Nanry served as a member of multiple committees and working groups in the United States Marshals Service with the responsibility of creating policy, procedures, and alternatives for regulatory and operational necessity. These committees and groups consisted of Information Technology, Biometrics, and the Financial Management Working group. Dr. Nanry was also selected as a peer reviewer for specific national initiatives. He has been a guest instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Brunswick, GA and as a member of a divisional training cadre. Currently, Dr. Nanry is a Special Agent with the Army Criminal Investigation Division investigating financial crimes in Major Procurement Fraud.

Dr. Nanry has also been a guest speaker at the 2022 Texas Cyber Summit in Austin, TX and presented research at the 2021 American Health Professionals Associations Conference and Expo in Denver, Co. His research and publications consist of education and law enforcement performance, human trafficking, sextortion, and crimes against children.

Dr. Nanry has a bachelorette of history from Empire State College, a masters in human resources; training and development from Seton Hall, and holds a doctorate of philosophy from Texas State University in adult education.



# EMPOWERING A GENERATION:

## SAN DIEGO HARBOR POLICE FOUNDATION'S IMPACT AT PERKINS K-8

By Jeff Wohler

Perkins K-8 School, located in the heart of Barrio Logan, a neighborhood with one of the highest concentrations of impoverished residents in San Diego County, faces unique challenges in providing equal opportunities for its students. Four out of ten students at Perkins K-8 suffer homelessness, and many are living with chronic stress due to trauma in their lives. With limited resources available, the students at Perkins K-8 are at risk of falling behind academically and facing long-term consequences such as unemployment and poverty. However, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the San Diego Harbor Police Foundation (SDHPF) and the Port of San Diego Harbor Police, a transformative series of programs called "Empowering a Generation" is significantly impacting the lives of these disadvantaged students.

"Empowering a Generation" programs will lay a strong foundation during the elementary and middle school years to break the cycle of generational poverty and create positive life outcomes for disadvantaged students, including the successful completion of high school and postsecondary education and integration into the local workforce in San Diego's high-paying industries. This integrative approach consists of several mutually supportive components that address the various needs of the students:

### 1. Classroom Furniture and Technology Upgrades

Recognizing the importance of creating conducive learning environments, the San Diego Harbor Police Foundation has funded upgrading aging classrooms at Perkins K-8 School. New specialized furniture, equipment, and technology have been installed to enhance the learning conditions and provide students with the tools they need to succeed.

### 2. Teachers RUL - Reading Comprehension Program

To address the academic challenges faced by the students, the Teachers RUL (Relationships Unity Love) program focuses on improving reading comprehension skills for third to fifth-grade students. Through one-on-one tutoring sessions, students receive personalized support to bring their reading comprehension to standardized levels. This program, offered during after-school hours, has already shown promis-

ing results in improving students' reading comprehension rates.

### 3. Career Pathways

The Career Pathways program prepares students for success by exposing students in grades six to eight to various career options and helps shape their career choices. Through partnerships with regional employers such as Qualcomm, Solar Turbines, Port of San Diego, and General Dynamics, students can participate in tours, career panels, and hands-on learning experiences. This exposure to high-paying industries in San Diego aims to inspire and motivate students to pursue postsecondary education and integration into the local workforce.

### 4. Youth Mentorship

Mentorship is crucial in empowering students and providing them with guidance and support. SDHPF has established two mentorship programs as part of "Empowering a Generation." The first program matches students with mentors from participating businesses, allowing them to receive guidance and set goals for their future. The second program, Officer-Student Mentorship, involves Harbor Police Department officers volunteering their time. Each officer adopts a grade level and stays with the group of students until they graduate. Officers regu-

larly visit the classrooms, engage in mentoring activities, and foster positive relationships with the students.

### 5. Field Trips

The "Empowering a Generation" program includes educational and recreational field trips for the students. These field trips provide transportation and lunch, allowing students to explore new environments, expand their horizons, and apply their learning in real-world contexts. Shop With A Cop and Fish With A Cop are just two of our programs.

### 6. Empowered Parent/Guardian Programs

Recognizing the importance of involving parents and guardians in the educational journey, SDHPF offers evening classes taught by professionals. These classes equip parents and guardians with tools to improve their family situations, from financial planning to life skills such as stress management and communication. The program aims to create a supportive network that empowers the student's well-being by empowering parents and guardians.

### 7. Food Security

Recognizing the impact of food insecurity on students' well-being and academic performance, SDHPF has partnered with the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank. Through the Food 4 Kids Backpack program, students





receive weekend food packages to take home, ensuring they have access to nutritious meals outside school hours.

The impact of the "Empowering a Generation" program at Perkins K-8 School has been significant. By providing resources, mentorship, and educational opportunities, SDHPF and the Port of San Diego Harbor Police are transforming the lives of disadvantaged students. The program's holistic approach addresses academic needs and social and emotional well-being, empowering students to break free from the cycle of poverty and achieve long-term success.

Fernando Hernandez, the principal of Grace W. Perkins K-8 School, expresses his gratitude for the support received from SDHPF and the Port of San Diego Harbor Police. He emphasizes the program's positive impact on the students, stating, "The 'Empowering a Generation' program has provided our students with opportunities they would not have had otherwise. It has given them hope, inspiration, and a belief in their potential." 🍀



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jeff is a lawyer and a former Special Agent with the U.S. Treasury Department, where he worked on organized crime and complex financial investigations. Once his work with the Treasury Department concluded, he focused on progressively responsible business experiences, including 30 years at the Presidential and Chief Executive Officer levels. Jeff has owned and operated multiple corporations, including a publicly traded company, in industries to include water remediation, export trading with offices in fourteen countries, and offshore shipping. As President and CEO of the San Diego Harbor Police Foundation, he has created a robust Human Trafficking awareness training program containing six separate segments: Housekeeping and Room Service, Front Desk and Guest Services, Hotel Security, Airport Workers, Airport Security, and Food and Beverage. All of these training modules are available through their website at [www.helpstophumantrafficking.org](http://www.helpstophumantrafficking.org)

Jeff is the recipient of multiple awards, including the President of the United States "E" Award for Excellence in International Trade, the 2021 and 2022 ASTORS Platinum Award for Excellence in Public Safety and Community Enrichment sponsored by American Security Today, and the 2022 Hope Rising award for the Foundations work in Human Trafficking.



# ALGORITHMS ARE THE FUTURE

## WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

By Heather Hollingsworth-Issvoran



**A**lgorithms have evolved to become the driving force behind nearly every aspect of our lives. From the moment we wake up to the second we lay our heads on our pillows at night, algorithms orchestrate the symphony of our existence. They are the foundation of the technologies we use every day. We can expect that they will only become more sophisticated over time. I don't think our society realizes how algorithms have seamlessly integrated into our daily routines, mainly how teenagers interact with and utilize algorithms daily. Teaching teenagers to be less reliant on algorithms and more self-reliant and critical thinkers is essential in today's technology-driven world. Here are some strategies that parents can use to help their teenagers strike a balance between technology and independent thinking:

**Open Communication:** Start by having open and non-judgmental conversations with your teenagers about their technology use. Please encourage them to share their thoughts, concerns, and experiences with algorithms. Listen to their perspectives and understand their reasons for relying on technology.

**Model Healthy Tech Use:** Parents are powerful role models. Show your teenagers that you can use technology responsibly and in moderation. Set boundaries for your tech use, especially during family time, to demonstrate the importance of balance.

**Teach Digital Literacy:** Educate your teenagers about how algorithms work and their impact on their lives. Discuss concepts like personalization, data privacy, and algorithmic bias. Please encourage them to assess the information they encounter online critically.

**Encourage Independent Problem Solving:** Encourage teenagers to think independently and solve problems without relying on algorithms. When they face challenges or have questions, suggest they try to find answers through research, books, or asking knowledgeable individuals before resorting to search engines.

**Limit Screen Time:** Set clear limits on screen time and encourage your teenagers to engage in offline activities. Encourage hobbies, sports, arts, or other interests that do not involve screens, helping them discover the joy of real-world experiences.

**Promote Critical Thinking:** Encourage your teenagers to question information they encounter online. Teach them to verify facts, cross-reference sources, and think critically about the content they consume. This practice will help them develop a healthy skepticism and avoid falling into echo chambers.

**Foster Face-to-Face Communication:** Encourage teenagers to spend time with friends and family face-to-face rather than relying solely on social media or messaging apps. These experiences can help develop essential social skills and emotional intelligence.

**Teach Time Management:** Help your teenagers prioritize their time and tasks. Teach them time management techniques, such as setting goals, making to-do lists, and managing distractions so that they can use technology as a tool rather than a constant distraction.

**Promote Outdoor Activities:** Encourage outdoor activities and nature experiences. Spending time in nature provides a break from screens and fosters a sense of wonder and connection to the world around them.

**Encourage Creativity:** Encourage your teenagers to explore their creative side. Whether it's through art, writing, music, or other creative pursuits, these activities can help them develop skills and interests beyond algorithm-driven content.

**Set Tech-Free Zones:** Designate specific home areas, such as the dining room or bedrooms, as tech-free zones focusing on face-

to-face interaction, reading, or other non-screen activities.

**Promote Healthy Sleep Habits:** Discuss the importance of adequate sleep and the detrimental effects of excessive screen time on sleep quality. Encourage your teenagers to establish a bedtime routine that does not involve screens. Don't let them sleep with their phone.

**Be Supportive:** Remember that teenagers are navigating a digital world different from the one their parents grew up in. Be supportive and patient as they learn to balance their reliance on algorithms with their own decision-making skills.

**Lead by Example:** Parents play a crucial role in shaping their teenagers' attitudes and behaviors toward technology. It can be overwhelming to think about these things. Still, by demonstrating a healthy balance between technology use and offline activities, parents can influence their teenagers positively, develop a healthy relationship with technology, and become more self-reliant.

## OTHER RESOURCES

There are several resources available to help parents address this issue effectively. Here are some valuable resources to consider:

### WEBSITES

**Common Sense Media** ([commonsensemedia.org](https://commonsensemedia.org)): Common Sense Media offers a wealth of resources for parents, including articles, videos, and reviews of apps, games, and other digital content. They guide how to encourage responsible and balanced technology use in children and teenagers.

**Center for Humane Technology** ([humanetech.com](https://humanetech.com)): This organization advocates for technology that promotes well-being and human values. They offer resources and insights into the impact of technology on children and provide tips for parents on managing screen time and encouraging healthier digital habits.

**Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI)** ([fosi.org](https://fosi.org)): FOSI provides parental resources and tools to ensure their children's safety and well-being online. They offer guidelines on digital parenting, including strategies to help kids develop critical thinking skills and reduce reliance on algorithms.

**American Academy of Pediatrics** ([aap.org](https://aap.org)): The AAP provides recommendations and guidelines for parents regarding children's media use. They offer advice on screen time limits, age-appropriate content, and balancing digital and offline activities.

**MediaSmarts** ([mediasmarts.ca](https://mediasmarts.ca)): This Canadian organization focuses on media literacy and provides resources for parents and educators. They offer lesson plans and interactive tools to help children and teenagers develop critical thinking skills and navigate the digital world effectively.

### BOOKS

There are several books written specifically for parents on the topic of raising children in the digital age. Some recommended titles include

"The Tech-Wise Family" by Andy Crouch,

"Screenwise: Helping Kids Thrive (and Survive) in Their Digital World" by Deborah Heitner,

"The Parent App: Understanding Families in the Digital Age" by Lynn Schofield Clark.

## OTHER TIPS & TOOLS:

**Parenting Forums and Communities:** Online communities and forums, such as Reddit's r/Parenting and r/DigitalParenting, provide a platform for parents to share their experiences and seek advice on raising kids in a digital

world. These communities often offer practical tips and strategies.

**Educational Apps and Games:** Utilize educational apps and games that promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Apps like "Scratch" and "Code.org" can introduce kids to the world of coding and creativity, encouraging them to be active creators rather than passive consumers of technology.

**Digital Detox Challenges:** Some organizations and websites offer digital detox challenges and activities to help families reduce screen time and become more mindful of their tech use. These challenges can be fun to engage with the topic as a family.

**Online Safety Tools:** Familiarize yourself with parental control software and apps that allow you to set screen time limits, filter content, and monitor your child's online activities. Examples include Qustodio, Norton Family, and Apple's Screen Time feature.

**Consult with Experts:** If you're facing specific challenges or concerns related to your child's technology use, consider consulting with child psychologists, therapists, or educators who specialize in digital parenting. They can provide personalized guidance and strategies tailored to your family's needs. Remember that every family is unique; what works for one may not work for another. It's essential to adapt the advice and resources to your family's values, circumstances, and the age of your children. Regular communication and maintaining an open, non-judgmental dialogue with your kids about technology use are critical components of successfully navigating this aspect of parenting.

*A.I. was used in the writing of this article. 🤖*

## ABOUT HEATHER ISSVARON



As the Director of Strategic Communications for the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS), I support the nation's premier homeland security education and research institution in reaching and engaging with diverse and influential audiences. With over 20 years of experience in the field, I deeply understand the challenges and opportunities facing homeland security practitioners and officials across all levels of government and sectors of society.

I lead a team of professionals who design and implement strategic communications plans and campaigns that showcase the impact and success stories of CHDS students, faculty, staff, and alums. We leverage print, broadcast, and web-based media platforms, social media, and events to raise awareness and visibility of the Center's programs and products. We also collaborate closely with the Naval Postgraduate School and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security leadership on these endeavors. My skills and expertise in media relations, public relations, agency outreach, student and alums relations, and recruitment enable me to effectively communicate the value and relevance of CHDS to a national and global audience of academics and practitioners. My mission is to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to foster a culture of innovation and excellence in homeland security education and research.

# WE CANNOT PREDICT THE FUTURE BUT WE CAN PREPARE FOR IT

By Dan O'Connor

Raising children in the modern interconnected world presents unique challenges beyond merely providing material comfort. Raising children requires parents to prepare them emotionally and mentally to face an ever-evolving landscape of challenges. Resilience, the ability to recover and remain adaptive and robust under adversity, is a crucial quality that parents can instill in their children. There are a variety of ways parents can foster grit, resilience, and preparedness in their children while balancing discipline and embracing failure and regret.

Never underestimate the lifelong impact you have on those you've created. There is no more significant role model than a parent or guardian. Children listen with their eyes and reinforce with their ears. All children learn by observing their parents. Parents set the example by exhibiting resilience in their own lives. When facing adversity, discussing a problem-solving process with children, sharing personal experiences of overcoming challenges, and recognizing that success only makes sense

and has value when failure is understood as a requirement, not a detriment.

One of the first things parents can do is to encourage children with tests or experiments on independence. In a world full of helicopter parents, schools, organizations, and practically everyone else, parents can foster resilience in their children by allowing them to make small, often inconsequential choices that will grow their independence. Whether selecting their outfit or choosing a meal for dinner, these early decision-making opportunities help children consider their options, make choices, reinforce decision-making, gauge others, and understand the good and bad consequences of their decisions.

As children mature, parents can gradually increase the complexity of decision-making tasks, thereby building their confidence and preparedness for more significant challenges. Instead of rushing to rescue children from frustration, parents can encourage them to think critically and develop solutions. Parents can guide their children by discuss-

ing options but ultimately let them choose their course of action. This approach equips children with the skills to handle challenges and difficulties while empowering them to embrace uncomfortable situations.

Parents have the unique privilege, through love and vulnerability, to demonstrate failure as learning. Embracing that failure is trying and growing is the most incredible demonstration of resilience we can foster in our children. Failure is not the end of the road but the beginning of a valuable learning journey. By sharing their failures and the lessons learned from them, parents can create a learning space or "sandbox" for children to discuss their setbacks. When children fail, parents can help them analyze what went wrong and how they can improve in the future, transforming failure into a stepping stone for growth.

The world constantly changes, and adaptability is a crucial and underdeveloped skill. On the one hand, society wants children to think and act like little adults. On the other





hand, we delay every opportunity to prepare our children for the next chapter and challenge in their lives due to various circumstances. Parents again model and teach their children that change is a part of life, whether it involves moving to a new school or adapting to a new routine. Discussing strategies to cope with change and highlighting the new opportunities that every transition brings can prepare children for life's uncertainties. There's little risk in things remaining consistent and static. It's also innately unrealistic.

Another excellent tool is building a sense of responsibility. Assigning age-appropriate tasks, assignments, chores, and responsibilities within the family can instill a sense of ownership, accountability, and delivery in children. It helps them delay gratification and develop planning, time management, and prioritization skills, all essential components of resilient people. Other excellent resilient building techniques encourage robust physical activity alone and with others. Multiple studies demonstrate that exercise is vital for a healthy mind. Regular physical activity, competing in various endeavors, and learning the value of sleep recovery, proper nutrition, and avoiding intoxicants is crucial for mental and physical wellness and resilience. Finally, being part of a team enables reflection and self-evaluation that we all must be accountable



and counted on. Teamwork builds lifelong behaviors, discipline, camaraderie, and another pathway to resilience.

Another important resilience skill is understanding awareness and making critical decisions when they appear to be breaking the "rules." Children need to understand that rules exist for valid reasons such as safety, fairness, and the smooth functioning of society. However, parents should also teach their children that there are situations where rules may need to be questioned or even broken. Here's how parents can approach this delicate subject: Encourage children to think critically about regulations. Discuss scenarios where rules might be in place and encourage them to consider the reasons behind these rules. Pose hypothetical situations where questioning or breaking these rules

might make sense. These discussions help children develop the ethical judgment necessary to decide when rules should be followed and when they might be challenged. There are consequences for all decisions. Not all of them are bad. Finally, like most things, resilience is a series of tradeoffs and consequences. Resilience is built on a foundation of self-discipline and delayed gratification. Items can not always be given. Most often, our joy, rewards, and satisfaction are earned from decisions we make and don't make. Instilling the concepts of discipline and understanding regret is vital in shaping a child's resilience and preparedness for life. Discipline involves making choices, commitments, and following through, while regret stems from a life of reaction rather than action. We must teach and live the value of self-discipline.





Parents can emphasize the importance of discipline by teaching children to set goals, stick to schedules, and make choices that prioritize long-term benefits over short-term pleasures. Discipline instills a work ethic, intrinsic motivation, and confidence in children, preparing them for future challenges. Without any plan and preparation, some things can occasionally fall in place for success. But not often.

When there is no planning, example, emulation, or recognition that adulthood gets harder over time, regret becomes a powerful and often negative mindset. Failure is a great teacher. It can also be misinterpreted as a human shortcoming. Don't let it be a regret. Instead of instilling fear of failure, parents can help children understand the beauty of effort and the satisfaction derived from knowing they've done their best. By sharing their own experiences with discipline and regret, parents can demonstrate how they've used these experiences for personal growth and better decision-making.

Raising resilient and prepared children is a multifaceted endeavor that requires parents to provide grace, guidance, support, and opportunities for growth. Fostering independence, teaching problem-solving skills, embracing failure, and encouraging controlled exposure to challenging situations are essential components of building resilience in children. Balancing discipline with an understanding of regret helps children prepare for life's challenges by instilling a sense of responsibility, foresight, and proactive decision-making.

By implementing these strategies, parents can prepare their children for the wonderment and inequity the world offers all of us. The delicate balance between discipline and regret sets the stage for children to become resilient and prepared individuals who navigate the complexities of the modern world with grace and determination. Do not despair; prepare. 🍀



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**D**an is sought after and recognized homeland security authority with a wealth of experience in exigent leadership, crisis management, emergency management, continuity of operations, and security/anti-terrorism.

He is a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School, Harvard Kennedy School, Swedish Defense University, FBI National Academy, and the United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College.

Dan has played a significant role in numerous high profile and critical assignments. Dan has provided security and emergency management across the United States and its territories, and internationally. He has directly supported more than 800 declared disasters and served as the anti-terrorism officer/emergency manager in Washington, DC, during the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

He has consulted and produced various security and emergency management operations at the 1996 Summer Olympics, 2002 Winter Olympics, the 2004 Summer Olympic Games, and the 2016 Summer Olympics. He is a presenter, lecturer, and published authority in emergency management, asset protection, information security, leadership development, and physical security. He has also consulted for four of the largest marathons in the United States and the Super Bowl. The combination of leading Marines, large event management, emergency management, organizational leadership, anti-terrorism, and high-risk experience makes Dan O'Connor uniquely qualified for helping an organization both operationally and strategically.



*By Steven Sund*

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the basic tourniquet application technique from this program available in an easy-to-follow poster ([CLICK HERE](#)) [3].

Different types of tourniquets are available for purchase to the consumer, and they all generally do the same thing. A commercially available tourniquet is often made of a nylon strap with a buckle that allows it to be affixed around a limb and cinched by pulling the excess strap through the buckle or with Velcro. The tourniquet is then further tightened by twisting a windlass, a short rod affixed to the strap, significantly tightening the strap around the limb and restricting blood flow. The most common are the Combat Application Tourniquet (CAT) or Soft-T tourniquet. They are inexpensive and can be purchased online or at camping and outdoor stores. Tourniquets are small and can easily be carried in a purse, a briefcase, or a backpack. I take one in my backpack and computer case and keep one in all our vehicles. If you encounter a situation requiring a tourniquet and do not have one, other options can be utilized in an emergency. You can also use a belt, a robe tie, a necktie, a dog leash, an electrical cord, or non-elastic strap. Anything you can tie around an extremity and sufficiently tighten can be used as a tourniquet. Although studies have shown that improvised tourniquets may be less effective or fail more frequently than commercially available ones, in an emergency, something is better than nothing.

Do your best to stay calm and don't panic. Panicking only wastes precious time and is likely to increase the heart rate of the injured person, resulting in even more blood loss. This situation is the opposite of what you want. Trust me, I know that seeing someone injured and losing a lot of blood is going to freak you out, especially if it is a family member. You need to calm them, call 911, and move to stop the bleeding as quickly as possible by applying pressure to the wound and, if appropriate, using a tourniquet. Tourniquets can be applied over light clothing. Thick or bulky clothing should be removed. It is common for the injured to feel pain or discomfort when a tourniquet is used correctly. The tourniquet needs to be tight to control the bleed sufficiently. Some errors people experience when apply-

ing a tourniquet include placing it in the wrong location, making the strap or band too loose, or removing the tourniquet too soon. Once used and the bleeding has been slowed or stopped, only a trained medical provider should remove the tourniquet. If the injury is in a location that is not appropriate for a tourniquet, call 911 and immediately apply direct pressure to the wound to try to reduce the amount of blood loss. You can also use a tourniquet on yourself. If you are injured and bleeding from an extremity, don't panic. Your mantra needs to be, I WILL SURVIVE! Stay calm and look for a tourniquet or something else that may suffice. Proper action improves your odds!

Tourniquets are easy to learn how to use and can be a lifesaver. But like any learned skill, take the opportunity to refresh your awareness of how to use them and where they are kept. Take a couple of minutes three or four times a year to pull out a tourniquet and review the steps on how and when to apply it. This practice will keep things fresh in your mind so that when you are faced with a severe injury, you don't panic and can immediately go into response mode and start considering ways to help yourself or others. Tourniquets improve the odds. 🙏

#### Resources

<https://www.stopthebleed.org>

[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB\\_Applying\\_Tourniquet\\_08-06-2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB_Applying_Tourniquet_08-06-2018_0.pdf)

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/medical-professionals/trauma/news/the-crucial-role-of-tourniquets-in-trauma-care/mac-20531726>

[1] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK535393/>

[2] <https://www.stopthebleed.org>

[3] [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB\\_Applying\\_Tourniquet\\_08-06-2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB_Applying_Tourniquet_08-06-2018_0.pdf)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**S**teven Sund is a thirty-year law enforcement veteran, author, and adjunct instructor. Sund served for over 25 years with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington DC where he rose through the ranks to become the commander (Deputy Chief) of the elite Special Operations Division.

After a brief retirement, he joined the United States Capitol Police (USCP).

He was appointed the tenth Chief of Police for the USCP in 2019.



# Restoring Hope

## *at the Castle on the Hill*

By Dr. Deanee Johnson



In a small town, quietly nestled in the Appalachian mountains, is a commanding structure reminiscent of a castle through the eyes of the children who step through the threshold. Trudy's House in Beckley, West Virginia, offers a sanctuary to those children and their families during some of the most challenging times in their lives. Trudy's House is the headquarters of Just for Kids, Inc. Child Advocacy Center (JFK CAC). This non-profit organization provides a neutral, child-friendly environment for the investigation of child abuse and neglect and assists with interviewing child witnesses to violent crimes. JFK also has another location serving the tightly knit community of Fayetteville, WV. JFK is where law enforcement, child protective services, and other investigative entities can work together to investigate these crimes and improve offender accountability. At the same time, CAC staff offers space for child forensic interviews and provides comfort and support through therapy, advocacy, and resources.

On November 6, 2023, I assumed the role of executive director at JFK. It was my birthday, and I couldn't think of a better birthday gift for myself. Over the last twenty-plus years, I have dedicated my life to improving outcomes for children who have been abused. My career goal was to land an executive directorship of an agency whose clients would benefit from advancements in the field and whose board of directors and staff would be open to my "pie in the sky" vision of eradicating secondary trauma and compassion fatigue.

Some people might ask why this is so important. It's important because every family interacting with these professionals will remember this interaction for the rest of their lives. They will remember if their experience was positive or negative. Of course, we want all families to have a positive experience. And wouldn't it be nice if those whose experiences were less than positive had an understanding as to why? But it's not fair

to expect them to navigate the internal struggles that their investigative team members might be experiencing or excuse an apathetic caseworker, an uninterested interviewer, or a harsh detective.

Individuals who work investigating and responding to these types of crimes are exposed to the negative impact of trauma as well and are not impervious to being affected by such traumatic experiences; this is especially true for law enforcement, victim service providers, medical professionals, and mental health providers. However, we assume they have the tools necessary to address the added unprecedented emotional stress put upon them to hold offenders accountable where extensive systems and jurisdictional differences may pose an issue. That is where JFK can step in.

Many of the children and families who come to a child advocacy center are often plagued with anxiety, ambiguities, hopelessness, and fear. JFK understands these challenges and helps alleviate some of these added stressors for families, making the investigative process more victim-centered and child-friendly. However, I would be remiss as a leader in the field if I only advocated for the well-being of the children and families and not of the men and women who dedicate their lives to working these cases.

Repeated exposure to traumatic events will eventually lead to the deterioration of one's ability to function normally and impede mental health and cognition, often leading to compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue is the emotional or physical fatigue of caring for others without the consideration or time taken to care for oneself. It can leave an individual feeling hopeless or unable to feel compassion for others. It drains us of our motivations and depletes us of our happiness. As a result, we

lose focus and often become isolated and depressed. This vicarious response is the antithesis of what these children need in a response team.

When a family comes to JFK, it is now my responsibility to ensure that the professionals they interact with do so in a compassionate and empathetic manner to restore hope rather than deplete the already lowered reserves. I have committed to the JFK staff and investigative team members to address vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue.

Taking this position has renewed my dedication to supporting staff and team members' exposure to the realities of trauma by advocating for self-care and prioritizing mental and physical health before others. Child advocacy centers are known for being trauma-informed and accredited based on their practices. It is my desire that when investigative team members come to our sites, their eyes widen with optimism because they know we are here to provide a reprieve from chaos, give them a sense of calm during the storm, and the feeling that they have support and understanding when case outcomes don't always go in the direction that we'd hope they would.

We are responsible for ensuring that our trauma response agencies and leadership lead by example by caring for their staff, being trauma-informed, and caring for themselves. The adage is true: one can not help others if one cannot help oneself first. Think of it as the mental health oxygen mask. The children and families we serve deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. They need supportive people in their corner shining light in a very dark space. They need their investigative team to be not only physically present but emotionally present, reassuring them that one day they will overcome their trauma and can look back at the castle on the hill as a beacon of hope. ♡



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**D**eanne' Johnson, Ph.D., began her career in victim services as a mentor for adolescent sexual assault survivors. She has over 20 years of experience in the crime victim field, working directly and indirectly with victims meeting the needs of children and their families.

Dr. Johnson is the Executive Director at Just for Kids, Inc., a child advocacy center that serves Raleigh and Fayette counties in West Virginia. Before becoming the executive director at Just for Kids, Inc., she established ACCS Online, a consulting company assisting agencies in responding to child adversities and trauma. She is a trained child forensic interviewer and assisted in establishing the first forensic interview program for Patsy's House Children's Advocacy Center in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Dr. Johnson completed a three-year fellowship with the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, where she created the Child Exploitation and Polyvictimization Working Group, which worked in conjunction with the U.S. Office of the Deputy Attorney General to identify the range of child sexual exploitation programs available nationwide, illuminating best practices. She has assisted Facebook's Safety Advisory Board to establish policies protecting children and youth on their social media platform. She is Chair Emeritus of the nonprofit Preparedness Without Paranoia's advisory board.

Dr. Johnson has a B.A. in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University, an M.A. from Midwestern State University in counseling, and a Ph.D. in child development from Texas Woman's University.



# HOW MUSIC THERAPY *CAN HEAL BODY AND MIND*

By Shannon Crocker and Kim Tapper



**W**hat is music therapy, and how does it work? Music therapy is the use of music to improve individuals' and groups' physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Music therapy can involve listening to music, playing instruments, singing, composing, improvising, or moving to music. Still, unlike music educators or musicians, music therapists are clinically trained to use music to address non-musical, therapeutic goals. Music therapists are Board-certified, trained professionals who use music to manage their client's specific needs and goals, such as reducing pain, anxiety, depression, and stress, enhancing communication, memory, or cognition, or promoting social and emotional skills, self-expression, or creativity.

Music therapy works by stimulating different areas of the brain that are involved in

processing emotions, memories, language, and motor functions. Music can also affect the autonomic nervous system, which regulates heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and other vital functions. Music can also create a sense of connection, belonging, or identity, especially when shared with others or linked to personal or cultural meanings.

What are the benefits of music therapy for traditional purposes?

Music therapy has been used in different settings, such as hospitals, schools, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, hospices, and community centers. Some of the benefits of music therapy for traditional purposes include:

- Improving physical health and functioning, such as reducing pain, nausea, fatigue, or muscle tension, improving the immune

system, wound healing, or motor skills, or enhancing physical endurance, coordination, or mobility.

- Improving mental health and functioning, such as reducing anxiety, depression, or trauma symptoms, improving mood, self-esteem, or coping skills, or enhancing cognitive abilities, such as attention, memory, or problem-solving.

- Improving emotional health and functioning, such as reducing anger, fear, or sadness, improving emotional regulation or expression, or enhancing empathy, compassion, or resilience.

- Improving social health and functioning, such as reducing isolation, loneliness, or conflict, improving communication, interaction, or cooperation, or enhancing social skills, relationships, or support networks.

- Improving spiritual health and function-

ing, such as reducing existential distress, enhancing meaning, purpose, or hope, or facilitating transcendence, connection, or growth.

What are the potential benefits of music therapy for veterans and law enforcement?

Music therapy can benefit veterans and law enforcement personnel who may face unique challenges and risks in their work and life, such as exposure to violence, trauma, injury, or death, high levels of stress, pressure, or responsibility, or difficulties in adjusting to civilian life, family, or society. When dealing with trauma, the impact has happened on a body level, and more significant healing can occur if it involves somatic experiences (whole-body) rather than only using verbal processing. Music can also be more accessible to a person, especially when they cannot speak about what has happened. Other benefits of music therapy for veterans and law enforcement include:

- Providing a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental space to express and process emotions, thoughts, and experiences related to their work and life.

- Helping to cope with the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as flashbacks, nightmares, hypervigilance, or avoidance, by using music to calm, soothe, or distract the mind and body, or to confront, reframe, or integrate the traumatic memories.

- This link can help you find groups and programs around the country that specialize in veterans' law enforcement and music: <https://www.operationwearehere.com/musictherapy.html>

What if I don't have access to a music therapist or don't want to go to therapy?

Music therapists practice nationwide, and you can use this link to find someone near you: <https://www.musictherapy.org/about/find/>. Suppose you do not have anyone in your area or are uncomfort-



able reaching out for help. In that case, you can use music for yourself or your child in several ways that can be therapeutic for reducing anxiety, stress, and loneliness and creating connections.

- Make playlists for moods (happy, sad, frustrated, unmotivated, etc.). Try to find songs that match your mood and express your initial emotions and those that help ease you into your desired mood. For example, if you're anxious or frustrated, your playlist might start with songs that match that mood and make you feel you are not alone, and after a few of those songs, add pieces that help you breathe easier and make you feel calmer so that as you listen, you get the frustration or anxiety out and replace it with more ease.

- Try writing a song! You don't have to be a musician or even a good writer. Just make up a tune, write out your thoughts and feelings, and see how it

feels to sing it out loud, even if it's just to yourself!

- Grab a drum (or Tupperware or pots and pans) and make some noise (in a place you won't disturb others!) Physically getting our emotions out in healthy ways releases tension and stress, and the vibrations can create a feedback loop that may provide soothing. When you finish, try to sit in silence for a few deep breaths and see how you feel.
- Pick a family song that brings you joy or connectedness and have a dance party (whether you think you can dance or not!). Combining music and movement has tremendous benefits! 💖



Photography by Sharon Hallman; courtesy of A Place To Be

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kim Tapper (Co-Founder of A Place To Be) and Shannon Crocker (A Place To Be Board Member).

A Place To Be is an award-winning nonprofit based in Loudoun County, Virginia, using music therapy, performance, and expressive arts to create community, belonging, and hope. Learn more at: [www.aplacetobe.org](http://www.aplacetobe.org)



# BECOMING PART OF THE SOLUTION

by Nina Delgadillo

**A**ctive assailants, frequently armed with firearms, have become far too familiar in our society. Families now find themselves having to discuss these violent, life-and-death issues with their children.

In this challenging time of increased threats and violence, parents and communities are asking what they can do to prevent shootings and other types of violence. There is no single solution. However, there are ways to help prevent an act of violence, and we can all be part of the solution.

Law enforcement refers to this concept as a "force multiplier," acting as a team with the same mission. This mission is to keep our children, communities, and nation safe. We need to work together to share information and do so promptly and consistently. If you see or hear something, say some-



thing! Alert authorities who may be able to avert an act of violence.

I have spent my entire adult life in public service, committed to protecting the public, engaging in the community, and mentoring youth. I have witnessed the anguish first-hand of a mass school shooting, bombings, murders, and numerous other acts of violence. I empathize with those who struggle to feel safe and who yearn for some solution to this problem.

When I retired from federal law enforcement, I knew my future would include my will to continue sharing empowerment tools with others, including youth, educators, students, businesses, communities, and first responders. Teaching is in my DNA.

Each time another act of gun violence occurs, there are renewed debates regarding firearms laws, the possession of firearms, mental health, and the lack of laws designed to reduce gun violence. When these conversations are presented,

I am often asked what should be done to protect families, schools, businesses, and houses of worship. My response is based upon my knowledge and experience as a federal agent, a school safety director, and a risk manager and the relationships I maintain with safety and security professionals around the globe.

Threat assessment, threat prevention, and threat risk mitigation can have a direct impact on reducing gun violence. Schools, businesses, communities, and houses of worship are often soft targets. Each of these sectors should be fully invested in the following topics:

- Identifying and understanding types of threats
- Identifying the pathway to violence
- Recognizing leakage before acts of violence and understanding the need to report critical information immediately
- Learning methods to avert violence to prevent threats
- Developing skills that can mitigate threat risks

- Improving everyday readiness and response
- Requesting Threat and Violence Risk Assessments (TVRA)
- Developing a thorough, written, all-hazards safety plan
- Conducting well planned and coordinated training and rehearsals

All of these will help you avert a violent attack while increasing your ability to survive an attack.

I also encourage parents to learn about the safety preparedness and response plans at their child's school or college. In the same way, if parents are curious about policies related to academics, sports, arts, and other opportunities at their child's school, they should also ask specific questions related to school safety.

Here are some areas that parents should consider discussing with the officials at their child's school:

- Ask if they have a reporting system if a student hears or learns about

concerning behavior or actions. Talk to your child about how this system works and the importance of communicating their concerns to a school official as soon as they observe or hear concerning behavior.

- Offer to be a part of the school's site safety committee. In California and other states, the final annual Comprehensive School Safety Plan approval requires parent representation, staff, and administration.
- Confirm how emergency messaging is delivered, ensure your emergency contact information is current, and ask if the school has a secondary backup method of communication. In a large-scale incident, cell phone service may be negatively impacted, and a secondary means of communication may be necessary.
- Discuss Reunification Plans with your children and how they are deployed after an incident. In an evacuation, do not go directly to the school. While this sounds counter-intuitive, realize that you are impeding the route of law enforcement. They will need to have a clear path of travel to respond to the threat, as well as other first responders who need to render medical aid. Parents will be directed to a Reunification Location.
- Ask about student release policies. Remember to bring identification when you check your child out since this be-

comes critical in accounting for all students. Doing this also ensures your child is released to the appropriate person.

- Speak with your children about the importance of safety and preparedness, and encourage them to ask questions and share their feelings and concerns. Remember Stranger Danger? Parents nationwide supported this campaign. Reinforce the importance of practicing ways to increase safety in every aspect of your lives at home, school, restaurants, the mall, and houses of worship. Knowledge is power.

Those are just a few tips I routinely share with parents. For additional detailed information, seek more extensive school safety training with vetted professionals. Be sure to research any company you consider hiring thoroughly. The professionals you entrust to assess and support your interests should have real-life experience working with first responders, communities, schools, houses of worship, and businesses. Ask them for specific examples in which they have faced crises and what their roles and responsibilities were in these events. You trust them to enhance your ability to prevent, mitigate, and respond to potential threats, so ensure they have the experience to teach you best practices.

Most importantly, be informed, be prepared, be ready. You can be part of the solution! 🍀

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nina Delgadillo is the Director of Safety and Emergency Preparedness at Panthera7 Inc. a retired Senior Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Nina engaged as a master instructor for ATF at the National Academy in Glynco, GA, throughout her career. There, she instructed courses on explosives, undercover investigation (basic and advanced), interviewing, and training the trainer. Nina conducted complex firearms, narcotics, explosives, and arson investigations, domestic and international terrorism investigations, and undercover investigations. Her significant career investigations include the Unabom investigation, the Williams Brothers investigation (arson of multiple synagogues, a reproductive health center, and a double murder), and international terrorism cases following 9/11 with the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Nina's investigative work has been featured on syndicated shows, including Forensic Files, Investigation Discovery, America's Most Wanted, and Crimes of the Century.

Following her ATF retirement, Nina became director of the Office of Safe Schools in the Sacramento City Unified School District, where she managed a 2.8-million-dollar contract with the Sacramento Police Department and directed the district's use of an online emergency management system. She also led a team of school resource officers, probation officers, and non-sworn personnel. The SRO team was contracted

to the district. It was responsible for maintaining a safe and positive environment for 50,000 students, staff members, parents, and members of the surrounding community.

Nina has been an active speaker at national school safety conferences and an advisor to national school safety organizations. In 2021, she became the Risk and Safety Coordinator for Schools Insurance Group, a Joint Powers Authority, where she provided specialized guidance related to the coordination of various projects associated with risk management and loss prevention for 34 client school

### Awards / Recognition:

- Recipient of ATF's Distinguished Service Medal; four FBI Director Awards; awards from the United States Department of State, Department of Diplomatic Services, the United States Air Force, Office of Special Investigations; recognized by United States Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign
- Recipient of Team Resolution from California State Assembly Member Jim Cooper for Outstanding Efforts in School Safety
- Recipient of State Senator Richard Pan's Unsung Hero Award
- Recipient of the City of Sacramento's Champion of Excellence in Education Award
- Recognized by the School Safety Advocacy Council for efforts in advancing school safety
- Member of the National Association of Threat Assessment Professionals

Nina has three children and five grandchildren and resides in Sacramento, California. She can be reached at [nina@Panthera7.com](mailto:nina@Panthera7.com).



# K Through 2 - No Topic is Too Taboo

By Rosemary McDonnell

For decades, emergency managers have been trying to find creative ways to promote messaging around personal disaster preparedness. Cheerful characters, such as Bert the Turtle, taught children and adults alike about how to respond to a nuclear detonation with catchy tunes and lighthearted animation. But how do kids learn about emergencies in the present day? Are nuanced preparedness practices—such as lockdown drills—teaching our children anything meaningful about what the threat is and how it may impact us? As the threat landscape continues to evolve throughout our nation and its history, parents are struggling to find ways to adequately prepare themselves and their children for emerging dangers, especially ones that may be difficult to fully comprehend and process, without deleterious psychological effects (sometimes almost akin to living through the emergency or disaster itself).

"Duck and Cover" Defense Poster of a 1950 movie that depicts the danger from a Soviet nuclear attack (Photo by © CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images)



In the Cold War era, the United States formed the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), which many believe to be the beginning of a formalized emergency preparedness structure in our nation. This period of history can be categorized by an inextricable link between national defense and education. It was through the National Defense Education Act of 1958 that this relationship was institutionalized. Through this Act, bomb threat preparedness became a mandatory aspect of curriculum. This included the requirement of teachers to practice this preparedness through duck-and-cover drills, which simulated recommended actions to take as an individual in case of an atomic attack. While it is unclear how effective these tactics may have been in a true nuclear attack, one result that was apparent was that students brought how these lessons back home to their parents. It was through this exchange that parents increased their knowledge about personal preparedness and, in turn, their disaster resiliency.

It is no secret that children can be positive influencers by bringing the message of preparedness home to their families. The Federal Emer-

gency Management Agency (FEMA) supports this concept and offers many interactive and kid-friendly emergency preparedness materials for parents to utilize. In elementary schools, however, emergency preparedness is not a set topic in a majority of curricula. While many elementary schools invite local fire fighters in to speak to students about fire safety, there is little to no mention of the effects of natural disasters and other manmade emergencies or how to prepare for them. Lockdown drills have become common practices that almost match the frequency of fire drills in some jurisdictions, but rarely will school boards allow teachers to truly explain the reasoning behind these drills to younger children or provide any meaningfully impactful preparedness tactics to keep them safe in other venues besides school.

In September 2013, I had the pleasure of meeting Lee Ielpi at the 9/11 Tribute Museum. Lee is a retired, highly decorated member of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) who lost one of his sons (a fellow FDNY firefighter) in the 9/11 attacks. In 2004 he co-founded the Tribute WTC Visitor Center, a small museum next to the World Trade Center site where visitors can come to learn more about 9/11 through the personal stories of those who experienced the events. He was also a fierce advocate for adding formalized lesson plans regarding the 9/11 attacks to school curricula, which faced some backlash from school boards across the country. Not only should the memory of this incident be kept alive, but it should also be told in an accurate depiction as to not foster racist and xenophobic attitudes. After almost ten years since the attacks on 9/11, was the hesitation from school boards that this event was not considered 'history' yet, or was it simply too taboo?

After hearing Lee's story, I felt compelled to contribute in any way possible to the personal preparedness of children for events that they likely were being exposed too, yet not provided much education on in terms of what to expect or how to mitigate the effects of them. I started by reaching out to my alma mater, an elementary school in a suburban area of New York. By researching and consolidating age-appropriate preparedness materials from FEMA's website, I formed lesson plans filled with interactive activities and group conversations around different types of natural and man-made disasters. At only approximately 20 minutes in length, these lesson plans were translated into presentations that I gave with a group of students from St. John's University whom I prepped beforehand. In April of 2014, we completed our first round of presentations in what would become an annual tradition at that same elementary school. Each year (except for the year 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic) for the better part of the past decade, we have presented to grades Kindergarten through Second grade (K through 2) in a one-day event where we go class-to-class speaking to students about various emergency preparedness topics.

Lessons will vary from appropriate ways to use the 911 call system, what to do when the power goes out, what to do in a 'stranger danger' situation, why it is important to have a fire safety plan at home and practice it with your family, and how to recognize the intensity of a storm by listening for thunder after seeing lightning. The most important lessons that I have learned from this experience are that children are being impacted by all types of emergency situations, and that impact follows them throughout their lives. During our group conversations, students are very open and vividly describe situations where they may have lived through something as serious as a hurricane or house fire, but also situations as small as a smoke detector going off

or a power outage that lasts a couple of hours. Without giving children an anchor of knowledge to pull from in any type of emergency, no matter the severity, they will likely react out of fear. By normalizing and socializing conversations around disaster preparedness with children, they will likely experience less anxiety and feel more confident during these events if they occur. In a life-threatening situation, your brain will search your previous experiences for an anchor that tells it how to respond. If there is no previous experience or exposure to this type of conversation on emergency preparedness, fear will likely take over by impacting your mind and body. Every year, I am pleasantly surprised by how much information that the older grades remember from previous years of our visits, which is a true testament to the impact of even the most basic conversations on disaster preparedness.

There are many resources for parents to utilize to begin conversations with their children on personal emergency preparedness. 'Ready Kids' is a national campaign that has tools and information for kids, teens, families, and educators to help before, during, and after disasters. By visiting [ready.gov/kids](https://ready.gov/kids), you can access free games, coloring books, activities, and lesson plans to make disaster preparedness a practice that your children will likely look forward to, while simultaneously helping them to gain extremely valuable practice in emergency response to enhance their overall resiliency.💖



Dr. Rosemary McDonnell poses with a group of first grade students holding up Disney/American Red Cross disaster preparedness coloring books after giving a presentation at a New York elementary school in May 2022.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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She graduated from St. John's University from the inaugural cohort of their Homeland Security Doctorate of Professional Studies program. She is a graduate of the June 2022 cohort of the Center for Homeland Defense & Security's (CHDS) Emergence Program, as well as the May 2023 CHDS Early Career Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program cohort. Dr. McDonnell serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for articles that fall under her subject matter expertise. She is also an Adjunct Associate Professor and Mentor Collective Homeland Security Student Mentor at St. John's University, as well as an Adjunct Professor at Idaho State University, teaching various emergency management and homeland security courses.

She serves as a Panelist on the Disaster Recovery Institute International Foundation's annual scholarship selection committee, as well as a Board Member and the Secretary of the Center for Homeland Defense & Security Association (CHDSA).



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# READYFDNY: WHAT IS READYFDNY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

By Anna Schermerhorn-Collins

*Submitted by C.T.D.P. - Tuesday, 04/13/2021*

**R**eadyFDNY debuted as a new feature on DiamondPlate in May 2020. Conceptualized before the coronavirus pandemic, ReadyFDNY was designed in anticipation of the Greater New York area suffering another catastrophic event on the scale of 9/11 or Superstorm Sandy. Following FEMA's Ready.gov format, ReadyFDNY shapes its recommendations to meet the needs of the responder community. As essential workers during a crisis, FDNY members are always first to respond, always willing and able, but often leave our loved ones facing the same challenging times at home. By providing preparedness guidelines for the entire FDNY workforce and our families — EMS, Fire, and non-uniformed (civilian) employees — ReadyFDNY acknowledges the unique challenges faced by essential workers and how these challenges impact family preparedness:

- Long hours and shift work often keep First Responders physically away from their families when catastrophic events occur.
- Work demands often leave First Responders unable to communicate readily with family members in times of crisis.
- The anticipated hazards faced by First Responders create added stress for family members, especially during times of crisis.
- Having family preparedness plans in place before catastrophic events helps reduce stress and reassure that family members will be safe, allowing First Responders to focus on crisis mitigation.

ReadyFDNY does not presume employees already have a family preparedness toolkit in place. Therefore, ReadyFDNY offers family preparedness guidelines for various emergencies, including extreme weather, terrorist attacks, pandemics, family medical crises, and work-related emergencies. New content incorporates the latest policies and procedures as preparedness is evolving. Past ReadyFDNY content is available on DiamondPlate in the *Regular Features* column:

- Hurricane Sheltering Guidelines During a Pandemic (May 2020)

- How to Build Your Disaster Supply Kit (June 2020)
- Financial Preparedness for the Next Disaster or Emergency (July 2020)
- What is Your Crisis Communications Plan? (August 2020)
- Time to Review Your Family Emergency Plan (September 2020)
- The Atlantic Storm Season Is Not Over – Secure Your Home and Vehicle to Keep Your Family Safe (October 2020)
- What Is in Your Medical Closet? (November 2020)
- Stamina and Mental Exercises for Pandemic Fatigue This Winter (December 2020)
- How Will the Fire Department Notify Your Loved Ones in an Emergency – Is Your Personal Contact Information Up-to-Date? (January 2021)
- Are You Prepared for a Family Medical Emergency? (February 2021)
- Winter Storm Preparedness (March 2021)

If there is a topic you would like ReadyFDNY to cover, please let us know. Send comments to [Anna.Schermerhorn-Collins@fdny.nyc.gov](mailto:Anna.Schermerhorn-Collins@fdny.nyc.gov). 📧

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## PDF Resources

Ready Responder - the Foundation of ReadyFDNY ([DOWNLOAD HERE](#))

ReadyFDNY Content ([DOWNLOAD HERE](#))

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anna Schermerhorn-Collins has over 27 years of service in the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY). After joining the FDNY in 1996, Anna served as a firefighter in Ladder Company 9 in lower Manhattan until her promotion to lieutenant in 2005. As a lieutenant, Anna served in Engine 93 in the densely populated Washington Heights neighborhood of upper Manhattan. For the past four years, Anna has worked at the FDNY Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness (CTDP) to push forth emergency preparedness initiatives and higher educational opportunities for the FDNY workforce. Anna graduated from the University of Minnesota/Twin Cities, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology in 1988. In March 2017, Anna graduated from the Center of Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, with a Master of Arts in Security Studies. Her studies at CHDS provided a foundation for Anna's work at CTDP, including ReadyFDNY – emergency action planning for family members of the FDNY workforce.

Being a member of FDNY during the attacks on September 11, Superstorm Sandy, and the Covid-19 pandemic, I became acutely aware of the additional challenges first responders and our families face when confronted with large-scale emergencies and disasters. Long hours and shift work keep first responders physically away from or unable to communicate with their families for extended periods, adding to the stress felt by both first responders and our families in anticipation of the hazards each may encounter during times of separation. Having family preparedness plans in place before catastrophic events helps reduce stress and reassurance that family members will be safe, allowing first responders to focus on crisis mitigation and support community resiliency.

# ***FIRE SAFETY FOR PARENTS***

## ***ENSURING CHILDREN'S WINTER SAFETY***

By Richard J. Blatus - Assistant Chief (Retired) - Fire Department New York



**A**s the holiday season approaches, it's the perfect time for parents to educate their children on the importance of fire safety. Throughout my career with the Fire Department of New York, I've hosted countless firehouse visits welcoming children of all ages, from preschoolers to the upper elementary school grades. While such holidays are enjoyable and educational, it's vital to recognize that the ultimate responsibility for teaching and reinforcing fire safety lies with the adults.

Recognizing that fires and related injuries are among the leading causes of death for those under the age of 14, the teaching of fire safety education to our loved ones is of paramount importance. Children often look to their parents as role models, particularly regarding safety within and around the home. While visits to the local fire company can be beneficial, reinforcing fire safety is an ongoing process that should begin at home.

To assist parents in this critical endeavor, I've compiled a "Top 10" list of points to empathize and review with the young members of your home.

### 1. Conduct Fire Drills

The importance of practice and planning cannot be overstated. Designate two

exit routes from your home and practice evacuation at least twice a year. Conduct drills during both day and night hours to ensure that children are comfortable with emergency procedures at any time. Explain the importance of crawling along the floor to avoid smoke and establish a pre-designated meeting place outside the home. Ensure that babysitters are also familiar with your safety and evacuation plan.

### 2. Teach Children What to Expect During a Fire

Instruct children to cover their mouth and nose with a damp cloth while crawling to evacuate. Teach them to feel the door and doorknob for heat before opening, as a hot door indicates danger.

### 3. Once Out, Stay Out

Reiterate that once outside, no one should re-enter the home. Assure children that the family pet can get out on their own.

### 4. Install Smoke Alarms

Place smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on each level of your home, including the kitchen and sleeping areas. Demonstrate to your children how the alarms sound and why changing the batteries is essential twice a year.

### 5. Instruct Children on the Dangers of Open Flame

Candle-related fires are a significant concern, with many victims being children between 5 and 9. Emphasize the dangers of open flames and candles. Consider using battery-operated candles and reinforce that fire is a tool, not a toy.

### 6. Stop, Drop, and Roll

Teach children how to stop, drop, and roll if their clothing catches on fire. Emphasize the importance of stopping, not running, dropping to the ground, covering their face with their hands, and rolling until the fire is extinguished.

### 7. Lighters and Matches

Instruct children not to handle lighters and matches and keep them out of their reach, preferably in a locked drawer or cabinet.

### 8. Call 9-1-1

Ensure that children know how to call 911 or your local emergency number after evacuating from the home.

### 9. Flames and Heat Sources

Teach children to avoid open flames and heat sources, particularly in the kitchen.

### 10. Online Education

Utilize online resources like those



provided by the American Red Cross and the National Fire Protection Association. These organizations offer interactive games and educational materials that can make learning about fire safety enjoyable for children.

The winter season presents unique challenges as the cold drives families to remain indoors. Spending more time inside our homes potentially increases the risk of fire-related incidents. Educating your children and incorporating the above safety tips into your daily routine can help ensure their safety and well-being.

My career as a professional firefighter has exposed me

to many tragic incidents involving our youth. Children playing with matches under a bed, fires started by candles too close to combustible material, and smoke detectors with batteries removed instead of replaced. There have been too many preventable incidents that have resulted in the loss of life, which has changed the lives of families forever.

Remember that you can make a difference by sharing these valuable fire safety lessons with your children. Have a safe and joyful holiday season, knowing you are taking the steps necessary to keep your children safe! ♥



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chief Blatus is a 42-year member of the FDNY, previously serving as the Acting Chief of Fire operations with direct oversight of the daily operational and administrative duties of uniformed fire personnel.

As a senior member of the agency, Chief Blatus has worked to advance strategic and operational readiness initiatives. A strong proponent of training, Rich is a published author and has lectured nationally on topics ranging from homeland security to leadership and emergency management training.

He holds a Master's Degree in Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate School and degrees in both Fire and Business Administration.

# Afterward



**P**reparedness is a topic that holds a special place in my heart. In my role as a higher education professional, I have the privilege of working with first responders regularly. These dedicated individuals put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe, not just for us but for their own children as well. Their commitment to preparedness is unwavering, and it's a testament to their passion for creating a safer world for all of us.

I often find inspiration in the stories of these brave men and women, who go above and beyond to protect and serve. They understand the importance of readiness and the impact it can have on our lives. Through their experiences, I've come to appreciate the value of preparedness as a means of empowerment, even for the youngest members of our society.

As a parent myself, I know that it can be challenging to strike the right bal-

ance between imparting knowledge about preparedness and ensuring that our children feel secure rather than fearful. That's precisely why this magazine is here – to provide resources, ideas, and guidance on how to engage our children in a positive, age-appropriate way.

Our readers, you, make the biggest difference in the lives of your children and communities. Your commitment to teaching preparedness and resilience is what will ultimately shape a brighter and more secure future for all of us. We are dedicated to supporting you and your families as you navigate this world of uncertainties, and we look forward to sharing stories, tips, and activities that will help you instill these essential values in your children.

Together, we can create a safer and more secure world for our children to thrive in.

**Heather Hollingsworth-Issvoran**  
Chair, PWP Advisory Board



A photograph of three people—two women and one man—collaborating in a professional setting. They are gathered around a table, looking at a laptop. The woman on the left is Black, the woman in the middle is white, and the man on the right is white with a beard. They are all dressed in business casual attire. In the background, there are white shelves with various books and documents.

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Are you a parent, caregiver, first responder, or educator who would like to contribute to *Parents With Preparedness* magazine? Send us your thoughts, or article submissions to:

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