

# Violence Prevention Initiative

When reading the newspaper, one cannot help but be struck by the surge in violence this summer in areas like Englewood and Lawndale. Protecting children has never been more challenging, but it is not enough to just keep them occupied – they need to build skills toward the future. With programs like **Providing Youth with Positive Alternatives**, Family Focus is keeping children safe and learning all year long.

Our programs provide **positive alternatives to premature sexual activity**, early parenthood, school dropout, and **gang involvement** by educating youth about their personal responsibilities and boundaries. The programs for youth ages 6-14, are offered before and afterschool, the time during which a lack of constructive activity and supervision can lead to risk-taking behavior. Activities include **tutoring, interactive workshops** and **support groups, career and academic planning, field trips, and recreational activities**. Last year, 51% of teachers reported improved classroom behavior from children involved with Family Focus' programs.

We also provide enrichment activities so children can showcase their creative and analytical skills. Children work on **digital media projects**, resulting in short films that they write, direct, film and edit - developing vital **computer skills** that can open future doors. Collaborations with local arts organizations such as the **Joffrey Ballet, Redmoon Theatre** and **Urban Gateways** broaden the world view of the children we serve at a time when they need hope. Or, students can join one of our **robotics clubs**, which meet weekly during the school year at 24 schools and teach children vital STEAM (**Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math**) skills, as well as the value of working together as a team.

Through the **Chicago Safe Start** (Safe From the Start) program at **Family Focus Englewood**, we are providing therapeutic services to children under six who have been **exposed to violence** in the community and in their families. We are currently serving **90 children** in that community in addition to 40 caregivers and parents. In our other Family Focus centers throughout Chicago, we provide **center-based summer camps** to keep hundreds of children safe, active and learning all summer long. These camps operate all day and provide much needed childcare for **local working parents**. We **hire teens** from the local community as camp counselors, enabling them to obtain **work experience** and serve as **positive role models and mentors** to the younger children. In essence, we are teaching these teens parent skills – building a support network for these children that will last long after summer is over.

Your support of Family Focus helps keep over **2400 children** safe and builds lifelong skills and networks that impact their future and our community. Click [here](#) if you want to support keeping kids safe.

