

FAQ for Families

Q. Is active shooter training too scary for my child?

A. Your child is receiving age-appropriate training. Also, NASP and NASRO published a *“Best Practices Considerations for Schools in Active Shooter or Other Armed Assailant Drills”* that makes several recommendations for conducting drills as well. It is also recommended to have meetings with the school psychologist, one-on-one aides, etc. ahead of time before any identified child is subjected to drills. Think about it this way.

We begin training children at 5-6 years old about fire safety. In the early stages of Kindergarten, our children are trained in how to survive a fire in a building. We also teach them stranger danger and what to do in that situation, which is scary, but with the proper application of training is not scary for your child. Our training is teaching your child how to survive a Violent Critical Incident, again properly instructed should not be scary.

Q. We’ve always had lockdown drills and have been fine. Why do we need to change?

A. We are not suggesting getting rid of lockdown. However, history has proved lockdown as a stand-alone strategy is not enough. Locking down and barricading has been proved to work as seen in many ALICE in Action stories. If lockdown is your stand-alone strategy, what are you preparing people to do if the shooter is in the room and you don’t have time to deploy your strategy? Human action and participating in your own survival has been proven to work.

Q. I’m worried about my child using counter. If he or she throws something or runs, will he or she make the aggressor mad, draw attention to him or herself, and get hurt?

A. Throwing an item and creating a distraction creates opportunities to heighten your survivability. The distraction you create is an action and creates a reaction by the aggressor. This provides the opportunity to put time and distance between you and the aggressor, out of reach of an edged weapon. Putting distance between you and a firearm diminishes the accuracy of the gunman. It has been reported that an individual is 90% less likely to be hit by a gunman if you are moving. By moving you also create another reaction the gunman must react to. It takes time for the eyes and brain to process new information. Therefore, reaction never beats action.

Q. An active shooter event won't happen here so why do we need training?

A. There has been a steady increase in Violent Critical Incidents since the year 2000 across all industries (FBI). Schools account for 21%-23% (NYPD Active Shooter Mitigation) of all Violent Critical Incidents, so it is a real-world possibility. The US Department of Education has recommended proactive training since June of 2013. If districts are not meeting or exceed recommendations, they will be held liable.

These events are happening every day in many locations. Would you rather be prepared or be reactive? You have insurance on your home, how many times have you had to use it? Probably not much, if ever. However, you still have it, just in case. It's the same with this training. We hope you never need to deploy these tactics, but wouldn't you rather have yourself and your family prepared?

Q. Can ALICE training only be used when my child is at school?

A. The training you receive can be utilized anywhere you may find yourself in harm's way. We experience VCIs in all areas you frequent, such as airports, houses of worship, shopping malls, concerts, etc. There are many scenarios we can run through. However, no-one can predict human action. The strategies we teach empower individuals to participate in their survival no matter the location.

Q. How can I become more involved?

A. Taking this course is a great first step! Your next step is to have a conversation with your child so he or she is prepared and will know what to do in a Violent Critical Incident. You can also visit alicetraining.com/resources to learn more about why we need options-based strategies and how to respond to a Violent Critical Incident.

Also, support your school district on their options-based strategies program. They are providing the safest learning environment for your child but need support and not negative responses.

Q. How do I talk to my child about Violent Critical Incidents?

A. At this age, some parents may feel "awkward" having this discussion as it's a terrible event. At this point, you have probably already discussed with your children about stranger/danger, fire, good touch/bad touch, and where to go if they become separated from their parents.

These are all examples of terrible events that can occur; however, you train and prepare your children to increase survivability. When training a child for stranger/danger it is never discussed what would happen if they get in a stranger's vehicle, it's discussed what to do to prevent getting in a stranger's vehicle. With fire, it's never discussed what happens if caught in a fire, the discussion is how to get out of a structure and where to go to meet others (rally point).

Training ALICE to a child is very similar and follows the same pattern of training parents provide children for other man-made and natural disasters – by discussing the options available in different situations and how to utilize them. Focus on survivability. Ensure you talk to your child about all the options they have to survive.

Q. How do I talk to my pre-teen about Violent Critical Incidents?

A. Pre-teenagers are very aware and conscience about Violent Critical Incidents, although they may not be knowledgeable about them. Tell them it is okay for them to do what they need to survive. Empower them... you know what your child can handle.

Q. How do I talk to my teen about Violent Critical Incidents?

A. Teenagers can know what is right but may have not been empowered to do what “feels” right; rather than follow orders. Many teens are afraid of getting in trouble if they don’t do what their teachers tell them. Make sure your teen feels empowered to make his or her own survival decisions.