

Alert: National "Code Orange:" Tips For Parents

September 10, 2002,

Today a "Code Orange" was issued in our country. "Code Orange" is defined as "high risk of terrorist attacks." At a local level this means to alert necessary agencies and review coordinated security plans. In the valley it is safe to say that the agencies involved in our security have met and have up-to-date plans. This is the same with all of our schools. Each school has safety and security, critical incident and emergency crisis plans that are updated annually and reviewed with faculty. We know that our schools are the safest they can possibly be. The outline of our safety and security plans can be viewed on this website by clicking on department, then Student Assistance Program and finally click on Crisis Management. Please feel free to contact your child's school to ask questions about their specific plan.

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT TERRORIST ALERT

Whenever a child is motivated to ask a question -- offer an answer that the child understands

- ✓ Listen first - talk second.
- ✓ We want to encourage our children to remain curious and to keep the lines of communication open and if we refuse to answer the child might be reluctant to ask questions in the future.
- ✓ Answer the question so that it meets the child's intellectual and emotional needs. Don't overwhelm them with everything you know about the subject. Too much isn't necessarily good!

Provide understandable information and realistic reassurance.

- ✓ Keep in mind that when kids ask questions about dangers and risks, they are usually looking for reassurance.
- ✓ The most important thing to do is to reassure children that you'll do everything you can to keep them, yourself and the rest of the family safe!

Turn off the TV.

- ✓ The continual repeated commentaries can fuel fears!

Try to control your responses -- it matter more than anything!

- ✓ If you're overcome by fear and sadness, your kids, even if they're very young, will pick up on that. Talk to another adult -- take care of yourself so that you are emotionally available to meet the needs of your children.

Play with children who can't talk yet.

- ✓ If you have a child that is too young to ask questions or express feeling, that doesn't mean he isn't fearful or worried about the atmosphere around him.

Take care of yourself!

- ✓ Remember it's hard to care for others when you have not taken care of yourself!