

## **School Lockdowns: What they are & How to talk to your children about them**

Fifty years ago, air raid drills were the routine practice in schools, in which students were instructed to “duck and cover” under their school desks in case of a nuclear bomb blast. However after the Columbine shooting in 1999, preparing for an active shooter situation has become the new standard for school districts across the nation. According to [Associated Press](#) reports, there have been about 500 school-associated violent deaths over the past 20 years—which averages out to about two per month. These statistics have called for school systems and parents alike to face the disturbing reality that their very own students could become victims of school-associated violence.

School lockdowns are the procedural drills used in the event of a perceived danger present inside the building. They typically include the securing of each occupied room by locking the doors and directing students away from windows and doors. Hallways are cleared, and law enforcement officials will typically arrive to secure the site and arrange for evacuation if necessary. Students are kept in their classrooms until the lockdown has ended.

As many schools are required to practice these drills multiple times throughout the school year, they have become the norm for students of all ages. Though still, many parents hesitate to discuss these lockdown drills with their children, as they can invoke unnecessary fear and distress. However, it is important now more than ever to ensure that students are prepared and equipped with an action plan in the unfortunate event of an active shooter present in their school. Clinical therapist [Judith Simon Prager](#) recommends that parents instruct their children to always refer to an authority figure for safety and information in the case of an active shooter. She also recommends instructing children to remain calm and on guard in emergency situations, and explain that it is necessary to practice the drills regularly to ensure preparedness. Prager wrote a comprehensive [guideline](#) for parents on how to talk to children about these lockdown drills, with emphasis on empowering them with the knowledge to stay safe and protected at school.

In recent years, however, many people have come forward and argued that these standard guidelines and drills are too reactive, and increase the likelihood of students becoming victims. Police Lieutenant [Doug Allen](#) of Colchester, Vermont, says that “just [locking] down” is not enough. He stresses the importance of teaching students to be “prepared to fight out against the aggressor.” State education agencies across the country are urging school districts to update the active shooter response plans with new guidelines and procedures that are more proactive and empowering for students.

At BulletBlocker, our NIJ IIA bulletproof backpacks were created to counteract the reactive emergency guidelines implemented in school systems. The discrete anti-ballistic panel weighs less than two pounds, and cannot be detected inside the backpack. The backpack can easily transform from a storage space for books into a mechanism to defend oneself against a threat. Students simply hold the pack between themselves and the threat by using the straps as handles, and using the pack as a shield to provide coverage for their upper torso. Dr. Seifert, forensic and child psychologist, believes that the BulletBlocker backpacks are “absolutely necessary” in this day and age. Seifert asserts that “every parent should buy a [bulletproof backpack] to protect their children.” Not only do our backpacks give children the ability to actively protect themselves in emergency situations, they also give parents the peace of mind and confidence they deserve when sending their children to school each day.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/judith-simon-prager-phd/talking-to-kids-about-a-lockdown\\_b\\_4117330.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/judith-simon-prager-phd/talking-to-kids-about-a-lockdown_b_4117330.html)

<http://hardtalkswithkids.com/tips-for-talking-to-kids-about-school-lockdown-drills-by-judith-simon-prager-phd/>

<http://www.colchestersun.com/proactive-crisis-response-to-replace-lockdown-drills/>