



**Bully Proofing
for
Teachers of 4–8 Year Olds**
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The family is the most powerful, the most humane, and by far the most economical system known for building competence and character in children and adults alike. Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1986.

Program Description:

This unit is designed to educate teachers of young children (Age 4-Grade 3) on how to recognize bullying through signs and symptoms, gender differences, and how to effectively intervene.

Learners will learn:

- * to recognize signs and symptoms of bully behavior and who the victims tend to be
- * gender difference related to bullying
- * what is normal peer conflict
- * the signs that a child may be being bullied
- * ways of intervention
- * conflict resolution styles

Materials:

- apple, knife, transparencies, handouts, script, closing story
 - Extension Fact sheet on bullies
- <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/human/guide/bullies.pdf>

Lecture

Bullying behavior may seem rather insignificant in younger children, especially compared to older kids bringing guns to school. Bullying is often dismissed as part of growing up. But it is actually an early form of aggressive, violent behavior. What is bullying behavior in elementary school can easily turn into violence by middle and high school. Everyday approximately 100,000 children carry guns to school. As many as 6,250 teachers are threatened each day, and of those about 260 are actually attacked (Lee, 1993). Bullies often cause serious problems that schools, families and neighbors ignore. Teasing at bus stops, threats on playgrounds, kicking or shoving – it is all fair game to a bully. Children know who the bullies are long before the teachers and staff do. Yet children do not tell on bullies. They do not tell because they are afraid. They are

afraid that they will become worse if they tell or that they might become the victim if they help someone by telling. And sadly, most victims feel that no one will help them or be able to stop the bully even if they do tell. Today we will learn the characteristics of bullies, what you can do to help prevent bullying, and how to help the victim and bully deal with this unhealthy behavior.

Visual T1 Handout T1/H1 <Myth or Fact Sheet>

This discussion sheet can be used as a transparency (T1) or a handout (H1). Take a couple minutes to do the sheet and then go over the answers as a group.

What is a bully?

Bullying is when a child is a target, over time, of repeated negative actions. It is not bullying when two children of the same age, strength or developmental level fight or quarrel.

For younger children ages 4 through 1st grade a typical conflict may be conflict over toys, or possessions (It's mine.), and wanting to be first in line for activities. For Grades 1 and 2 selfishness and wanting one's own way can be the root of conflict. Also this grade level tends to start threatening with tattling or not playing with ("I'm not inviting you to my birthday party.") Grade 3 is starting to focus on what is fair and what isn't. Teasing, gossiping and feeling superior is evident in this age.

T2 : A bully is:

A bully is a child:

- * who is aggressive for rewards or attention;
- * who lacks empathy and has difficulty feeling compassion for other children;
- * who does not feel guilty. A bully fully believes that the victim provoked the attack and deserved to be bullied.
- * who likes to be in charge, to be the "boss". A bully likes to win in all situations;
- * whose parent(s) (or other significant role model) often model aggression;
- * who thinks in unrealistic ways (e.g., "I should always get what I want.").

Boy vs. Girl. Are there Gender Differences?

T3 – Read The New Kid on the Block poem

We know the answer to this question from our first activity. A common myth is that all bullies are boys. Both girls and boys are bullies. Boys are more likely to admit to being one and are sometimes easier to catch bullying because of the way they bully.

Boys tend to bully with aggressive tactics. Physical aggression is frequently used and it tends to be swift and effective. Tripping someone, a quick blow, or a knee in the stomach are all likely behaviors. Verbal aggression often accompanies the physical aggressions or is used to threaten later physical consequences.

Girls tend to bully with social alienation and intimidation strategies. A victim might be teased about her clothing, gossiped about in a malicious manner, or become the recipient of intimidating notes. Some girls are targeted by cruel and demeaning extortion tactics with the promise of inclusion in a desired peer group if a specific act is performed. Female bullying is typically more insidious, cunning, and difficult to spot than is male bullying.

(Interesting tidbit: Merle Froschl, codirector of Educational Equity Concepts (EEC) (a company that developed an anti-bullying program called Quit It!) shared results of a teasing and bullying study EEC conducted in grades K-3 in New York City. Some of the highlights of the study included that boys initiated bullying or teasing incidents 3 times as much as girls, although boys and girls were equally likely to be recipients.)

Normal Peer Conflict – What Bullying is Not

Conflict is a part of every child's life experience. As children learn to give and take, learn about cooperation and social interaction, conflict naturally occurs. Children in the early years do not always think of others. Their goal in both friendship and play is egocentric, or self-centered. A common response to frustration is one of rejecting the other child. Normal peer conflict is typically characterized by the developmental level of the children involved. Aggression and hurtful remarks are part of conflict at all ages; they do not necessarily mean that a bully-victim problem exists.

T4 – Normal vs. Bullying

Bullying can be recognized by these unique social interactions:

Bullying is repetitive negative actions targeted at a specific victim.

Bullying is an imbalance of power so that the victim has trouble defending himself or herself.

Bullying is usually characterized by unequal levels of affect. The child being victimized is typically very upset.

Who are the Victims?

Children who are the victims of peer aggression and bullying are not randomly targeted as once believed, nor are they selected exclusively because of external appearance or disabilities. The victims of bullying are likely to be anxious, insecure children who lack social skills and the ability to defend themselves. They are often physically weak, cry easily, and are easy targets because they yield to bullying. These children are referred to as passive victims because they fail to fight back.

There is another, smaller group of children who are likely to be victimized because of their provocative behavior. Provocative victims are children who are often restless, irritable, and who tease and provoke others. While these children will fight back to a point, they are ineffectual aggressors, and more frequently than not they end up losing the power struggle with the bullies and thus are also targets of bullying behavior.

The child who is the victim of a bully is probably suffering in silence. Children who are victimized usually don't tell and don't expect help.

What types of children are likely to be victims:

A Child who:

is isolated and alone during most of the school day;
is anxious, insecure, and has trouble making friends;
is small or weak and therefore unable to defend himself or herself;
cries easily, gives up when bullied, and is unable to stick up for himself or herself very well;
may have suffered past abuse at home;
who may have a learning disability.

Sometimes a victim (even though he or she may not seem like a victim) is: A child who:

is often restless, irritable, and who teases and provokes other children;
will fight back a little bit, but ends up losing; tries not to give in to the bully, and gets very upset when he or she does lose.

Types of Bullying?

T5: What is Bullying:

Bullying is not always easy to define. Bullying in younger children can include:

Physical bullying – Pushing, spitting, tripping, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats;

Verbal bullying – Name-calling, mocking, sarcasm, spreading rumors, persistent teasing;

Emotional bullying/Social alienation– Excluding from a group, gossiping, spreading rumors, ethnic or racial slurs, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation;

Intimidation – Graffiti, a public challenge to do something, playing a dirty trick, taking possessions, coercion;

Sexual bullying – Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

Emotional bullying, like ridicule and exclusion, seems to be more common than physical violence and, judging by what young people express, it can also be the most difficult type of bullying to cope with or prove.

Possible signs of Bullying

Have participants break into small groups of 2 or 3 and brainstorm signs of bullying. When finished brainstorming give out handout H2 of possible signs of bullying. A child may indicate by their behavior that he or she is being bullied.

If a child shows some of the following signs, bullying may be responsible.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- * is frightened of walking to or from school;
- * doesn't want to go on the school / public bus;
begs to be driven to school;

- * changes their usual routine;
- * is unwilling to go to school (school phobic);
- * becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- * starts stammering;
- * attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- * cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- * feels ill in the morning;
- * begins to do poorly in school work;
- * comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- * has possessions end up "missing";
- * asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- * has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
- * has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- * comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen);
- * becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- * is bullying other children or siblings;
- * stops eating;
- * is frightened to say what's wrong;
- * gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviors could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Pose group discussion question: What do you think persistent bullying can lead to? After discussion put up transparency T6 to review.

Persistent bullying can result in:

Depression;
 Drop in self-esteem to self-defeating, fearful attitude;
 Shyness;
 Poor academic achievement;
 Feeling scared, withdrawn, isolated, and/or sad;
 Physical symptoms (e.g. headache, stomachache, general fatigue);
 Not liking school and;
 Threatened or attempted suicide.

Why it is Important to Respond to Bullying/Intervention

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. All children will be exposed to peer aggression at some point in their school experience. Teachers have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. Young children cannot handle true bullying situations by themselves. Dr. Dan Olweus (1991), who has researched bully-victim problems for over twenty years, found the single most effective deterrent to bullying to be adult authority.

One out of every Seven children reports being involved in bullying experiences at school. Six percent are likely to bullies while 9% of children report being victims (Greenbaum, Turner, & Stephens, 1989). In an average elementary

classroom of twenty children, there are most likely three children who need your help.

Intervention/Prevention

Prevention may include:

writing a set of school rules (put up T7 – School Rules example);
signing a behavior contract (put up T8 – Behavior Contract example);
writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying (put up picture – T9 or use poem again)
reading stories about bullying or having them read to class (put up list of books – T10 ; also available as a handout – H3)
making up role-plays;
having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

Teacher attention and verbal praise are the most powerful reinforcers of good behavior for elementary age children. But other reinforcers can also be given such as:

- * being allowed to sit next to the teacher at lunch time;
- * helping the teacher with a special project;
- * a positive note or special certificate sent home;
- * displaying the child's photograph and name in the classroom or hallway on a "Caring Student of the Week" poster;
- * a cool pencil or other school supply;
- * gift certificate to local fast food restaurant or video arcade;
any edible treat;
- * being allowed to pick his or her partner for the next project.

Optional segment – Also available as handout – H4

Things schools and communities can do to prevent bullying

In order to support teachers and students, schools need to:

–Work with staff and pupils together to create an anti-bullying policy that includes issues of racist bullying.
–Ensure that the policy is readily available to staff, parents and pupils. Some schools ask pupils to sign the policy and keep it in their school file
–Explain that everyone has a part to play in preventing bullying – no one is allowed to be a bystander. Anyone who knows about or witnesses bullying, must tell and get help.

–Act when told about racist or any kind of bullying.

Be aware and vigilant. If possible, the staff should try to uncover the bullying as this protects the victims from being seen as tattling and further risking their safety.

Provide a private way for frightened victims to tell, such as individual meetings with all students on a regular basis so no one is seen to be singled out or a box where children can anonymously post suggestions, complaints and comments. Ensure that lessons in self esteem and friendship skills, assertiveness, handling conflict are included in lesson plans.

Ensure the safety and support of victims.

Try first to mediate so that pupils are given a chance to resolve things peacefully, if possible.

Help bullies to understand that their behavior is completely unacceptable and that they must take responsibility for their actions, apologize and make amends. Record repeated and or serious incidents of bullying so that trends in a class or with certain pupils can be monitored and stopped.

Inform parents/guardians about bullying incidents and what action is being taken – in serious cases, ask them to come to a meeting to discuss the problem. Call the social services or police, if necessary and appropriate.

Make it clear that suspension or exclusion will be considered in serious cases.

Teach all students bullying prevention which can include strategies such as: ignore the bullying, pretend not to hear

walk away quickly; use body language to look determined, strong and positive even if you feel frightened inside

shout NO, GO AWAY as loudly as possible

always tell a trusted adult if you are bullied

Playground Bullying: Suggestions for teachers and staff:

- Have participants get into small groups of 2–3 people to share and talk about playground bullying suggestions.
- Work with the children to make up a list of playground rules.
- Use an assembly to enable the children to present the rules.
- Photocopy the rules and have every child sign them. Keep a copy in their files so that no one can say 'I didn't know the rules!' Ensure that there is a copy of rules in the staff handbook.
- Stagger the times the children play, if necessary.
- Have different parts of the playground set out for games, quiet activities, playing with balls, etc. Much trouble arises because children run into each other while playing.
- Ensure that the playground supervisors understand that they have a role in monitoring children's behavior.
- Deal with bullying and intimidation immediately. (Telling children to 'go and sort it out' almost ensures that a fight will follow. Sorting it out is the responsibility of the playground supervisors.)
- It is important to have clear procedures for the supervisors to report such incidents.
- If you have a bad problem with bullying on the playground, keep a camera handy and take pictures. Works wonders sometimes just to point the camera at the trouble spot – no one wants a photo proving they were the cause of the trouble.

Consequences for bullying:

Pupils, parents and staff need to know that bullying will not be tolerated and what will happen if it persists. School staff should discuss and agree on what consequences will be for children who bully. Since bullying behavior is antisocial and hurts other children, it works well to assign consequences that involve prosocial behavior and helping other students. It is important for all staff members to be consistent in applying consequences for all bullying incidents be all students.

Following are some examples of possible (positive) actions to counteract or teach lessons to children about bullying:

- * Read a book on bullying to class;
- * Perform a helpful act for the victim;
- * Having the child call his or her parent(s) to explain one's behavior;
- * Having lunch with or doing something nice for the student one bullied (this requires adult supervision and willingness);
- * Observing the playground time of younger students, passing out rewards to children displaying caring, kind behaviors to others.
- * Volunteering to help younger children with school work.

Conflict Resolution

Teaching children to solve their own problems with peers is a difficult task. Some children seem to naturally do this better than others. We do know that those children who are not good at this skill can be taught strategies which assist them. There are no absolute right or wrong ways to solve problems, but there are techniques that work better at different ages and developmental levels.

Have participants take out writing utensil for questionnaire.

The following activity will help identify your primary approach to solving problems.

T11 Conflict Resolution or give out handout

It is important to realize that staff members have different styles of dealing with conflict management. There are situations where each of the approaches may be appropriate and successful. Typical conflicts in children ages 3–5 are conflicts over toys and possessions, ("It's mine!"), going first, and wanting one's own way. Tattling or not playing with again is threatened in older 5 year olds. Typically the preferred styles of resolution in younger children are the No-nonsense, Smoothing, or Problem Solving styles. Action oriented, separation of children, changing the topic and undoing what the offender did also work with this younger age.

Small group Activity

Divide group participants into groups of 4 or 5, and have each work on the following scenario. Then gather back together and discuss the scenario as a whole group. This activity will help:

- Identify the skills and comfort levels of the participants
- Openly discuss feelings and beliefs about intervention with aggressive children.
- Develop a plan of action for different types of conflict that can happen during the day.

Scenario (This can be read to the participants as a whole or made as individual handouts for each group to review- Questions will be transparency T12)

This is your first year teaching 1st grade of pproximately 20 students. Soon after the year begins, you notice one student, Lauren, is encouraging some of the other girls to perform behavior that makes you feel uneasy. Specifically, Lauren often makes fun of Tamara, a small, shy girl who has some mild learning difficulties. Lauren will go over to Tamara's desk on Fridays when the alphabet work is handed back and loudly ask

Tamara how she did. When Tamara won't answer, Lauren says things like, "I bet you did bad and just don't want to tell." In spite of your reminders that grades are a private matter and that no one has to share his or her grades with another, the pattern persists. One day later in the fall, you become more alarmed when you have playground duty and notice that Tamara is rejected by the other kids and left out of their play. As you walk closer to observe, you overhear Lauren telling one of the other girls to remember their "secret." After school that day, you ask one of the girls to talk to you about the "secret." You learn that Lauren has made a pact with the other girls to "never talk to Tamara." If a girl slips up and talks to Tamara, she is excluded from Lauren's club.

Discussion Questions/Intervention Design (T12)

Divide into small groups and have each group take on one of the discussion questions.

One participant from each group can share the groups suggestions.

Design an intervention that details steps you would take with Lauren to stop her from bullying Tamara and encouraging others to join her in excluding Tamara.

Would you handle the problem within your classroom alone or involve other members of the school staff to assist you?

Would you contact Lauren's parent(s) as well as the parents of the other girls and, if so, how would you approach each set of parents?

Design an intervention that details the steps you would take to protect Tamara from further victimization.

How would you offer protection to Tamara both on the playground and in the classroom?

What efforts might be needed to restore Tamaras' self-esteem and confidence about her academic work as well as her value within the peer group?

Summary

Children cannot thrive in an environment of fear. Ultimately all children are effected when bully-victim problems go unaddressed. The victims feel humiliated, fearful, and some are physically tormented and hurt. The silent majority of children, those who stand by and watch, are effected as well. Some are secretly afraid of being targeted themselves; others are left feeling guilty and remorseful for not protecting the victimized children. The bullies also come out as losers. Research (Eron, 1987) has found that a boy who is a bully at age eight is three more times more likely to be convicted of a crime by age thirty and less likely than others to finish college and locate a good job. Girls who bully are more likely to raise children who bully.

Parents and schools together can stop this cycle by providing a safe, nurturing school environment for all children.

Closing Activity

(you will need a sharp knife and apple for this closing activity)

Tell (or read) the story about the little lonely star.

Once upon a time the sky was very dark at night. There were no stars... except one... a very tiny star. This little star was all alone and felt very lonely all by himself. One day this lonely star went to see a very wise, very old man who lived on the earth on top of a high mountain. The lonely little star asked the old man if he could help. Because the old man loved this little star very much, and because he was very wise, he said he would do two things.

First, the old man reached behind him and pulled out a beautiful, shiny black bag. He opened it up, reached inside and pulled out a handful of shimmering, glimmering stars. With one great swoop of his hand, he filled the night sky with a thousand stars.

"There," said the wise old man. "Now that you have many stars to be your friends. But because you have been so lonely, I am going to do something else for you. I am going to place special helpful stars on earth, inside something special." He snapped his fingers and it was done.

Do you know where that wise man put that star? He put that star in the hearts of teachers and somewhere else....

Take the knife and cut the apple in half horizontally to make two equal portions. Pull the apple apart and show the "star" to the group.

Discussion Activity

Discussion Questions/Intervention

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