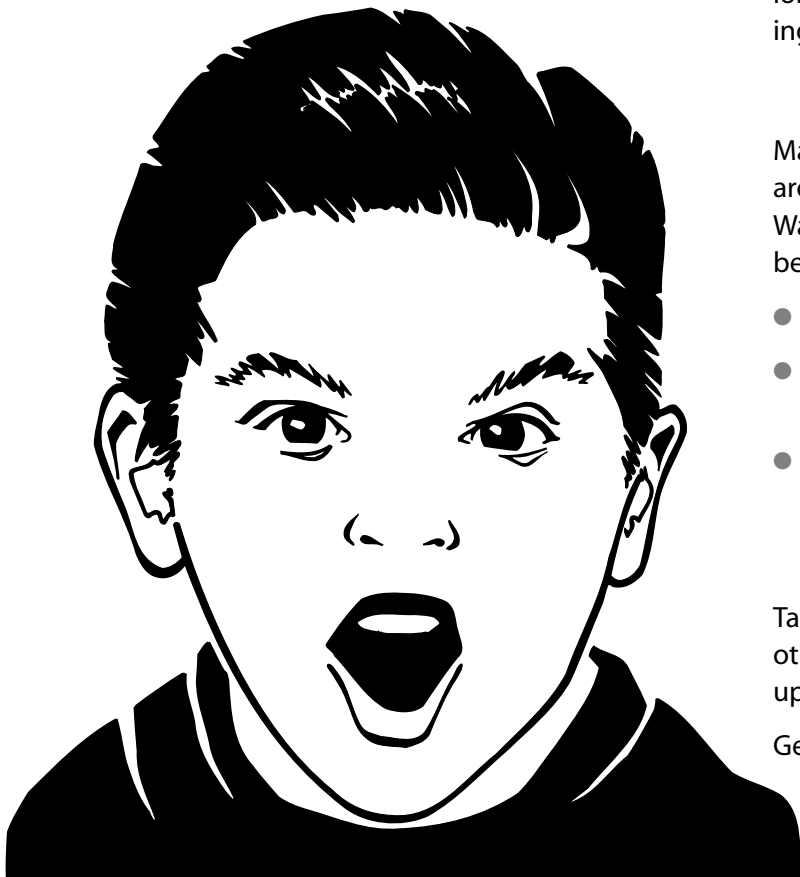


Working with a Bully

Think back to when you were in school. Do you remember kids who were often pushing others around, making fun of other kids, or spreading rumors? These kids were bullies. Bullies have been around for a long time, but the shootings in schools have made adults take a harder look at this type of behavior.

Bullies make children afraid and reduce their ability to learn. In the past, bullying was often thought of as just part of growing up. Adults turned the other way and didn't do anything about it. Studies are now showing that the violence we are seeing in schools can partly be blamed on bullying.



What does bullying look like?

There are three forms of bullying:

Physical: The most common includes hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and taking things that belong to others.

Verbal: Includes teasing to hurt others, name-calling, and making threats.

Emotional: Includes spreading rumors, controlling other children, excluding children.

Bullying often begins when a child is young. Studies have shown that children who bully are more likely to have other negative behaviors as they get older, such as stealing or taking drugs.

Playing vs. Bullying

Many bullies will say they are just playing around. But playing is different from bullying. Watch for these points to decide if a child is being bullied:

- one child is more powerful than the other
- one child wants to hurt, embarrass, or put down another child
- the behavior happens again and again — with the same person or with others

What can you do?

Take a stand against bullying. Don't look the other way and think it's just part of growing up.

Get children to think about what they are saying and doing.

If you hear a child putting another child down, ask him if his words are meant to

be helpful or hurtful. For example, one child tells another that she is ugly. Stop the child who made the comment and ask, "Carl, when you told Sara that she is ugly, did you say those words to help her or hurt her?" Go on to explain why we don't say things to hurt others.

Give children the power to say "No."

When you see a child teasing another, take both children aside. Ask the child being teased, "Joe, does it bother you when Alys says you're a little kid?" If Joe says, "Yes," turn to Alys and say, "Joe says that it bothers him when you call him a little kid. Joe wants you to stop saying that. Joe, tell Alys, 'No,' if she says something that bothers you."

You can't say, "You can't play."

Keeping others from playing often starts at a young age. It's a common way for bullies to put others down. Make a rule in your child care that children can't tell others they can't play. When a child says, "You can't play," this is a good time to get the group to do some thinking together. Tell the children, "You can't say, 'You can't play.' How are you going to work this out so you can all play?" Then get the children to think of ways so everyone can join in the play.

Protect children's play.

If a child takes a toy from another child, move in to do some teaching. Say to them, "Gina, there's a problem here. Bob had that truck in his hand and you took it away from him. You need to give that truck back to him. You may have it when he's finished playing with it. I'll help you find something else to play with until he's finished."

Adults need to take a stand against bullying.

Every child is special.

Help children learn and understand that every person is special. Help children think about their strengths. Try creating "All About Me" books in which the children can draw pictures of their families, pets, their house, favorite foods, things they like to do, etc. When the books are finished, each child may want to share his book with the other children and talk about it. During sharing time you can talk about ways that this child is alike or different from others in the group. Point out that it's important to value and respect ways that we are different from each other.

READ BOOKS ABOUT BULLYING

Books are great teaching tools. You may want to look for some of the following children's books in your local library to read to the children.

The Sneetches, by Dr. Seuss

Move Over, Twerp, by Martha Alexander

The Big Bad Bully Bear, by Ginnie Hofmann

The Berenstain Bears, No Girls Allowed, by Stan and Jan Berenstain

The Berenstain Bears and the Bully, by Stan and Jan Berenstain

Mean Maxine, by Barbara Bottner

Tyrone the Horrible, by Hans Wilhelm

Maxine in the Middle, by Holly Keller

Chrysanthemum, by Kevin Henkes

Loudmouth George and the Sixth Grade Bully, by Nancy Carlson



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