

Information about:

Bullying

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Introduction

Information About Bullying is part of a series of information packets developed by the Vermont Family Network (VFN). Designed to provide basic information, the packet includes fact sheets, articles, advocacy tips, and resources for families of children with special needs and for the professionals working with them.

After reading the packet, we hope that you'll have a greater understanding of bullying and the ways in which parents and professionals can support children at home, in school, and in the community. We've selected information from a variety of sources, and many articles are on the Internet.

Thank you to BEST (Building Effective Strategies for Teaching), Vermont Department of Education, for making this publication possible. Thanks also go to the organizations and authors who gave us permission to use their articles and fact sheets. Use of any specific articles in this packet is meant for information purposes only and doesn't indicate any endorsement on the part of VFN of the views and opinions of the authors.

Because your comments are important to us, we've included a reader's response form at the end of the packet. Please take a few minutes to fill it out and return it to our office. Thank you.

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Bullying

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Bullying is a common experience for many children and adolescents. Surveys indicate that as many as half of all children are bullied at some time during their school years, and at least 10% are bullied on a regular basis.

Bullying behavior can be physical or verbal. Boys tend to use physical intimidation or threats, regardless of the gender of their victims. Bullying by girls is more often verbal, usually with another girl as the target. Recently, bullying has even been reported in online chat rooms and through e-mail.

Children who are bullied experience real suffering that can interfere with their social and emotional development, as well as their school performance. Some victims of bullying have even attempted suicide rather than continue to endure such harassment and punishment.

Children and adolescents who bully thrive on controlling or dominating others. They have often been the victims of physical abuse or bullying themselves. Bullies may also be depressed, angry or upset about events at school or at home. Children targeted by bullies also tend to fit a particular profile. Bullies often choose children who are passive, easily intimidated, or have few friends. Victims may also be smaller or younger, and have a harder time defending themselves.

If you suspect your child is bullying others, it's important to seek help for him or her as soon as possible. Without intervention, bullying can lead to serious academic, social, emotional and legal difficulties. Talk to your child's pediatrician, teacher, principal, school counselor, or family physician. If the bullying continues, a comprehensive evaluation by a child and adolescent psychiatrist or other mental health professional should be arranged. The evaluation can help you and your child understand what is causing the bullying, and help you develop a plan to stop the destructive behavior.

If you suspect your child may be the victim of bullying ask him or her to tell you what's going on. You can help by providing lots of opportunities to talk with you in an open and honest way.

It's also important to respond in a positive and accepting manner. Let your child know it's not his or her fault, and that he or she did the right thing by telling you. Other specific suggestions include the following:

- Ask your child what he or she thinks should be done. What's already been tried? What worked and what didn't?
- Seek help from your child's teacher or the school guidance counselor. Most bullying occurs on playgrounds, in lunchrooms, and bathrooms, on school buses or in unsupervised halls. Ask the school administrators to find out about programs other schools and communities have used to help combat bullying, such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, and anger management training, and increased adult supervision.
- Don't encourage your child to fight back. Instead, suggest that he or she try walking away to avoid the bully, or that they seek help from a teacher, coach, or other adult.
- Help your child practice what to say to the bully so he or she will be prepared the next time.
- Help your child practice being assertive. The simple act of insisting that the bully leave him alone may have a surprising effect. Explain to your child that the bully's true goal is to get a response.
- Encourage your child to be with friends when traveling back and forth from school, during shopping trips, or on other outings. Bullies are less likely to pick on a child in a group.

If your child becomes withdrawn, depressed or reluctant to go to school, or if you see a decline in school performance, additional consultation or intervention may be required. A child and adolescent psychiatrist or other mental health professional can help your child and family and the school develop a strategy to deal with the bullying. Seeking professional assistance earlier can lessen the risk of lasting emotional consequences for your child.

For more information see *Facts for Families*:

www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/facts_for_families_numerical_list

[#33: Conduct Disorder](#)

[#55: Understanding Violent Behavior in Children](#)

[#65: Children's Threats](#)

[#66: Helping Teenagers with Stress](#)

See also: *Your Child* (1998 Harper Collins) / *Your Adolescent* (1999 Harper Collins)

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You may also mail in your contribution. Please make checks payable to the AACAP and send to Campaign for America's Kids, P.O. Box 96106, Washington, DC 20090.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) represents over 7,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists who are physicians with at least five years of additional training beyond medical school in general (adult) and child and adolescent psychiatry.

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Easing the Teasing: How Parents Can Help Their Children

Children who are teased on a school bus, in class, or during recess often don't want to go to school. Unfortunately, teasing can occur anywhere, and it is difficult to prevent—despite the best efforts of parents, teachers, and school administrators to create a more cooperative atmosphere (Ross, 1996). Most young children become upset automatically if they are called a name or ridiculed in any way. Parents cannot always protect children from these hurtful situations, but they can teach their children useful strategies to help them deal with teasing. Young children who learn these coping skills at an early age may be better prepared for more significant social challenges and conflicts in their preteen and teen years. This Digest discusses different types of teasing, why children tease other children, and strategies for both parents and children to help them deal with teasing.

Types of Teasing

Not all teasing is harmful—playful teasing can be fun and constructive. Teasing and being the target of teasing can help young children develop social skills that they will need in adolescence and adulthood (Ross, 1996).

Playful or good-humored teasing occurs when it causes everyone to smile or laugh, including the person who is being teased. In contrast, hurtful teasing includes ridicule, name-calling, put-downs, and saying or doing annoying things. Unlike playful teasing, hurtful teasing may cause the person being teased to feel sad, hurt, or angry. More hostile teasing, which may include tormenting or harassing, may require ongoing intervention by a parent, caregiver, teacher, or school administrator.

Why Children Tease

Children tease for a number of different reasons:

- **Attention.** Teasing is a good way of receiving negative attention, and, unfortunately, for many children, negative attention is better than no attention.
- **Imitation.** Some children model or mimic what is happening to them at home by acting the same way to others at school or in the neighborhood. These teasers are children who may be teased by siblings or who experience aggressive or harsh parenting.
- **Feelings of superiority or power.** Many teasers feel superior when they put others down, or they may feel powerful when teasing upsets others (Olweus, 1993).
- **Peer acceptance.** It is not uncommon to see children engage in teasing behavior because they may perceive it as being the "cool" thing to do. It may help them feel part of a group. The need to belong

may be so strong that a child may tease others to be accepted by the "popular" children.

- **Misunderstanding differences.** A lack of understanding of "differences" may be the underlying factor in some teasing. Many children are not familiar with or do not understand cultural or ethnic differences. In some instances, a child with a physical or a learning disability may be the target of teasing because she is different. Some children criticize anyone who is different instead of trying to learn or understand what makes others special.
- **Media influence.** One cannot discuss the reasons children tease without acknowledging the powerful influence of the media. Our children are frequently exposed to teasing, put-downs, sarcasm, and a lack of respect in many of the television programs geared toward children.

How Parents Can Help

Strategies for Parents

When your child experiences teasing, it is important to see the problem from the child's point of view. Sit down and listen attentively to your child in a nonjudgmental way. Ask your child to describe the teasing. Where is it happening? Who is the teaser? Understand and validate your child's feelings. It might be helpful to relate your experience of teasing as a child. The following strategies may also help:

- Do not overreact. A parent's overreaction can result in a child overreacting.
- Convey the message, "You can handle it."
- Encourage children to be with children who make them feel good, not bad.
- Review your own behavior. Do you model the behavior of a "victim," or do you tease your children inappropriately?
- Teach or review and practice the strategies discussed below.

Strategies Parents Can Teach Children

Teasing cannot be prevented, and children cannot control what others say; however, they can learn to control their own reactions. Parents can teach their children the simple strategies listed below that will empower them and reduce feelings of helplessness. When children realize that there are effective strategies that they can use in teasing situations, their coping skills are strengthened.

- **Self-talk.** Encourage children to think about what they can say to themselves when they are in a teasing situation (Bloch, 1993). A child could say to himself, "Even though I don't like this teasing, I can handle it." A child should ask himself, "Is the tease true?" Often it is not. Another important question is, "Whose opinion is more important . . . the teaser's or mine?" It is also helpful for the teased child to think about her positive qualities to counteract the negative remarks.

- **Ignore.** Displays of anger or tears often invite more teasing; therefore, it is often effective for children to ignore the teaser. The child who is being teased should not look at or respond to the teaser. Children should try to pretend that the teaser is invisible and act as if nothing has happened. If possible, walking away from the teaser is encouraged. Parents can role play "ignoring" with their children and praise children for their excellent "acting." It should be noted that ignoring may not be effective in prolonged teasing situations.
- **The I message.** The "I message" is an assertive way for children to effectively express their feelings. The child expresses how he feels, what has caused him to feel that way, and what he would like others to do differently. For example, a child could say, "I feel upset when you make fun of my glasses. I would like you to stop." This strategy generally works better when expressed in a more structured or supervised situation, such as a classroom. When used in other situations, such as recess or on the school bus, it may lead to more teasing when the teaser perceives the child being teased is upset. Nevertheless, it is an easy skill to teach children to help them deal with many situations. The child should learn to make eye contact, speak clearly, and use a polite tone of voice.
- **Visualization.** Many young children respond well to visualizing words "bouncing off" of them. It provides them with the image of not having to accept or believe what is said. This image can be created by showing how Nerf balls bounce off a person. Another effective visualization is for a child to pretend he has a shield around him that helps the teases and bad words bounce off. Again, this technique gives children the message that they can refuse these put-downs.
- **Reframing.** Reframing is changing one's perception about the negative comment; it is turning the teasing into a compliment. For example, a child teases another about her glasses, "Four eyes, four eyes, you have four eyes." The child being teased could politely respond, "Thanks for noticing my glasses!" The teaser is usually confused, especially when there is not a reaction of anger or frustration. Another child might respond to a tease by saying, "That is a *great* put-down."
- **Agree with the facts.** Agreeing with the facts can be one of the easiest ways to handle an insult or tease (Cohen-Posey, 1995). The teaser says, "You have so many freckles." The teased child responds, "Yes, I have a lot of freckles." The teaser taunts, "You are such a cry baby. . . ." The teased child can answer, "I do cry easily." Agreeing with facts usually eliminates the feeling of wanting to hide the freckles or the tears.
- **"So?"** The response of "so?" to the teaser conveys an indifference that the tease doesn't matter. Children find this response simple yet quite effective. This strategy is humorously addressed in Bill Cosby's book *The Meanest Thing to Say*.
- **Respond to the tease with a compliment.** When a child is teased, it is

often effective to respond with a compliment. For example, if a child is teased about the way he runs, he can answer, "You are a fast runner."

- Use humor. Humor shows that little importance is placed on the put-downs or mean remarks. Laughing can often turn a hurtful situation into a funny one.
- Ask for help. At times, it is necessary for a child to seek adult assistance or intervention if the teaser is persistent.

When Teasing Becomes Harassment

Most types of teasing can be dealt with effectively by the children involved, sometimes with the assistance of parents, caregivers, teachers, social workers, or counselors. Teasing becomes harassment, however, if it is repeated or prolonged, threatens or results in violence, or involves inappropriate touching or physical contact. Adults should be alert to the possibility of harassment and intervene as needed if harassment is suspected or anticipated. In such cases, it may be necessary to involve administrators and parents in determining the appropriate course of action to end the harassment.

Conclusion

You can help your children understand that teasing cannot be prevented, and they cannot control what others say. However, they can learn to control their own responses and reactions, which will "ease the tease."

For More Information

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What To Do If Your Child is Teased or Bullied

My son's only seven, but he's been coming home upset every day. He says a boy named Mark keeps teasing him. Now the rest of the kids won't play with him because they are afraid Mark will start picking on them, too. He's miserable and doesn't want to go to school. What can I do to help him?

Some of the toughest problems parents must deal with happen right on the school playground where teasing, bullying and mean-spirited kids abound. There seems to be an epidemic of mean-acting kids these days. In fact, the National Education Association estimates that 160,000 children skip school every day because they fear being attacked or intimidated by other students. While we can't prevent the pain insults can cause, we can lessen our kids' chances of becoming victims. In my new book, *Building Moral Intelligence: The Seven Essential Virtues That Teach Kids to Do the Right Thing*, I tell parents the best thing to do is teach our kids how to deal with their tormentors. Doing so will show them there are ways to resolve conflicts without losing face or resorting to violence and will boost their confidence. So the next time your child is upset from teasing, here are a few ideas I suggest you do:

1. Listen and gather facts.

The first step is often the hardest for parents: listen to your child's whole story without interrupting. Your goal is to try to figure out what happened, who was involved, where and when the teasing took place, and why your child was teased. Unfortunately, teasing is a part of growing up, but some kids seem to get more than their fair share of insults. If your child appears to be in no immediate danger, keep listening to find out how she reacts to the bullying. By knowing what reaction didn't stop the bully, you can offer your child a more effective option.

2. Teach a bully-proofing strategy.

What may work with one child may not with another, so it's best to discuss a range of options and then choose the one or two your child feels most comfortable with. Here are six of the most successful strategies to help kids defend themselves:

- Assert yourself. Teach your child to face the bully by standing tall and using a strong voice. Your child should name the bullying behavior and tell the aggressor to stop: "That's teasing. Stop it." or "Stop making fun of me. It's mean."
- Question the response. Ann Bishop, who teaches violence prevention curriculums, tells her students to respond to an insult with a non-defensive question: "Why would you say that?" or "Why would you want to tell me I am dumb (or fat) and hurt my feelings?"
- Use "I want." Communication experts suggest teaching your child to address

the bully beginning with “I want” and say firmly what he wants changed: “I want you to leave me alone.” or “I want you to stop teasing me.”

- Agree with the teaser. Consider helping your child create a statement agreeing with her teaser. Teaser: “You’re dumb.” Child: “Yeah, but I’m good at it.” or Teaser: “Hey, four eyes.” Child: “You’re right, my eyesight is poor.”
- Ignore it. Bullies love it when their teasing upsets their victims, so help your child find a way to not let his tormentor get to him. A group of fifth graders told me ways they ignore their teasers: “Pretend they’re invisible,” “Walk away without looking at them,” “Quickly look at something else and laugh,” and “Look completely uninterested.”
- Make Fun of the Teasing. Fred Frankel, author of *Good Friends Are Hard to Find* suggests victims answer every tease with a reply, but not tease back. The teasing often stops, Frankel says; because the child lets the tormentor know he’s not going to let the teasing get to him (even if it does). Suppose the teaser says, “You’re stupid.” The child says a rehearsed comeback such as: “Really?” Other comebacks could be: “So?,” “You don’t say,” “And your point is?,” or “Thanks for telling me.”

3. Rehearse the strategy with your child.

Once you choose a technique, rehearse it together so your child is comfortable trying it. The trick is for your child to deliver it assuredly to the bully -- and that takes practice. Explain that though he has the right to feel angry, it’s not okay to let it get out of control. Besides, anger just fuels the bully. Try teaching your child the CALM approach to defueling the tormentor.

- Cool down. When you confront the bully, stay calm and always in control. Don’t let him think he’s getting to you. If you need to calm down, count to twenty slowly inside your head or say to yourself, “Chill out!” And most importantly: tell your child to always get help whenever there is a chance she might be injured.
- Assert yourself. Try the strategy with the bully just like you practiced.
- Look at the teaser straight in the eye. Appear confident, hold your head high and stand tall.
- Mean it! Use a firm, strong voice. Say what you feel, but don’t be insulting, threaten or tease back.

Like it or not, most kids are bound to encounter children who are deliberately mean. By teaching kids effective ways to respond to verbal abuse, we can reduce their chances of being victims as well as helping them learn how to cope more successfully with future adversities. Of course, no child should ever have to deal with ongoing teasing, meanness and harassment. It’s up to adults and kids alike to take an active stand against bullying and stress that cruelty is always unacceptable.

Common Mistakes Parents Make About Bullying

Not taking children's bullying complaints seriously—your child could be hurt. If there is ever the possibility of injury do step in.

Telling the child, "Just tell him to stop." Bullies rarely just go away; kids need to learn ways to deal with them to stop their abuse.

Advising kids to hit back. Aggression amongst kids can escalate quickly over very minor issues, and many kids at every grade level are carrying weapons.

Copyright: Parents Do Make A Difference: How to Raise Kids with Solid Character, Strong Minds and Caring Hearts. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999. ISBN 0-7879-4605-2. To order, call Jossey-Bass, 800-956-7739 or <http://www.parentingbookmark.com> or your local bookstore. Dr. Borba's website is <http://www.micheleborba.com>

1. Introduction

As a result of Act 117 of 2004, An Act Relating to Bullying Prevention Policies, the following is intended as an insert to the Vermont Department of Education Guidelines for Discipline Plan Development (June 2003) for use in addressing bullying in schools. Bullying is a form of dangerous and disrespectful behavior that will not be permitted or tolerated. Bullying may involve a range of misconduct that, based on the severity, will warrant a measured response of corrective action and/or discipline. Behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying, as defined below, still may be subject to intervention and/or discipline under another section of the discipline plan or a discipline policy.

2. Definition

Bullying means any overt act or combination of such acts directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

- (a) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored activity;
- (b) is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
- (c) is repeated over time.¹

3. Notice of Prohibition Against Bullying and Anti-Bullying Interventions

The _____ School District recognizes that students should have a safe, orderly, civil and positive learning environment and that bullying has no place and will not be tolerated in its schools. The _____ School District shall:

- (a) Include the prohibition against bullying in the student or school handbook and in other ways make students aware of the prohibition against bullying, the penalties for engaging in bullying, and the procedures for reporting bullying.
- (b) Develop strategies for school staff to prevent and intervene in bullying. See Appendix A, as well as the Vermont Department of Education Web site, for prevention and intervention strategies.

4. Reporting, Investigating, and Notifying Parents of Bullying Reports

To address bullying, the _____ School District:

- (a) Encourages students to report personally or anonymously to teachers and school administrators acts of bullying. The _____ School District has established the following methods for such reporting:

Anonymous Reporting: *[provide location of drop box and/or describe other means here]* And

¹ Conduct that might otherwise be considered bullying but *does not* occur during the school day, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event still may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §§1161(a) and 1162; however, such misconduct would not meet the definition of bullying.

² Any student, who knowingly makes false accusations regarding bullying, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Personal Reporting: *[provide name, title, mailing address, phone number of person designated to take bullying complaints here].*

(b) Encourages parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying. See (a) above.

(c) Requires teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying to promptly notify *[insert title of person identified in (a) above]*.

(d) Requires *[insert title of person identified in (a) above]* to accept and review all reports of bullying, including anonymous reports. If after initial inquiry, an anonymous or oral report appears to warrant further investigation, school districts shall promptly continue with an investigation. School administrators shall investigate any written reports.

(e) As with any other disciplinary action, requires school staff to notify the parent or guardian of a student who commits a verified act of bullying of the response of the school staff and consequences that may result from further acts of bullying.

(f) To the extent permitted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, (FERPA), requires school staff to notify the parent or guardian of a student who is a target of bullying of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying.³

5. Data Gathering

The _____ School District delegates the responsibility of data collection to: *[provide title of person]*. He/she shall collect data on the number of reported incidents of bullying and the number of incidents that have been verified and to make such data available to the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Education and to the public. See the Dept's Safe Schools webpage (www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_safeschools.html#data) for further information on data gathering.

12/16/04

³ FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the confidentiality of student records and the school district must comply with this law, as well as a similar state law. When the school administrator contacts a parent about the school district's response to a bullying incident, he/she may discuss information about an investigation and corrective action taken, but only to the extent that it may be done without disclosing information about any students other than the student subjected to the bullying.

Appendix A: Quick Reference on Bullying Prevention & Intervention Possible Strategies for Prevention

- Assess the school environment.
- Adopt a comprehensive approach that considers the bully, the target and bystanders.
- Provide bullying prevention and intervention training to all faculty and staff.
- Closely supervise all areas of the school.
- Update discipline plan and procedures; adopt all legally required related policies.
- Utilize multiple means for publicizing clear behavioral standards/rules.
- Consistently and fairly enforce standards/rules.

- Establish an anonymous reporting system.
- Encourage parent and community involvement in bullying prevention.
- Use classroom management techniques for response to classroom behavior and when needed, use appropriate discipline.
- As warranted, refer victims and bullies to school counselors or mental health professionals.

Possible Steps for Intervening in Bullying Situations

- Intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Talk to the bully and the victim separately. If more than one student is involved in bullying behavior, talk to each separately, in quick succession. (Expect bullies to minimize [or] deny their actions.)
- Remind the bully about school and classroom rules, reiterate what behavior is expected, and discuss sanctions that will be imposed for future bullying behavior.
- Reassure the victim that everything possible will be done to prevent a recurrence.
- Make other students aware of the consequences of the bullying behavior. Reiterate the school's policy of zero tolerance toward bullying.
- Phone the parents of both the bully and the victim as soon as possible. If possible, involve the parents in designing a plan of action.
- Continue to monitor the behavior of the bully and the safety of the victim.
- Consult administrators, teachers, and staff members to alert them to the problem and to get a better understanding of it.
- If the situation doesn't change, remove the bully - not the victim - from the classroom. Education World citing The Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic. www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues103.shtml

For bullying prevention and intervention, see also:

1. BEST: Building Effective Supports for Teaching Students with Behavioral Challenges. Call Anne Dubie, (802) 656-5775 or visit www.uvm.edu/~cdci/best/.
2. Bullying Strategies That Work, Education World. www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues103.shtml
3. Blueprints for Violence Prevention. www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/
4. Think You Know What A Bully Looks Like? Think Again... National PTA. www.pta.org/bullying/
5. Project on Teasing and Bullying, Wellsley Centers for Women, www.wcwoonline.org/bullying/
6. A World of Difference Institute. www.adl.org/education/edu_awod/awod_classroom.asp

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Bullying

Will, a 12-year-old boy with autism, is in middle school. During his IEP meeting it was decided that Will would have a paraprofessional aid him in the classroom, but Will would be responsible for moving between classes. During the first week, Will handled the transition well. Early in the second week, a group of students in the hallway walked by Will, whose mannerisms often drew attention. A student jumped in front of him and screamed as if to startle him. Will's eyes welled up with tears, he plugged his ears with his fingers, and sat down in the hallway. Will was frozen, fearful, and unable to recognize what he should do next. Will remained seated in the middle of the hall until the class period began and his paraprofessional came to look for him. Will's IEP team met again to consider supplementary aids and services, program modifications and supports to address Will's sensitivity to loud noises and crowded, socially confusing situations, such as the school hallway.

Children with disabilities who are eligible for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will have an IEP (Individualized Education Program). The IEP team can work together to develop goals, benchmarks or short-term objectives, and identify supplementary aids and services or program modifications or supports to help prevent and intervene against bullying. Include the child in the decision-making, as this can improve the likelihood of the child meeting his or her IEP goals.

For example, the IEP could include goals and objectives that address the following:

- Improve social skills such as sharing, taking turns, or thinking before acting
- Develop ability to carry on a 2-way conversation
- Identify social norms for the child who does not catch on to them by him or herself
- Participate in friendship group to practice social skills with peers under direction of school staff
- Increase self-advocacy skills so child can say “no” or “stop that”
- Improve speech intelligibility so child can interact with peers
- Identify and practice direct and indirect ways to react to, handle, and avoid bullying behavior

Examples of supplementary aids and services, program modifications or supports:

- Hallway or playground monitoring by school staff
- Allowing child to leave class early to avoid hallway incidents
- Use social stories to help child understand difficult situations when they occur
- In-service school staff to understand child's disability and vulnerability
- In-service classroom peers to help them understand child's disability and/or child's use of assistive technology, paraprofessional, or interpreter (i.e. things that are “different”)
- Educate peers about school district policies on bullying behavior
- Set up no-questions-asked procedure for child to remove him or herself from a situation where bullying behavior occurs

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Record Keeping and Bullying

Billy, a 12-year-old diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, had been a target of bullying since the first day in his new school. He told his parents about the behavior right away. Billy's dad bought a journal and has recorded each of Billy's conversations about the bullying incidents. Billy's father started a second section of the journal after he began having conversations with Billy's teachers and other school personnel. When the parents decided to write the school a letter, they were able to easily refer to the journal for an accurate and thorough account of the events.

When a child is a target of bullying, parents need to document the events and develop a record (or history) of what is happening to their child. This record is useful when talking with school educators, law enforcement personnel, or other individuals who may need to assist parents in intervening against bullying.

Parents, as the most invested party, should do their best to keep track of events. In this way, emotions alone do not drive the discussion. Records can help parents keep a concise, accurate timeline of events. Parents may think they are going to remember the events, but it is easier to use a written record when referring to events versus trying to recreate them afterward. The record can also help in determining if the bullying behavior has increased or decreased in frequency or duration. The record should be factual and based on actual events. Do not add opinions or emotional statements. Data is important. Remember—if it is not in writing, it does not exist.

Content should include:

- written information about the bullying incidents
- the date of the event,
- the persons involved,
- and the child's account of the event.

Also include:

- all communication with professionals (teachers, administrators, etc.)
- the date of the communication
- discussion (summary) of the event
- the responses of the professional
- the action taken
- reports filed by the school in accordance with the school district policy

Other methods for recording events may include pictures taken of the child after a bullying incident to document any physical evidence, health care records that indicate bullying, or a tape recording of the child talking about the bullying.

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Bullying–Notifying School Administrators of Harassment Concerns

The following are 10 suggested steps to follow when parents choose to formally notify school administrators about their concern of harassment based on the child’s disability.

1. In writing, address the notification to a specific person and date the letter.
2. Write the letter to a person who has the authority to investigate and the authority to correct the wrong.
3. Note that the school district is a recipient of federal financial assistance.
4. State the past or continuing discriminatory activity against your child.
5. State that the school district has control over both the site of the discrimination and over any school personnel involved.
6. Explain that the discrimination was not a single act but was severe and pervasive.
7. Tell how the discrimination excluded your child from continued participation in school or denied your child the benefits to which other students in school have access.
8. Explain, as well as you can, what you would like the school to do to stop the discrimination or to remediate the harm the discrimination has done to your child.
9. Ask for a copy of a school district grievance procedure under Section 504 (even if your child has an IEP under IDEA). Not having this information may result in continued discrimination.
10. State that if the person receiving this letter does not investigate or does not take effective corrective action, that you may claim that the district showed deliberate indifference to the discrimination. *You may also want to add a date you expect to hear back from the district in regards to your letter.*

These steps are adapted from attorney Reed Martin’s “10 steps to making a successful complaint”. This information is educational and not intended to be legal advice. Reed Martin is an attorney with over 34 years experience in special education law and recognized as one of the nation’s leading experts. He can be reached through email at connie@reedmartin.com or www.reedmartin.com

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What if Your Child IS the Bully?

The word “bullying” often conjures up an image of a schoolyard scene, with a big, intimidating student towering over a small, cowering child. That’s just one face of bullying—and of children who bully.

Another face of a bully might be...that of your child. Surprised? Many parents are. Often they have no idea that their child is harassing other children. Yet knowing the facts—and acting to change the situation—is vitally important in making the future safer for your child and all children.

Here’s why. Children who bully suffer as much as those they target. They are significantly more likely than others to lead lives marked by school failure, depression, violence, crime, and other problems, according to experts. The message is clear: Bullying is too important to ignore.

Could your child be bullying others? Would you know? Once you found out, would you know what to do? Here is some information that can help.

What is bullying?

Bullying is different from the routine conflicts of childhood. It is intentional behavior that is meant to hurt and dominate another person. Characterized by an imbalance of power between the child who bullies and the target, bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional (social), or sexual. It includes harassment via e-mail and instant messaging.

Who does it?

Children who bully come in a variety of packages—the waif-like second grader, the big sixth-grade boy, the child with a disability, the popular girl, the loner. They can come from any background, race, income level, family situation, gender, or religion. Research has shown that despite their differences children who bully typically have one or more of the following traits. They may:

- be quick to blame others and unwilling to accept responsibility for their actions
- lack empathy, compassion, and understanding for others’ feelings
- be bullied themselves
- have immature social and interpersonal skills
- want to be in control
- be frustrated and anxious
 - come from families where parents or siblings bully
- find themselves trying to fit in with a peer group that encourages bullying
- have parents who are unable to set limits, are inconsistent with discipline, do not provide supervision, or do not take an interest in their child’s life.

If you see these traits in your child or hear from others that your child is bullying, you may want to look into the issue. If your child is bullying, take heart. There’s a lot you can do to help correct the problem.

Remember, bullying is a learned behavior—and it can be “unlearned.” By talking with your child and seeking help, you can teach your child more appropriate ways of handling feelings, peer pressure, and conflicts.

Here are some ideas.

Help your child to stop bullying

1. Talk with your child. Find out why he or she is bullying others. You might explore how your child is feeling about himself or herself, ask if he or she is being bullied by someone else, and invite discussion about bullying. Find out if your child’s friends

are also bullying. Ask how you can help. *By Marcia Kelly*

2. Confirm that your child's behavior is bullying and not the result of a disability. Sometimes, children with disabilities bully other children. Other times, children with certain behavioral disorders or limited social skills may act in ways that are mistaken for bullying. Whether the behavior is intentional bullying or is due to a disability, it still needs to be addressed. If your child with a disability is bullying, you may want to include bullying prevention goals in his or her Program (IEP).
3. Teach empathy, respect, and compassion. Children who bully often lack awareness of how others feel. Try to understand your child's feelings, and help your child appreciate how others feel when they are bullied. Let your child know that everyone has feelings and that feelings matter.
4. Make your expectations clear. Let your child know that bullying is not okay under any circumstances and that you will not tolerate it. Take immediate action if you learn that he or she is involved in a bullying incident.
5. Provide clear, consistent consequences for bullying. Be specific about what will happen if the bullying continues. Try to find meaningful consequences, such as loss of privileges or a face-to-face meeting with the child being bullied.
6. Teach by example. Model nonviolent behavior and encourage cooperative, noncompetitive play. Help your child learn different ways to resolve conflict and deal with feelings such as anger, insecurity, or frustration. Teach and reward appropriate behavior.
7. Role play. Help your child practice different ways of handling situations. You can take turns playing the part of the child who does the bullying and the one who is bullied. Doing so will help your child understand what it's like to be in the other person's shoes.
8. Provide positive feedback. When your child handles conflict well, shows compassion for others, or finds a positive way to deal with feelings, provide praise and recognition. Positive reinforcement goes a long way toward improving behavior. It is more effective than punishment.
9. Be realistic. It takes time to change behavior. Be patient as your child learns new ways of handling feelings and conflict. Keep your love and support visible.
10. Seek help. Your child's doctor, teacher, school principal, school social worker, or a psychologist can help you and your child learn how to understand and deal with bullying behavior. Ask if your school offers a bullying prevention program. Bullying hurts everyone. Parents can play a significant role in stopping the behavior, and the rewards will be immeasurable for all.

This handout is reprinted from, PACESETTER, Fall 2005.

Cyber Bullying Quick Reference Guide for Parents

Patti Agatston, Ph.D. www.cyberbullyhelp.com

What is cyber bullying?

Cyber Bullying (sometime referred to as Internet Bullying) is using the Internet or other digital devices to send or post negative messages, images, or video clips about others

Forms of Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying can take many forms, including posting or sending mean or embarrassing comments and or images on chat rooms, message boards, websites, social networking sites, online gaming sites, cell phones, instant messages or email.

Why is cyber bullying a problem?

Cyber Bullying is a form of emotional bullying (sometimes referred to as relational aggression) that causes feelings of fear, isolation, and humiliation among its targets. Research over the last decade confirms that traditional bullying can seriously affect the mental and physical health of children and their academic work. Children who are bullied are more likely than nonbullied children to be anxious, depressed, and to suffer from low self-esteem

¹. They also are more likely than other children to think about taking their own lives². Preliminary research suggests that children who experience cyber bullying may have a similar experience and this may be intensified since cyber bullying can occur 24/7³.

Prevention of Cyber Bullying

Parents need to discuss cyber bullying with their children as part of their regular discussions about Internet Safety and appropriate use of technologies. Parents can make it clear that using the Internet or cellular phones to embarrass or hurt others' feelings is not part of their family values. Discussing the golden rule as it applies to internet and technology use can be very helpful. Parents should discuss bystander behavior as well, encouraging children to speak out against cyber bullying they witness and to report it to the appropriate person. In addition, parents need to set up guidelines for appropriate use for each new piece of technology that is brought into the home.

Prevention Tips from Students

- Set age appropriate guidelines.
- Teach us how to deal with conflict.
- Monitor our use of the internet.
- Supervision, not snoopervision.
- Watch for warning signs)
- Don't blame the victim.

(Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2007)

Warning Signs of Cyber Bullying

- Child is visibly upset or angry during or after internet use or cell phone use.
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Drop in academic performance
- School avoidance
- Child is a target of traditional bullying at school.
- Child appears depressed or sad.

(Kowalski, et.al. 2007, Willard, 2006)

Intervention Tips for Responding To Cyber Bullying

- Save the evidence. Print copies of messages and websites. Use the save feature on instant messages.
- First Offense (if minor in nature) - ignore, delete, or block the sender. Instant message programs, email, and cell phones usually have blocking features.
- If a fake or offensive profile targeting your child is set up on a social networking site, report it to the site. The link for reporting cyber bullying and fake profiles can be found under the help sections of many websites. MySpace has a help center on its site that provides a link for reporting offensive profiles. Make sure to copy the link (the website address) to the site for reporting purposes.
- Investigate your child's online presence. Set up an alert on Google, or search your child's name occasionally through a variety of search engines.
- If the perpetrator is another student, share evidence with the school counselor. Check to see if any bullying may be occurring at school.
- If perpetrator is known and cyber bullying is continuing or severe contact the perpetrator's parents and share your evidence (if you are comfortable doing so.) Ask that they ensure that the cyber bullying stops and any posted material be removed.
- If parent of perpetrator is unresponsive and behavior continues, parent of target may contact an attorney or send a certified letter outlining possible civil/legal options if the behavior does not stop or material is not removed.
- Report the cyber bullying to the police or cyber crime unit in your area if the cyber bullying contains threats, intimidation or sexual exploitation.
- If your child expresses emotional distress or thoughts of self harm seek help immediately. (Kowalski, et.al. 2007)

References:

¹ Hawker, D. S. J., & Boulton, M. J. (2000). Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment: A metaanalytic review of cross sectional studies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41, 441-455;

Olweus, D. (1978). *Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys*. Washington, DC.

²Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in schools: And what to do about it*. Briston, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

³Ybarra et al (2006). Examining characteristics and associated distress related to internet harassment: findings from the second youth internet safety survey.' *Pediatrics* Vol. 118, no.4, pp. 1169-1177.

Kowalski, R., Limber, S. & Agatston, P (2007). *Cyber Bullying: Bullying in the Digital Age*. Malden, MA. Blackwell Publishers.

Willard, N. (2006). *A Parents Guide to Cyber Bullying*, Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use.

Parenting Suggestions Regarding Technology

Become involved in your child's cyberspace. Sit at the computer and let them teach you how they use the Internet:

- Ask them to take you places they frequently visit and show you what they do. Three types of sites children commonly utilize are:
- Instant messaging services (e.g. Yahoo, AOL IM and Messenger)
- Social networking sites (e.g. Face Book and MySpace)
- Video Posting (e.g. You Tube, AOL Video)
- Open up your own accounts where they have accounts. Have your child guide you through the process.
- If your child is under 13, you do have the option to have these accounts deleted since most of these services have an age and/or parental consent requirement.
- Have them share with you all their user account names and passwords. If this is creating a trust issue, perhaps a good compromise is to have your child write down all the user account names and passwords on a sheet of paper and place this in a sealed envelope to only be opened by the parent in case of an emergency.
- Make certain they have never and will never share their passwords with anyone, even a friend. Explain the risk of someone impersonating them and ruining their reputation.
- Have them show you what they have in their profiles/pages. How do they describe themselves? Is it all accurate and appropriate? Does it show too much detail about your child? Are they protecting and sustaining a positive reputation?
- Scrutinize their friend lists on these accounts. It is very important to recognize the identity of each person. If they don't know the real name of an on-line friend, then consider that person a stranger. Request they delete and block that person.
- Ask your child if they have ever been ridiculed, intimidated and/or humiliated on the Internet (cyber bullied). Encourage them to come to you for support if they are being bullied. Both of you should learn how to use the print screen option to save evidence of the cyber bullying.
- Ask whether they have bullied anyone. It's important for them to appreciate how much emotional pain can be inflicted by unkind words or images, and that the reach of the Internet makes it far more destructive. Use Ryan's story to make the point.
- Also explain that this is a particularly difficult emotional period for many children and what may seem to be harmless teasing, can be devastating to the person being teased.
- Share with them that the Internet is a public forum so anything can be shared with other people without their knowledge or consent. They should be very discreet in what they say and do on-line. They need to always be vigilant in protecting their reputations. Things said and done on the internet can come back to bite them many years later.
- Have a very pointed conversation about "sexting", the risky practice of sending sexually explicit photos and/or messages which can easily be forwarded on to others and damage their reputation.

Establish clear and enforceable guidelines:

- Establish your own family policy for acceptable computer use. List what may or may not be allowed including clear rules about time limits.
- Be upfront with your child, that this policy will be enforced and monitored. Try to set a policy that respects your child's privacy while also considering their age, maturity level and inclination towards risky behavior.
- Purchase monitoring / time control software to help enforce your family's policy.
- Search "parental control software reviews" to find the latest products, features, and reviews.
- Do not allow a computer to be in a child's bedroom. Keep it in a public area such as the kitchen or den.

How much technology and access does your child really need?

- Does a middle school child or younger possess the maturity, judgment, and social skills to use instant/text messaging and social websites responsibly? Do their peers?
- Does your child really need a cell phone, particularly with text messaging and/or

- photo/video features? Are they mature enough to handle these options responsibly?
- When does too much technology begin to hurt a child? You need to find the right balance with other activities.
- Is it healthy for them to come home and plug right back into their social network versus having some quiet, reflective and regenerative time with their family?

Please visit <http://www.RyanPatrickHalligan.org> for more information about these topics and to also learn more about bullying and teen suicide prevention.

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Bullying is intentional and persistent aggressive behavior. It can include physical violence, teasing and name-calling, and intimidation. It is a particular form of violence that requires specific interventions. For other information on violence prevention and school safety see the Resource Pages on

- [Violence Prevention for Schools](#)
- [School Safety/Security and Law Enforcement](#)
- [Preparing for and Responding to Crises in Schools](#)
- [Juvenile Justice](#)

Center Briefs

[Preventing Bullying In Schools and the Community](#)

This fact sheet explores bullying, its victims, perpetrators, and consequences, as well as how schools and communities can prevent bullying.

Websites

[The Stop Bullying Now Campaign](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/) (<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/>) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers educational materials for youth, parents, educators, and health professionals. The Stop Bullying Now/Take A Stand, Lend A Hand site features songs, games, and 12 “webisodes” about bullying, as well information on what children can do if they are bullied, witness bullying, or feel they might be bullying others. A section of the site titled What Adults Can Do features materials and information on bullying prevention, public service announcements, information on cyberbullying, Webcasts and podcasts of workshops, and information for educators and families. The What Adults Can Do section of the Web site is also available in Spanish.

[About Bullying \(National Mental Health Information Center\)](#)

(<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/15plus/aboutbullying.asp>)

This resource from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) includes information and resources for a number of audiences, including parents, grandparents, and caregivers; educators, administrators, and guidance counselors; mental health professionals and other health care; community organizations and law enforcement; and children and teens. Other resources on this site include video public service announcements on bullying and a compendium of bullying research.

[The Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life \(IFNL\)](#)

(<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/ifnl/index.htm>) offers technical assistance and

materials on bullying prevention. IFNL can be reached by telephone at (864) 656-6271.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (<http://www.clemson.edu/olweus/>) has been identified as an Exemplary Program by SAMHSA. In the United States, the Institute of Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University provides training and technical assistance for this program. Their Web site includes materials to help schools understand and implement the Olweus Program.

Web-based Courses and Workshops

The ABC's of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression (http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_intro_pg1.htm) is an online course available through the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's (CSAP) Prevention Pathways Web site. The ABC's of Bullying examines the causes and effects of bullying, prevention techniques and programs, screening, treatment options, and legal/ethical issues surrounding bullying. The course qualifies for Continuing Education Units and is intended for health and mental health practitioners, educators, and parents.

School Safety Centers

A number of state departments of education have funded state school safety centers that provide technical assistance and resources on school safety and security, violence prevention, bullying, emergency preparedness and response, and how schools and law enforcement agencies can work together. While technical assistance is usually only available to schools and districts located in the same state as the safety center, many of the other resources and publications are available to anyone. A linked list of school safety centers can be found at (<http://www.ncpc.org/programs/be-safe-and-sound-campaign/state-school-safety-centers>).

Publications Available Online from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

CSPV at the University of Colorado (<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html>) offers a number of publications on bullying and bullying prevention. These include fact sheets (available at <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/publications/factsheets/safeschools/FS-SC07.pdf>) on

- Bullying Prevention: An Overview of Bullying
- Bullying Prevention: Recommendations for Schools
- Bullying Prevention: Recommendations for Parents
- Bullying Prevention: Recommendations for Kids
- Bully Proofing Your School
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Publications Available Online from ERIC

The Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (<http://eric.ed.gov>) features a large number of documents on bullying and bullying prevention. The documents described below can be found by using the ERIC search engine and the ERIC Number, which is included in parentheses after the author's name. ERIC includes a large number of older resources on bullying, as well as abstracts of articles published in the professional literature.

- Bullying in Early Adolescence: The Role of the Peer Group by Dorothy Espelage (ED471912). This ERIC Digest summarizes the role of the peer group in middle school bullying. A Spanish-language version of this document is also available on

the ERIC Web site.

- Bullying In Schools: Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Series by Rana Sampson (ED481473). This comprehensive guide discusses how police can help prevent bullying in schools.
- Preventing Bullying by Linda Lumsden (ED463563). This ERIC Digest summarizes what is known about bullying and bullying prevention, as well as what peers and schools can do to prevent bullying.

Other Publications Available Online

Educational Forum On Youth Bullying

(<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/39/youthbullying.pdf>)

Chicago: American Medical Association, 2002

Proceedings of a forum on bullying, including a principal address on Addressing Youth Bullying Behaviors by Dr. Susan Limber, responses to Dr. Limber's remarks by an expert panel and audience members, and a bibliography of the research literature.

Schoolwide Prevention of Bullying (http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED461175&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_accno&accno=ED461175)

Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001

This booklet provides an introduction to the research on bullying, preventing bullying in schools, what parents, teachers, and counselors can do to prevent bullying, and case studies of a number of school-based bullying prevention initiatives.

Tackling the Schoolyard Bully: Combining Policymaking With Prevention

(<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/schoolyard.htm>) by Finessa Ferrell-Smith.

Washington, DC: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2006

This report focuses on bullying and legislative responses to bullying. However, much of the policy focus will be useful for those creating bullying policies for districts or schools.

Resources for Parents

What Adults Can Do: Family Corner

(<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/>)

This resource from the Stop Bullying Now Campaign includes information on bullying, recognizing the signs of bullying, cyberbullying, talking to children who may be bullied or bullying others, talking to educators at a child's school about bullying, and working with the community to prevent bullying.

Bullying (<http://aacap.org/page.wv?name=Bullying§ion=Facts+for+Families>)

A resource from the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychology.

Helping Kids Deal with Bullies

(<http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/bullies.html>).

This online publication by the KidsHealth project of the Nemours Foundation is also available in Spanish.

Bullying Prevention: Recommendations for Parents

(<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/publications/factsheets/safeschools/FS-SC09.pdf>)

This Safe Schools Fact Sheet from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence including information on bullying, recognizing if a child is being bullied or bullying others, and suggestions for parents about responding to bullying.

Cyberbullying

[Stop Cyberbullying](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html) (<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html>)

This comprehensive Web site on cyberbullying and cyberbullying prevention includes information for parents, schools, law enforcement, and children (categorized by age group). It includes information on the psychology of cyberbullying, technology (including instant messaging, blogs, Web sites, email, and cellphones), and how parents and schools can take action to prevent or intervene in cyberbullying.

Resource List for Young Readers

BP-6

- Capote, Truman. *"The Thanksgiving Visitor."* New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1996. (Illustrated by: Beth Peck) A boy recalls his life with an elderly relative in rural Alabama in the 1930s and the lesson she taught him one Thanksgiving Day about dealing with a bully from school.
- Clements, Andrew. *"Jake Drake, Bully Buster"* New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2001. (Illustrated by: Lynn Munsinger)
- Duffey, Betsy. *"How to Be Cool in the Third Grade."* New York, N.Y., U.S.A: Viking, 1993. (Illustrated by: Janet Wilson) When Robbie York is marked as a target by a bully at school, he decides that the only way to survive the third grade is by being cool.
- Hazen, Barbara Shook. *"The Knight Who Was Afraid of the Dark."* New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1989. (Pictures by: Tony Ross and , Barbara Shook Hazen) When the castle bully discovers bold Sir Fred is secretly terrified of the dark, he tries to stir up trouble between that brave Knight and his Lady Wendylyn.
- Lester, Helen. *"Hooway for Wodney Wat."* Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1999. All his classmates make fun of Rodney because he can't pronounce his name, but it is Rodney's speech impediment that drives away the class bully.
- Lovell, Patty. *"Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon."* New York: Putnam's, 2001. (Illustrated by: David Catrow) Even when the class bully at her new school makes fun of her, Molly remembers what her grandmother told her and she feels good about herself.
- Smallcomb, Pam. *"Camp Buccaneer."* New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002. After spending summer vacation learning to be a real pirate at Camp Buccaneer, Marlon feels much better prepared to return to school and face Carla, the bully who has pestered her since kindergarten.
- O'Neill, Alexis. *"The Recess Queen."* New York: Scholastic, 2002. (Illustrated by: Laura Huliska-Beith) Mean Jean is the biggest bully on the school playground until a new girl arrives and challenges Jean's status as the Recess Queen.
- Polacco, Patricia. *"Mr. Lincoln's Way."* New York: Philomel Books, 2001. When Mr. Lincoln, "the coolest principal in the whole world," discovers that Eugene, the school bully, knows a lot about birds, he uses this interest to help Eugene overcome his intolerance.
- Shreve, Susan. *"Joshua T. Bates in Trouble Again."* New York: Knopf, 1997. (Illustrated by: Roberta Smith) After finally being promoted to fourth grade in the middle of the year, Joshua is so worried about the bully who rules the fourth grade boys that he makes some unwise decisions.
- Stine, Megan and William. *"How I Survived Fifth Grade."* Mahway, N.J.: Troll Associates, 1992. Elliot doubts that he will survive the fifth grade, because the obnoxious class bully has selected him as his own special victim.

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