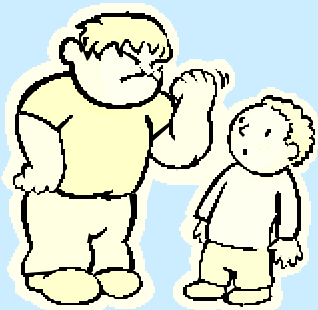


# The Child Care Resource Center, Inc.

## Child Care Quarterly

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### SPECIAL ISSUE ON BULLYING

In our culture, we are focusing new attention on childhood bullying and harassment. Many parents are asking questions about the prevalence of bullying in our schools and communities, often because they do not feel that they have enough information to evaluate and/or deal with bullying behavior.

#### What is bullying?

Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose. The person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Bullying often happens over and over again.

#### Types of bullying

- ? Physical bullying, such as pushing, punching, shoving, kicking and other acts that hurt children physically
- ? Verbal bullying, such as taunting, teasing, threatening, starting rumors, or hate speech
- ? Exclusion from activities, such as keeping certain people out of a “group.” This does not mean that a child should not have the right to choose to play, or not to play, with another child. It does mean that children should not be allowed to systematically exclude others: “No one play with Mary.” “Don’t be his friend.”
- ? Cyberspace bullying can also happen on-line or electronically. Cyber-bullying is when children or teens bully each other using the internet, mobile phones or other cyber-technology. This can include:
  - ◇ Sending mean text, e-mail, or instant messages
  - ◇ Posting nasty pictures or messages about others on blogs, or websites
  - ◇ Using someone else’s user name to spread rumors or lies about someone

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## Effects of bullying

- ? Bullying happens more frequently than some people think. Studies reveal that 15-25% of U.S. students are bullied with some frequency . (Melton et al, 1988) Craig & Pepler's playground observation research found an average of one incident of bullying every seven minutes. Their research observed adult intervention in only 4% of the incidents, and peer intervention in 11% of incidents
- ? Being a bully can significantly affect a child's future. Young people who bully are more likely than those who don't bully to skip school, drop out of school, and are more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, and get into fights. (Nansel, et al, 1993)
- ? Bullying bothers or scares some children so much that they skip school. Bullied students may stay at home an any given day because they are being relentlessly bullied. (Pollack, 1998) Targets of bullying are more likely to grow up depressed and anxious.

Why can't parents just tell kids to stand up for themselves or pretend it doesn't bother them? The answer is simple: the kids have most likely already tried both of these responses before asking adults for help. If those strategies worked, they would already have solved the problem. Furthermore, bullying is a result of imbalance of power; the more powerful aggressor blames the target, and the targeted children often come to blame themselves.

## **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS:**

### How to Stop Bullying and Raise Responsible, Caring Children

Can we identify parenting styles that lead to young people becoming, or not becoming, bullies?

Families where discipline is inconsistent and where there is little warmth and adult attention are more likely to raise children who bully. Consistent fair discipline teaches self-control and responsibility. Warmth and time spent together teach connection and empathy. Of course, there are many important factors outside the family that are major contributing forces to the culture of bullying. (See below).

What about factors outside the family?

The more children are exposed to violent television, violent movies, violent video games and music that glorifies violent, the more likely they are to solve problems in violent ways. However, parents can limit kids' exposure and access to these types of media.

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### What parenting style has the best results?

Authoritative parents, who have clear rules and follow through on expectations AND who show love and interest in the child's feelings, tend to raise the most confident, successful children. Authoritarian parents (as distinct from authoritative), who have clear, but sometimes rigid, rules AND who show less love or interest in their children, tend to raise children who either live by rules, or rebel against them. Permissive parents, who give their children love BUT have inconsistent rules, tend to raise children who are confident and secure, but who may have problems with self-control, or with respecting the rights of others.

### What kind of positive reinforcement works best?

Praise is important. General, non-specific praise, such as "You're so smart," or "Good job," doesn't help kids see what they did right, and may make them afraid to risk failure if they think they can only be smart when they do something right. "I"-message praise, such as "I'm so proud of you when you ..." tells kids that they are responsible for our feelings, and this may lead to dependency, or rebellion. But telling young people exactly what they did, and what positive results their actions have, empowers them and helps them be proud of their own behavior. An example of such a comment: "You studied hard this week, and you got a 95% on that test."

### What about bullying prevention programs in schools?

Research-based bullying prevention programs combine six basic strategies school-wide:

1. Clear expectations and school-wide consistent consequences for hurting others with words or actions.
2. Positive staff-student communication
3. Staff spend time with students
4. School staff help aggressive youth change
5. Staff support targets of bullying
6. Staff help bystanders discourage bullying

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## FINDING IN-HOME CARE

**Is In-home Child Care (au pair /nanny) the right choice for your family? The Child Care Resource Center provide a free consultation and resource guides to help you make an informed decision.**

**Find answers to such questions as:**

- ◆ **What are your in-home care options?**
- ◆ **What are the advantages and disadvantages of in-home care?**
- ◆ **How do you get started?**



**Call CCRC to learn about all other types of Child Care:**

**DAY CARE CENTERS    LICENSED FAMILY DAY CARE    PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS  
SCHOOL-AGE CARE    BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE    TEMPORARY / BACK-UP CARE**

**Call today @ 617-547-2982 or email @ [www.ccrinc.org](http://www.ccrinc.org)**

How can I talk with my child if he or she bullies someone else?

Help your child tell you exactly what he or she did, without excuses or blaming others. Remember that even if other students were involved, your child made a choice to do what she did. Encourage her to talk about how that behavior affected the other person. Help find the goal he was trying to reach through hurting the other person. Did he want attention? Power? Fun ? To be left alone? Then help her find other ways to reach that goal without hurting others. Encourage your child to behave differently next time.

How can I support my child if he or she is bullied at school?

Avoid blaming your child for the harassment. Think twice before giving advice; your child may have already tried the strategies that you suggest. Get as much information as you can. Talk with your child's teacher, principal, or counselor, and ask them to help your child be safe. Their intervention may included consequences for the bully, increased supervision, and helping your child make more friends, if she or he is isolated.

Ask your child what he has already tried to resolve the problem. Praise him for the things that he has tried. Give him permission to stop doing the things that haven't worked to stop the bullying. Encourage him to keep telling you and other adults. Help him to think about what has worked, or what might work. If your child is isolated, help him to make other connections through activities, hobbies, or clubs.

What if my child is in an abusive friendship with someone who hurts him or her?

Both girls and boys sometimes get into friendships with someone who is a friend one day, and mean or hurtful the next. This is the kind of "friend" who talks behind your back, and who makes you feel that this hurtful behavior is somehow all your fault. The best way for children to protect themselves from this hurt is to move on to other friendships, knowing that a real friend doesn't hurt you.

How can I encourage my child to speak about bullying that he or she sees?

Encourage your children to join with others in telling bullies to stop; to tell adults when they see bullying; and to reach out in friendship to isolated, bullied youth. Praise your children when they do these things. Remind them that they have the power to help.

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Parents can make a difference. Consider whether bullying is taking place in your child's school or child care center or youth group, and if so, consider taking action, rather than remaining silent. For additional information, you may consult the resources below.

*The Child Care Resource Center* would like to thank Stan Davis for permission to use materials from his website <http://www.stopbullyingnow.com>.