Bullying affects on children and prevention strategies

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Bullying Affects on Children

and Prevention Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Every day millions of children in the United States are exposed to verbal and/or physical acts of harassment that leave lasting negative effects. Many bullied children develop depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, social problems, and show violent behavior, which can lead to dropping out of school and/or suicide. In the past, peer harassment was seen as a normal part of growing up. Now it is evident that it is a social issue we should be more concerned about because there have been many past incidents where bullied students have acted out in rage and have hurt and killed others and even themselves. Many of these acts of bullying occur in the schools. Children are required by law to attend school and have the right to feel safe there. We as educators and parents need to know better how to identify and eliminate bullying in our schools so our children will be safe and happy for their own wellbeing.
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CHAPTER ONE

Research Background
Millions of children are being bullied in schools everyday in the United States. According to a survey of 500 teens conducted by the National Crime Prevention Council (2002) in December 2002, six out of ten teens report seeing bullying incidents at least once a day or more often at their schools. Bullying affects about 15% of the school age population. It usually starts in 3rd grade, escalates in middle school, and declines in high school (Quinn, 2003). Kids are bullied with words, taunted about their race, religion, gender, physical attributes, or mental abilities. This is a growing concern because bullying can sometimes lead to devastating emotional and physical consequences for the bullied children.

About one in seven schoolchildren have been either a bully or the target of a bully (Coloroso, 2003). Coloroso (2003) defines bullying as, “a conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror” (p. 13). Bullying is a violent act that in the past has not been seen as such a concern and has been widely tolerated. One reason for this is because many adults consider bullying to be a normal part of growing up. Educators have become desensitized to bullying and do not even notice when it is going on (Barone, 2000). Adults often “minimize or dismiss the bullying, underestimate its seriousness, blame the bullied child, and/or heap on additional insult to injury” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 22). When a bullied child seeks help, adults usually tell them that it’s not a big deal and that it is part of growing up; they are told to just ignore it and the bully will go away. That is the worst thing one can say to a bullied child, because the bullying will never get resolved this way and the child will continue to suffer.

American schools are not safe and therefore our children are not safe. In the United States, 30% of students report being bullied during a single school year (Christie-Mizell, 2003).
According to Dan Olweus, every 25 minutes a child becomes the victim of bullying and each incident usually lasts 37 seconds on average (Torres, 2003). The unfortunate part of this is that children are required to attend school until the age of 16 – they are pretty much prisoners of the school system – but some do not feel safe enough to even attend. Bronski (2000) states that “one major problem of student-on-student school violence is that unless the administration steps in to stop it there is no other alternative but to endure it: you are legally mandated to attend school; schools, in this situation, become prisons” (p. 65).

Bullying is a life-and-death issue that we ignore at our children’s risk. It can no longer be minimized, taken lightly, brushed off, or denied. Thousands of children go to school every day nervous with fear. Some children often fake an illness to avoid going to school so that they will not be taunted or attacked. “No student should be afraid of going to school for fear of being harassed or degraded, and no parents should need to worry about such things happening to his or her child” (Olweus, 2003, p. 12). We as teachers and parents need to be aware if bullying is occurring in our schools and how we can prevent it. Bullying needs to be eliminated for the safety of our children’s health and well-being. Studies have shown that students who are victims of bullying can develop depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, anxiety, social problems, and show violent behavior, all which can lead to dropping out of school and/or suicide.

**Problem Focus:**

This capstone will address bullying in schools, particularly noting what teachers can do to reduce this problem. In my research paper I will not be addressing certain relevant issues such as gun control, racism, gangs, or violence due to mental illnesses. I will only be dealing with the topic of bullying in schools as a whole; I will consider students by gender instead of by their ethnic backgrounds. I will not talk about the issue of kids being involved in gangs because it is
not always related to bullying. Gang violence is a different issue all together. I will not be addressing what parents can do about bullying because that would be another research paper. What I am going to focus on in this paper is how schools can play a role in preventing bullying.

HISTORY OF BULLYING

“Some victims whose cries went unheard, whose pain was ignored, whose oppression went unabated and unrelieved, have struck back with a vengeance and a rage that have racked our communities with incomprehensible horror and sorrow” (Coloroso, 2003, p. xvi).

In the past, our society has been taught to tolerate bullying because it was seen as a normal part of childhood. But now, with recent dramatic bullying incidences in schools and the effects it has had on children, research has shown that bullying is a lot more important to pay attention to and prevent; it is not something that should be ignored or brushed aside. There have been some situations where a child erupted out of anger, killing themselves along with others in the school, just because they were a victim of bullying. According to Olweus (2003), the percentage of victimized students had increased from 1982 to 2003 by approximately 50% (p. 12).

The one incident that has had the greatest effect on society’s views on bullying was the Columbine massacre. Grapes (2000) writes, “On April 20, 1999, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold entered Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, firing sawed-off shotguns and tossing homemade pipe bombs at their fellow students. Twelve classmates and one teacher were killed and 23 students were wounded before Harris and Klebold turned their guns on themselves” (p. 9). Eric and Dylan performed this act because they were constantly harassed at school by the ‘jocks’. They were regularly slammed into lockers and teased about their sexual orientation.
One day a student accused them of possessing marijuana at school and the school searched their property. Another incident, even more humiliating than the search, was that their peers surrounded them in the halls and squirted ketchup packets all over them, laughing at them, calling them faggots. That happened while teachers watched. Eric ad Dylan couldn’t fight back. They wore the ketchup all day on their clothes and went home covered in it (Coloroso, 2003).

Nobody would listen to their pain. They finally got fed up. All their built up frustration turned into an outraged massacre.

In addition to the massacre at Columbine, there have been many mass shootings in U.S. Schools. B.J. Grapes (2000) writes:

- On February 2, 1996, Barry Loukaitis killed two students and one teacher and wounded one student at his school in Moses Lake, Washington.
- Ramsey shot and killed one teacher and one classmate in his Bethel, Alaska, high school on February 19, 1997.
- In Peral, Mississippi, Luke Woodham killed two classmates and wounded seven others at his high school on October 1, 1997. He wrote a letter explaining the motivation behind his rampage: “I am not insane. I am angry. I killed because people like me are mistreated every day. I did this to show society, ‘push us and we will push back’ (p. 11).
- On December 1, 1997, Michael Carneal shot and killed three students and wounded five others at Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky.
- Mitchell Johnson and Andrew golden killed one teacher and four students and wounded ten others at Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, on March 24, 1998.
- Andrew Wurst opened fire at a school dance in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, on April 24, 1998, killing one teacher and wounding two classmates.
• On May 21, 1998, Kip Kinkel shot and killed two students and wounded 21 others at Thurston High School in Springfield Oregon.

• May 20, 1999, exactly one month after the massacre at Columbine, T.J. Solomon opened fire on his classmates in a crowded hallway at Heritage High School in Conyers, Georgia, wounding six.

• On February 29, 2000, in Mount Morris Township, Michigan, a first grader shot and wounded another 6-year-old a day after they have a quarrel in the schoolyard (Quinn, 2003).

These are the high profile cases. Not every child who was bullied will go to such extreme measures, or be reported in the newspapers. Almost everybody can tell a story or two about having once been victimized in school by a bully, and most of us get over the fear and the humiliation, but some of us do not (Barone, 2000). We can never underestimate when a child will turn suicidal or start a killing rage. We can’t ignore children’s feelings and self-worth. We don’t want any of our younger generation to feel that they are not worthy of respect.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In my research paper I am going to address six main questions:

1) What types of bullying are there?

2) Why do children bully?

3) What are the later effects of bullying?

4) What children are more at risk of being bullied?

5) How can bullying be prevented?
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For my research paper I read many books from different author’s perspectives and scholarly journals from CSU Monterey Bay’s campus library’s online database. I looked up newspaper articles online and watch a film called “Bullying for Columbine” which spoke about the massacre at Columbine and various other violent situations that have happened in schools. I also researched the internet for articles dealing with bully prevention techniques and anti-bullying programs schools are implementing today.

PERSONAL INTEREST

I am interested in conducting this study because I was bullied as a child. I was never physically bullied but I was verbally bullied and it affected my school performance and self-esteem. I remember being afraid to go to school because girls would threaten to beat me up if they saw me in the hallway because one girl decided to spread rumors about me. I was also verbally harassed with sexual terms from boys. I developed slower than most girls and was often made fun of about it. I have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and was often teased about being “a ditzy blonde” because I had blonde hair and was slow sometimes at understanding things. Because I was referred to as air-headed and stupid I started to believe that I was and would not try to be otherwise, or prove that I wasn’t. I started to believe that I really was stupid. Fortunately my parents recognized what was happening to me and pulled me out of public school and put me into a private school, which I loved. I was respected by my peers and I then realized that I was not stupid after all.

At the time, I was never told that I should be concerned about this bullying going on. I was told as a child that bullying was going to happen to everyone while they were going through
puberty and it was something that we just had to deal with during our adolescent years. Bullying was seen as a part of growing up. Now we know differently - that it is something very serious and cannot be dismissed or ignored. Fortunately my experience with bullying wasn’t as bad as some kids’ stories that I have heard and read about during my research.

I realize how hard it is for kids to be in school when they are constantly being made fun of. When I become a teacher in the near future I want to make sure that my students are having a bully-free education. I want to learn to be aware if there is bullying happening in my classroom and I want to be able to stop it and be there for my students. I want to make sure that my students want to be in school and aren’t afraid. One of my goals as an educator will be to make sure that all of my students are treated with respect.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

- **Hazing** - when a peer is forced to do things against their will in order to not be physically harmed, or to be accepted into a club, group, or clique.

- **Bullying** - a conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity directed towards a peer and intended to harm and create fear through the threat of further aggression (Coloroso, 2003).

- **Bullying** - when children choose to kill themselves rather than face one more day of being bullied (Coloroso, 2003).

- **Bystanders** - those who witness a bullying incident and usually support the bully by cheering him on and do nothing to stop it.
CHAPTER TWO

Research Findings
TYPES OF BULLYING

*Sticks and stones will break my bones, and words will always hurt me.*

There are three main types of bullying: physical, verbal, and relational. The most obvious one is physical bullying because it can be visibly identified. Physical bullying “accounts for less than one-third of the bullying incidents reported by children. It includes slapping, hitting, choking, poking, punching, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, twisting limbs into painful positions, spitting, and damaging or destroying clothes and property belonging to the bullied child” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 16). Boys tend to use physical bullying more often than girls. Boys usually play in large groups and they like to pick on each other, but bigger girls are also known to trip, shove, and poke smaller girls or smaller boys (Coloroso, 2003). One boy who was interviewed about bullying at his school said, “I’ve been flicked in the ear and thrown into lockers. In the locker room, I’ve been thrown up on the bench and pushed into walls. I’ve been picked up and turned around into the air…they’ve jumped on me, they kicked me, shoot rubber bands at me, call me names,…Yeah, most of them just keep on doing it almost every day” (Espelage, 2001, p.53). Boys are also taught that is it okay to horseplay and be rough. Father’s often say, “Stand up for yourself. Be a man!” Many boys believe that physical violence is a way to be accepted into the popular crowd and be cool; if you are strong and powerful, you are respected.

The old child’s saying “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” is not true. Another form of bullying is verbal abuse. This is the most common form of bullying used by both boys and girls. It accounts for 70% of reported bullying. Verbal bullying is not as obvious to notice as physical bullying. “Verbal bullying can take the form of name-calling, taunting, belittling, cruel criticism, personal defamation, racist slurs, and sexually
suggestive or sexually abusive remarks. It can involve extortion of lunch money or possessions, abusive phone calls, intimidating emails, anonymous notes containing threats of violence, untruthful accusations, false and malicious rumors, and gossip” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 16).

Both boys and girls use verbal bullying equally, but the type of verbal bullying is different for boys and girls. Coloroso states that boys often have an allusion that girls are on the lowest rung of the ladder of power and respect:

The words used to bully boys tend to be derogatory terms defining them as “less than a boy”- that is, a girl (sissy, wuss, pussy, bitch, ‘you run like a girl’) - or homophonic terms (gay, fag, queer, homo). Weaker boys are often called wimp, sissy, and nerd. The words used to bully girls tend to objectify their bodies, demean their sexuality, or infantilize them (fat, dog, cunt, hole, pussy, lez, slut, whore, hooker, babe, baby, chick, kitten) (Coloroso, 2003, p. 35-36).

Verbal bullying needs to be recognized because if it is allowed, it becomes normalized and the target will continue to be put down and degraded. “When a child becomes the regular butt of jokes, he or she is often excluded from other, more prosocial activities, the last to be chosen, and the first to be eliminated. Who wants to have a loser on their side?” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 16). Children who are teased a lot are not seen as a potential friend to others. If another peer is seen with the teased child, that peer’s reputation is diminished.

The third type of bullying used is relational. Relational bullying is the most difficult to detect because you can’t see it. Relational bullying is when a child is ignored, isolated, excluded, or shunned and the child’s sense of self is lessened (Coloroso, 2003, p. 17). Gossip is a form of relational bullying; the child is talked badly about behind their backs and the other children believe the gossip and judge the child accordingly. Coloroso (2003) explains that
“gossip destroys peer relationships and exaggerates a bullied child’s problem, mistakes, and interactions; ‘did you hear what she did?’ (p. 16). When a child is the topic of gossip, s/he will not have many friends, and the rumors that are spread will not always be true. The child being gossiped about may not even hear the rumor but will still suffer from its effects: “Stay away from him, he has cooties”, or “Don’t hang with her, she’s slept with half the boys on the team.”

Relational bullying is used to alienate and reject a peer or to purposefully ruin friendship. It can involve subtle gestures such as aggressive stares, rolling of eyes, sighs, frowns, sneers, snickers, and hostile body language (Coloroso, 2003). One seventh grader named Jenny, upon moving to a new school, was nicknamed Harriet the Hairy Whore. Jenny’s peers spread rumors that she was a slut, and convinced every girl in class to sign a petition saying they hated her (Dutton, 2003). This is an example of relational bullying. Coloroso (2003) also states that “excluding a child from sleepovers, birthday parties, and playground games is often seen as a form of bullying because it is not as easy to identify such as name-calling or a fist in the face; the results are not as obvious as a black eye or a torn jacket; and the pain it causes is usually hidden” (p. 17). When students do speak up about being rejected, adults usually dismiss them and say, “You wouldn’t want to go to their party anyway.” Relational bullying is most present during adolescence when children are undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and sexual changes. It is a time when young teens are trying to figure out who they are and trying to fit in with their peers.

Girls use relational bullying more often than boys. Girls tend to play in small, more intimate circles. They often compete out of jealousy, and in the blink of an eye, the secrets best friends share with each other can kill their friend’s reputation (Dutton, 2003). One girl that was interviewed about bullying in her school said, “I don’t usually hit other students, but sometimes in band class we will get bored and talk about a girl’s hairstyle or what she is wearing that day”
Girls are often taught at a young age to not use force because it is not “lady-like,” so they developed gossip and rejection as their way of bullying.

One form of relational bullying is hazing. This is when a peer is forced to do things against their will in order to not be harmed physically or to be accepted into a club, group, or clique. For example: being forced to drink until passing out, being forced to eat disgusting things, to be tattooed, pierced, or shaved, or to steal or commit a crime (Coloroso, 2003).

In an article about hazing in USA Today, Tamara Henry cited an April 2000 study by Alfred University concerning the “risk of initiations that include being humiliated or forced to engage in illegal or dangerous activities” when high school kids join clubs. Of the 1541 high school students who responded to the random survey, 48% said they were subjected to hazing, 43% were subjected to humiliating activities, 23% were involved in substance abuse, and 29% told of performing potentially illegal acts (Coloroso, 2003). Many children believe that they need to do certain acts to be admitted into a social group or club.

One example of hazing happened to eight year old Meghan, who was suspended from school for pulling her pants down on the playground in front of a group of boys while a group of girls watched. Meghan was desperate to belong to the popular group and the leader told her she could join the group if she would pull down her pants in front of the boys and if she didn’t they would make sure nobody else would play with her (Coloroso, 2003). It is important for all of us to feel that we belong. It can be such a powerful force for young people that they often will do unspeakable cruel things to themselves and other people in order to be accepted into a group.

Bullying can also be wrapped in sexual overtones. Sexual bullying is when a child is made fun of because their body development or sexual orientation. They can be grabbed, grouped, touched when they don’t want to, or mocked because of what they look like. Coloroso
(2003) states that “our sexuality is an integral part of who we are; sexual bullying cuts at the core of our being and can have devastating consequences (p. 34). When a child is sexually harassed their self image is lessoned.

In a survey done by researcher I. Rivers, one-third of the kids surveyed reported experiencing sexual bullying in 6th grade or earlier. Girls who mature early and boys who mature late are at a high risk for being targeted for sexual bullying. Kids of different sexual orientation are likely to be bullied. In an article “Young, Gay, and Bullied”, published in Young People Now, Rivers wrote about his 1996 study in which he interviewed 140 gay and lesbian young people. He found that 80% of those responding had experienced taunting about their sexual orientation, and over half had been physically assaulted or ridiculed by peers or teachers (Coloroso, 2003). Another study done by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network in 1998 surveyed 496 gay adolescents nationwide and found that 69% of gay students reported having been targets of verbal, physical, or sexual harassment in school and that 42% said they have been physically assaulted (Portner, 2001, p. 14).

According to another study done in 1993 by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation called “Hostile Hallways” a questionnaire was given to 1632 students from grades eight to eleven (Coloroso, 2003). These were the alarming results: 85% of girls and 76% of boys reported having experienced sexual harassment, 65% of girls reported being touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way, 13% of girls and 9% of boys reported being forced to do something sexual other than kissing, 25% of girls stayed home from school or cut classes to avoid sexual harassment, 86% of girls targeted reported being sexually harassed by their peers and, 25% of girls targeted reported being sexually harassed by school staff.
Bystanders also play a big role in a bullying incident. A bystander is someone who witnesses a bullying incident and usually supports the bully, cheering him on, and does nothing to stop it. Bystanders usually taunt the target and actively encourage the bully; some might even join in and become one of the bunch of bullies. Coloroso (2003) mentions that, “Actively engaging with the bully or cheering him on causes even more distress to the child who is bullied, encourages the antisocial behavior of the bully, and puts the bystanders at risk of becoming desensitized to the cruelty or becoming full-fledged bullies themselves” (p.62). When children observe these antisocial activities, they are more likely to imitate those activities if they see the bully as popular, strong, and as a role model.

There are four types of bystanders: ones who remain fearful of the bully and continue to blame the target for becoming a victim, ones who join the bullying, ones who do not see anyone else intervening, shrug their shoulders, and feel helpless to stop the bullying, or even worse are the ones who see no need to stop it (Coloroso, 2003). Some bystanders are afraid of interfering when a bullying incident is taking place because they are either afraid of getting hurt, afraid of becoming a new target, afraid of doing something that will only make the situation worse or they do not know what to do (Coloroso, 2003).

When children witness a bullying incident and nothing is done to stop it, they begin to think that these actions are okay and to not feel empathy or guilt for the person being victimized. Sometimes children will believe that the victim deserved it. Coloroso (2003) makes a good point about bystanders:

The lack of sanctions for bullying, the breakdown of inner controls, the reduction of feelings of guilt, and the magnification of a target’s negative attributes all contribute to the cultivation of a worldview that reinforce stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination.
That in turn hinders kids from developing empathy, compassion, and perspective taking (walking in another’s shoes) - three essentials for successful peer relationships (p. 63).

When children think it is okay to pick on their peers and insult them they will never make friends, or keep them. They will never understand that others feel pain too and will never live by the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you.” “Kids who bully, who are targets, and who are bystanders are all bound up in the cycle of violence and weakened by the experience” (Coloroso, 2003, p.46).

WHY CHILDREN BULLY

“This violent streak is part of our American Mythology, is central to the legend we’ve created about our westward expansion, our growth as a superpower. We believe we always should meet might with might, strength with strength, and violence with violence” (Kalet, 2000, p.141).

School is a place where people do mean things all the time, for no reason. Most students bully because they have low self-esteem and the want to feel powerful: “Bullying is not about anger. It’s not even about conflict. It’s about contempt- a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 20). Low-self-esteem predicts higher levels or bullying (Christie-Mizell, 2003). Bullying is arrogance in action. Kids who bully often are trying to cover up deep hurt and a feeling of inadequacy. They use their feelings as an excuse to put someone down so they can feel better about themselves. Coloroso (2003) states that “the biases at the foundation of this contempt are often deeply rooted attitudes found in our homes, our schools, and our society” (p. 21). Most bullies feel un-loved, unimportant, and inferior and they like to project those feelings onto their victims. Bullies have three times more family problems than non-bullies and their parents are
not good role models at home. Studies have shown that four out of five violent kids are victims at home and come from disengaged families (Hazler, 1996). The parents don’t teach them how to get along well with others and how to solve problems the right way.

Bullies are often older and stronger than their peers, assertive, and impulsive (Michna, 2003). Bullies are not born bullies though. Environmental influences have a great impact on who’s more at risk of becoming a bully. Bullies learn to be bullies in large part by the way they were treated by bigger or more powerful people in their lives. Someone who is allowed to feel free and strong from childhood does not have the need to humiliate another person (Coloroso, 2003). Some factors are the children’s home life, school life, and the community and culture (including the media) that permits or encourage such behavior.

Children learn how to bully thorough observation. Bullies are taught to bully (Coloroso, 2003). For example, if they often hear adults yelling obscene words at each other or to them, they are more prone to say those words at school and to their peers. According to Christie-Mizell (2003), the term for this is Social Learning; the child acquires behavior through observation and imitation (p. 238). Kids who bully might often have family problems at home: “Many scholars have pinpointed parenting styles along with violence and discord between parents as chief causes of child behavior problems” (Christie-Mizell, 2003, p. 238). One way for the child to relieve his frustration and anger in his personal life is to put it out onto someone else. If they don’t feel happy, why should anyone else.

Some traits of bullies are: they like to dominate other people, like to use other people to get what they want, find it hard to see a situation from the other person’s point of view, are concerned only with their own wants and pleasures and not the needs, rights, and feelings of others, tend to hurt other kids when parents or other adults are not around, view weaker siblings
or peers as prey, use blame, criticism, and false accusation to project their own inadequacies onto their target, refuse to accept responsibility for their actions, lack foresight, and crave attention (Coloroso, 2003). Research has found that children who do well in school are less likely to engage in bullying behavior (Christie-Mizell, 2003). If they are doing well in school then they are more likely to be happy and have high self-esteem. If a child is put down and told he can’t accomplish anything, then his grades and behaviors will reflect that.

THE LATER EFFECTS OF BULLYING

“The guilt, shame, and sense of failure felt by the target unable to cope with the brutalization contribute to the destruction of his sense of wellbeing. As he becomes more isolated from his peers, has trouble concentrating on schoolwork, and develops survival strategies instead of social skills, his life changes radically” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 46).

Bullies often grow up with a poor self-esteem, few social skills, and an aggressive response to their frustrations. Bullying becomes a way of life in their personal, social, and work relationships (Coloroso, 2003). Christie-Mizell (2003) states that “children who persistently engage in bullying are more likely as adults to experience poor physical health, depression, difficulties in sexual relationships, involvement in criminal behavior and low socioeconomic attainment” (p. 238). Olweus found that boys in grades six to nine who were bullies were approximately four times more likely to be convicted for a crime by age 24 than boys who were victims or who were neither victims nor bullies (Michna, 2003). Quinn (2003) states that there is a 40% chance that those identified as bullies between the sixth and ninth grade will have three or more arrests by the age of 30. Kiger (2000) believes that an estimated 60% of childhood bullies
go on to commit adult crimes (p. 31). Kids who commit physical bullying are more likely to move on to more serious criminal offenses.

Bullying can leave lasting emotional and psychological scars on children. Research has shown that bullying can extend across the generations: the children of bullies often become bullies themselves (Barone, 2000). This is because they parent their children the same way they treat their peers. They are negative and are not positive role models for their offspring, giving them poor social skills and low self-esteem. Children more often than not grow up acting just like their parents: “Many children who bully continue these learned behaviors into adulthood and are at increased risk of bullying their own children, failing at interpersonal relationships, losing jobs, and ending up in jail” (Coloroso, 2003, pg. xvi). Kiger (2000) also believes that some bullies become killers (p. 28). Adults who act aggressively towards situations are more likely to take their aggressive actions too far because they can’t control their anger.

Children who are the victims of bullying often have low academic achievement because they find it hard to concentrate in school when they are always paranoid about when they will be attacked next. Children who are bullied spend a lot of time thinking up ways to avoid the being harmed and have little or no energy left for learning. Juvonen & Graham (2001) state that, “Many children recover from frequent experiences of victimization that are of short duration, others must cope with incidents that are sporadic but recurrent and still other youth have to deal with being isolated even that is intense and has enduring effects” (p. 21). Victims can suffer from depression, poor grades, eating disorders, and even suicidal thoughts. Malverson (2000) wrote about how being a victim of bullying as a child scarred him in his later life:

I was an object of constant ridicule from about 5th grade until my high school graduation.

I still carry the scars of public education. I am still quite timid. I don’t like to express
strong opinions or emotions to others, because of a latent fear that I will be teased for them. I still like to blend into a crowd, and don’t like to do anything that will draw attention to me. I have trouble making friends, and I never really fell that I can trust the friends that I do make to continue to deserve my trust. On some deep-down level, I feel that I must constantly expect them to betray me… I never dated in high school, and only a few times in college. I don’t have empathy for other people. I despise the educational system and everything related to it (p. 100).

Dixon (2000) was also bullied as a child and has suffer from it effects. She states that, “To this day, twenty years later, I still size up my surroundings, automatically, thinking where the best place to be cornered would be if someone cornered me” (p. 104). She was often beaten up, knocked on the floor, pushed into walls, kicked until she was sick, and stabbed with pencils about three times a week for two years; once a boy even broke her arm by twisting it behind her back.

Depending on how long the child is exposed to peer harassment determines how much the bullying affects him during childhood. Researchers have linked peer victimization to loneliness, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, social problems, and school maladjustment. Frequent harassment interferer’s with child’s ability to successfully adapt to his surrounding at school. The child also develops a sense of mistrust towards his peers and becomes so preoccupied with feelings of alienation and becomes concerned with their safety that they have difficulty focusing on school and homework and eventually develop negative attitudes towards school (Ladd & Ladd, 2001). Often the child is so frustrated with school that they drop out. They then have a hard time finding a job and continue to have a low economic status.
Sadly, sometimes a bullied child will turn to bullycide. This is when a child chooses to kill themselves rather than face one more day of being bullied (Coloroso, 2003). These kids who chose bullycide have dealt with tremendous shame brought on by rejection and humiliation. Coloroso (2003) describes how children bullied everyday must feel:

It is difficult to motivate yourself even to get out of bed in the morning if all you have to look forward to is a day of being bullied. It is hard to persist against frustration day in and day out when your emotional and physical well-being are under threat of attack from the moment you leave for school until you get home again; when it matters not what precautions you take or concessions you make to avoid a confrontation. It’s hard to regulate moods when you are ignored, shunned, rumored about, sneered at, and kicked. You’re on a roller coaster of fear, despair, anger, frustration, and sadness (p. 58).

Many children do not know how to cope with these everyday fears and stresses of being harassed and they believe that nobody cares or can help them and they only way to end the pain is to commit suicide.

Kerby Casey Guerra (1985-1999) is one of many unfortunate teens who decided to end their lives to stop the bullying. Kerby was 13 years old and in 6th grade at Eagleview Middle School in Colorado Springs. Popular boys often teased her about her weight and taunted her saying she bought her clothes at Walmart. They would also hurl ethnic, racial and sexual slurs at her such as whore and Mexican white trash. She would hide in the girls’ restroom and avoid classes where she might run into bullies. She once went to the principal and was told to shrug it off. She began slashing her wrists and hid scars from parents. She frequently binged and purged food and her grades went from B’s to F’s. She tried to commit suicide once in January 1999 and swallowed a mix of narcotics (Demerol, Antibiotics and Xantac cold medicine). She wrote a
suicide note to her parents saying, “Dear Mommy and Daddy, I know my death will shock you, but I had to do it. All my life I’ve been teased and harassed. I just couldn’t stand it anymore.” When the parents got home they rushed her to hospital and she got her stomach pumped and she survived. She was admitted to a psychiatric facility and put on antidepressants. Two months later, she shot herself when her parents were out at dinner on March 19, 1999. After Kerby was gone the mother found out that a year before Kerby committed suicide, she told a counselor that she was suicidal and that information was never reported. The mother was furious, “My daughter went to the people in the school, she went to counselors and teachers and no one helped” (Portner, 2001, p. 37-45).

Homosexually can also lead children to commit suicide. Homosexual children are harassed more often, and are often frustrated and heartbroken that they can’t change the way they are. Homosexual youths are more than five times as likely to attempt suicide as their heterosexual peers (Portner, 2001, p.14). Mark, 18 years old, and a student at high school in New York City downed a near fatal dose of penicillin and painkillers in 1998. He could no longer endure the daily routine of being harassed at school - only to go home, where his brother beat him until he bled because he was gay. “I feel so unsupported… there’s still some days I wish I were dead” (Portner, 2001, p. 14). Fortunately Mark is still alive and has reached out and found support.

Bullycides just don’t happen out of nowhere. They are not at all unpredictable. “It is the tragic ending of what is often a long, dramatic story, with small hints, red flags, and cried for help along the way (Coloroso, 2003, p. 54). Each bullycide is a result of an environment where adults have failed to provide support and help to a bullied child. Coloroso states that, “Nothing
seems to threaten the human spirit more than rejection, brutalization, and lack of love” (Coloroso, p. 53). Bullycides can be prevented with the right environment.

**TYPES OF CHILDREN PRONE TO BEING BULLIED**

Pretty much any child can be a victim of bullying. Sometimes it’s just a matter of being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Targets can be just about anybody: the kid who is new on the block, the kid who is the youngest in the school, the kid who has been traumatized or has already been hurt, the kid who is extremely sensitive, and finds it hard to ask for help, the kid who is submissive, the kid who has behaviors others find annoying, the shy kid, the poor or rich kid, the kid who is of a different race, the kids with different sexual orientation, the religious kid, the gifted kid, the kid who doesn’t conform to the norm, the fat or thin kid, the short or tall kid, the kid who wears braces or glasses, the kid with acne, or the kid with mental disabilities (Coloroso, 2003).

The one thing that all kids who are bullied have in common is that they were targeted by a bully: “Each one was singled out to be the object of scorn and thus the recipient of verbal, physical, or relational aggression, merely because he or she was different in some way. Bullies need targets on whom they can heap their aggression” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 42). Also, younger children who haven’t yet developed a strong sense of self are the most susceptible to being bullied (Coloroso, 2003).

Special education student are more likely to be victimized. Children with Learning Disabilities (LD) are at greater risk of peer victimization. They are more likely to be rejected, not accepted, and neglected by their peers: “Approximately 25% to 30% of students with LD are socially rejected, in comparison to 8% to 16% of their peers without LD” (Michna, 2003, p.
Children with LD tend to have social problems. They have difficulties with language, attention, information processing, and problems interpreting social information (such as facial expressions), all of which may interfere with everyday social interactions (Michna, 2003). Children with autism are also at risk for being targets of bullying: “Kids with autism often walk with an unusual gait, have narrow, focused interests, and don’t read social cues well. They are easy targets for kids to mimic their gait, mock their interests, and persuade them to act in ways that get them in trouble” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 43). They are seen as entertainment for the bullies.

Kids who stammer are more likely to be bullied. Kids with cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy are more likely to be bullied. They’re rated as being less popular than their peers and teachers tend to underestimate the bullying that these kids experience (Chamberlain, 2003). Pretty much any kids who isn’t considered “normal” in society (and that could be almost anything) is teased; nobody is perfect.

Some kids are rejected just because they have a bad reputation, not just because of something they have done: “Peer rejection measures do not focus directly on the behavioral or personality characteristics of the child. They rather reflect the social environment’s- the peer’s-evaluation of the child in the form of a general liking or disliking” (Olweus, 2001, p. 7). If one kid is the center of gossip and thus gained a bad reputation, they are more likely to be rejected just because of the rumors spread about them, whether or not they are true. Children who are the targets of other children’s aggression and who typically acted differently than the “norm”, one of withdrawal and anxiety, are often disliked and rejected (Olweus, 2001). Some kids have different habits and ways of doing things. Many children come from different countries and
have different customs, or say different words, and they are often ridiculed because they have
different beliefs.

Another type of children that can be rejected are called a Bully-Victims, or provocative
victims. The characteristic of these kinds of kids is that they may have Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). They tend to react aggressively if they are provoked by other
kids. They are picked on because their aggressive behaviors, but also, in turn, they bully other
kids because they are victimized too (Chamberlain, 2003). Children who are both bullies and
victims are the most severely rejected by peers. Peers are afraid of them because they are a bully
and peers don’t like them because they are looked down upon. Christie-Mizell (2003) makes a
good point when she says that, “Not only does disruptive behavior result in rejection by peers,
but also includes academic difficulties, negative labeling by teachers, and damages self-concept”
(p. 238).
CHAPTER THREE

Possible Solutions
PREVENTION OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

“Bullying is a learned behavior. If it can be learned, it can be examined, it can be changed” (Coloroso, 2003, p. xxi).

In order to make sure that our children are safe, we have to make sure that bullying is eliminated from schools. There are some theories being thought of to deal with bullying. Texas state representative Tony J. Goolsby proposed to have bullies who are causing another peer to have emotional distress removed from the school and placed in an alternative education program (Torres, 2003). Another idea proposed was creating school safety report cards that would make it easy for parents to evaluate campuses and may stop other school shootings by making parents aware of the problems their children are facing. And yet another idea discussed was raising the amount of money parents would have to pay for their children’s hurtful actions towards peers (Kass, 2003). But researchers are convinced that these actions will not help stop bullying. Taking the disruptive kids out of school only hurts them more in the long run and does not teach them responsibility for their actions. The report cards method might work but does not cut to the core of the underlining issue. And for the payment method, many parents don’t have the funds or financial stability to pay for their child’s wrong doings.

Today all fifty states have implemented a “Zero-Tolerance” policy to control bullying and school violence as well as possession of weapons and the use of drugs. This policy “mandates predetermined consequences or punishments for specific criminal or violent offenses” (Hazler, 1996, p. 8). This program states clear consequences for children who commit violent acts in school. As a form of punishment, some students can get detention, suspension, or expelled. There are many critics of this policy claiming that it is inflexible, harsh and lacks common sense. Coloroso (2003) says to beware of the zero tolerance policy because it equals
zero thinking. “It requires an “all of nothing” approach that gives administrators the message “you have no choice” and has resulted in a reckless and punitive approach that has an overtone of vindictiveness and has also brought increased lawsuits against schools regarding unfairness and inequities” (p. 184). She says that the zero tolerance rule is unfair because no matter what a kid does, they get treated with pretty much the same punishment. Sometimes the punishment is harsher than the actual doing of the child. Coloroso (2003) gives some examples of zero tolerance being less than effective in action:

- A first grader suspended for three days for pointing a breaded chicken finger at a friend like a gun.
- Two eight year olds arrested and charged with “making terrorist threats” for wielding a paper gun in class.
- A 13 year old boy expelled for making a list of his enemies, which a classmate found in the trash and showed to a teacher.
- An 11 year old arrested for having a plastic knife in her lunchbox to cut chicken.
- A 16 year old expelled after he turned in an English assignment in which he wrote about his thoughts of getting revenge on those students who had taunted and physically harassed him daily.

These are descriptions of incidences where these children were severely punished for minimal or no real offenses. Fortunately in March 2001, the American Bar Association released a statement opposing such zero-tolerance procedures, calling them a “one size fits all solution to all the problems that schools confront. It redefined students as criminals, with unfortunate consequences” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 185). There are some incidences where students who aren’t even the bullies get blamed and their actions are not given a fair trail. One example is that in
April 1998, a 12 year old boy, Wayne, from New Jersey, brought a pellet gun to school, hoping to scare a bully into leaving him alone. Wayne ended up suspended from school, then pled guilty to unlawfully possessing a weapon (Kiger, 2000). There has to be a better way to handle bullying in schools and to give everyone a fair trial. Coloroso (2003) says that “each student has to take responsibility for his or her own behavior and go through disciplinary procedures that are non-hostile, non physical sanctions” (p. 16). I agree that the best way to help stop bullying is to make the students learn from their mistakes and take responsibility for their actions.

Also, the Zero Tolerance program is used to control physical bullying, but not all bullying is physical, as we now know. The “Zero-Tolerance” policy does not take into consideration that there are other types of bulling, such as verbal and relational. Chamberlain (2003) thinks that the Zero-Tolerance policy is a bad way to deal with bullying because it does not solve the problem. She states, “There are an awful lot of kids who bully their peers with some frequency, and certainly we can’t look to zero tolerance as a solution to bullying…Kids who bully their peers are in desperate need of exposure to prosocial peers, prosocial adults, and I think that means within a school environment. It’s really creating a bigger problem for the community, simply to keep these kids out. I think it’s doing them no service at all” (p. 238). Instead of kicking the bully out of school, he needs to be taught how to treat others respectfully. If he is punished, he will still continue to bully because he has no empathy. A bullying child needs a “teachable moment” to reflect on his behavior and learn how his actions are hurting others.

One suggestion is that instead of focusing on preventing bullying in the upper grades, we need to focus on the lower grades, where children are more susceptible to changing their behaviors early on. Chamberlain (2003) states, “We have learned that we can’t begin violence
prevention programs in high school or middle school—working with only the kids who are most aggressive or violent—that really we need to begin earlier, looking for some of the behaviors that may be antecedents to more serious behaviors down the line” (p. 236). The key issue here is that respect and tolerance need to be taught in our schools, and it should begin in grade school.

Some schools have developed dress codes, or school uniforms, to deal with bullying because many children are often bullied about the clothes they wear. Also, children often feel pressured to look good and wear popular clothes and not every family can afford such fashion. In the video *Bowling for Columbine*, Moore (2002) describes using dress codes as a way to reduce weapons (by the tucking in of the shirts), release tension, reduce disciplinary actions, and generally improve the atmosphere. In Long Beach, California a mandatory uniform policy was adopted in 1994. The number of assaults, fights, and suspensions in the school district dropped dramatically. The school states that uniforms reduce undesirable behavior because they put students in the right frame of mind to learn. The assault and battery cases in Kindergarten through grade eight dropped 34%, physical fights between students dropped 51% and there were 32% fewer suspensions (Portner, 2001). But dress codes don’t always solve the bullying problem because kids will find different ways to bully their peers.

Another tactic that some schools have established is called “school mapping”. This identifies areas around the school that are known to be dangerous or disruptive (Van Dorn, 2002). Once that is figured out there is more teacher supervision of the areas where bullying is most likely to occur. This method is only effective if the teachers know what to look for and are able to pick out when bullying is happening.

One of the most important parts of making an anti-bullying school is to have positive role models. Chamberlain (2003) states that, “A person doesn’t learn to bully overnight; bullies are
not born bullies either, it’s conditioned. Bullies portray these violent acts because it is what they have seen at home; it is what has been modeled for them. Schools are the best places to help unlearn these violent behaviors and to discuss with them about bullying, and how it affects them, everyone around them, and the community they live in” (p.237). If students see teachers, school bus drivers, school staff, and anyone else on the school premises being respectful of each other and showing mature conflict resolution, the students will understand that that is the correct way to respond.

An opposite example of this was when a boy, Jared, was bullying kids at school repeatedly. When the school told the mother about it she condoned and excused her son’s negative behaviors for many years, did not hold him responsible and thereby modeled for him that such behaviors were acceptable. Both Jared and his mother believed he was misunderstood and mistreated and that he was just fine the way was (Kiger, 2000). That child did not have any positive home influences in his life to help him understand that his behavior was hurting others.

An alarming research study done at Tulane University in New Orleans found that 8% of suburban high school students thought it was okay to shoot someone who had offended or insulted them, and 20% thought it was appropriate to open fire if someone stole from them. (Grapes, 2000). These children too need to be taught that these actions are wrong.

In order to provide students the best anti-bullying program, the school staff and teachers need to be trained in what is bullying, what it looks like, and what they can do to stop it. Barone (2000) believes that schools need to invest in in-service training for staff member and in counseling programs that counsel the victims and bullies, and teachers need to interweave the issue of bullying into the curriculum. Teachers and staff need to be taught how to pick out
children who are at risk of being bullied, that are being bullied, or that might be on the verge of committing suicide.

Teachers and staff need to be aware of the warning signs of kids who are victims. A child who is suffering from bullying might: show an abrupt lack of interest in school or refuse to go to school, take an unusual route to and from school, suffer a drop in grades, withdraw from family and school activities, want to be left alone, is hungry after school, saying he lost his lunch money or wasn’t hungry at school, take parent’s money and making lame excuses for where it went, make a beeline to the bathroom when s/he gets home, is sad, sullen, angry, or scared after receiving a phone call or an e-mail, does something out of character, use derogatory or demeaning language when talking about peers, stop talking about peers and everyday activities, have disheveled, torn, or missing clothing, has physical injuries not consistent with explanation, have stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, be unable to sleep, sleeps too much, or is exhausted. When a child is anxious or paranoid, their adrenaline keeps getting released. The body stays on hyper-alert, churning up the stomach, twitching the limbs, and numbing the brain (Coloroso, 2003).

In the training program teachers and staff need to be taught what to do if there is a bullying situation. The first thing that must be done is to discipline the bully. Coloroso (2003) states that “Discipline gives life to learning; it is restorative and invites reconciliation. Its goal is to instruct, teach, guide, and help children develop self-discipline from within” (p. 106). When disciplining the bully, we do not want him to say he’s sorry and then just leave. We want him to have consequences for his actions and to truly be sorry and understand what he has done. “When a child has developed his own moral code, is committed to acting kindly and justly, believes he has both the ability to control his behavior and a choice in how he behaves, and takes
responsibility for his own actions, he will be able to get his own needs met while treating others with the same dignity and regard with which he would like to be treated” (Coloroso, 2003, p.106). The only way children will learn from their mistakes is to understand why they are punished and what they can do to make amends.

According to Coloroso (2003) there are 4 steps of discipline, called the three R’s: Restitution, Resolution, and Reconciliation. Restitution requires fixing what the bully has done. If a kid brakes someone’s toy, they have to fix it or buy them a new one. An apology is requested and not demanded. If you demand an apology, you will get either an insincere “I’m sorry” or repeated insincere apologies after repeated bullying. A sincere apology is more likely to be forthcoming if the child has seen it modeled or has been the recipient herself of a sincere “I’m sorry.” Just speaking the words I’m sorry is not enough (Coloroso, 2003). To be truly sorry the child must assume responsibility for his actions, admit what he had done was wrong, and express a strong desire not to do it again, and begin to mend the torn relationship (Coloroso, 2003).

The next step of discipline is resolution. This means figuring out a way to keep the incident from happening again. The bully can’t go back and undo the deed. He needs to be able to figure out what he actually did, what he did to bring it about, what he can learn from it (Coloroso, 2003).

The third step of discipline is reconciliation. This is a process of healing with the person you have harmed. “It involves a commitment by the offender to honor her plan to make restitution and live up to her resolutions. It involves the willingness of the bullied child to trust, risk, and rebuild a relationship with him/her. After making restitution and coming up with practical resolutions, it is helpful if the bully offers their time and talent to the bullied”
In this process the bully has to figure out how to make the victim happy again. There are two purposes for this process. The bullied can experience the goodness of the bully, and the bully can experience their own ability to be good and do good.

Another very important factor for helping reduce violence and suicide is to just listen to the kids. Chamberlain states “The biggest frustration is that the educators think this will work itself out over time. In the meantime they don’t take into consideration how it makes the kid feel physically, emotionally, how it affects them academically, all the time” (Chamberlain, 2003, p.238). Many victims of harassment feel that they have no one to tell or that no one cares about what they are going through. Many believe that it is just a normal part of growing up, since that it was is told to them. We, as educators and parents, need to let them know that bullying is not okay and it not healthy. We need to tell students that they deserve better treatments and sympathize with them, “What an awful experience, you do not deserve to be treated that way. Nobody deserves that kind of treatment. Let’s do everything we can to make sure it stops” (Chamberlain, 2003, p. 240). Just that sentence can make a bullied child feel better, will give them hope and shows that we care.

After the Columbine massacre there was a suicide note left inside the school by one of the shooters, Eric Harris. This is what his note said:

By now, it’s over. If you are reading this, my mission is complete… your children who have ridiculed me, who have chosen not to accept me, who have treated me like I am not worth their time are dead. They are fucking dead… surely you will try to blame it on the clothes I wear, the music I listen to, or the way I choose to present myself, but no, do not hide behind my choices. You need to face the fact that this comes as a result of your choices. Parents and teachers, you fucked up. You have taught these kids to not accept
what is different. You are in the wrong. I have taken their lives and my own - but it was your doing. Teachers, parents, let this massacre be on your shoulders until the day you die (Bronski, 2000, p.63).

This letter was an eye-opener for schools to take into consideration that they were not paying attention to their students’ feelings and mistreatment. If parents and teacher were aware of the warning signs and realized what these boys were going through, this massacre could have been prevented. This letter shows that these boys were intelligent and were more aware of the school’s problem then the staff and teachers were. If only someone would of listened to their cries...

The media stated that students Dylan Klebold and Eric Harrison liked to listen to Marilyn Manson, and that is one thing that made them rebel. When Michael Moore interviewed Mansion about the Columbine shootings he asked him, “If you were to talk directly to the kids at Columbine and the people in the community, what would you say to them if they were here right now?” Mansion responded, “I wouldn’t say a single word to them, I would listen to what they have to say, and that’s what no one did” (Bowling for Columbine).

There are a couple of successful programs that have been actually implemented in elementary and middle schools to eliminate bullying. One program was designed by Dr. Dan Olweus, one of the leading international authorities on bullying who has developed a highly successful intervention program in Bergen, Norway, that has significantly reduced bullying in the schools that have adopted it. His program is a “bullying prevention program that is a multilevel and multicomponent program designed to reduce and prevent bully/victim problems among students at school. The school staff is largely responsible for introducing and implementing the program, and their efforts are directed toward improving peer relations and
make the school a safe and pleasant environment” (Chamberlain, 2003, p. 241). In this program the whole school is involved in making a bully-free environment.

His program is built on a set of four key principles to create a school and home environment characterized by: warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults; firm limits as to unacceptable behavior; in case of violations of limits and rules, consistent application of non-hostile, non-physical sanction (discipline as opposed to punishment); behavior by adults at home and at school that creates an authoritative (not authoritarian) adult-child interaction or child-rearing model (Coloroso, 2003). These four principles translate into actions on an individual level, whole-class level, and school-wide level in any number of ways. Dake (2003) states that “the methods used to accomplish these goals included assessing the problem, setting school conference days, providing better supervision at recess, forming a bullying prevention coordinating group, scheduling parent-teacher meetings, establishing classroom rules against bullying, convening classroom meetings about bullying, requiring talks with bullies and victims, and inviting talks with parents of involved students” (p. 178). The program has adults that care, fair consequences for actions, and positive role models for the children to look up to.

Another program being implemented in elementary and middle schools is the Bully-Proofing Your School program, produced by Creating Caring Communities, a nonprofit organization. The goal of the program is to make school safe for all children, both physically and mentally. A basic component of the program is a belief in the power of the "caring majority"—those students who are neither bullies nor victims, but who may observe bullying behavior, fear for their own safety, and believe that getting involved will make them vulnerable. The Bully-Proofing Your School program works to empower bystanders as a powerful resource for creating a safe school environment. The curriculum consists staff training and awareness of
the problem, student awareness, supporting the victims, intervention with bullies (helping them
direct their anger in better ways), developing a caring school climate, and working with parents.

These programs were successful because they had a school culture change where
everyone was involved. In order to reduce bullying at school it requires a culture change, and all
the adults and students together saying, “This is something that we don’t accept, and we are
going to look out for each other and report and talk about his as a form of peer abuse”
(Chamberlain, 2003, p.239).

In order to implement a bully-free program in your school there are steps you have to
take. These steps were used in elementary schools in Canada and in the US to decrease bullying
and help students build supportive relationships with one another.

First Step:

The first step is to gather information about bullying at school directly from the students.
For example, ask the kids if they feel safe and if not what they need to feel safe. This can be
done by surveying students anonymously. And while gathering the data, make sure to also
increase awareness among students about the three types of bullying.

Second Step:

The second step is to establish clear school-wide and classroom rules about bullying;
mentioning the Three R’s for conflict resolution.

Third Step:

The third step requires training all adults in the school to respond sensitively and
consistently to bullying. “If teachers are not fully aware of the extent to which bullying affects
students or do not perceive bullying behaviors as serious, they will have passive attitudes
towards bullying, and effective intervention efforts are unlikely” (Yoon, n.d., p.28). The kids
have to know that they will be supported when they ask for guidance. The educators agree to teacher tolerance and diversity awareness in their classrooms and model positive, respectful and supportive behavior.

**Fourth Step:**

The fourth step is to provide adequate adult supervision, particularly in less structured areas, such as on the playground and in the lunchroom. There should also be greater adult presence even on the school bus.

**Fifth Step:**

The fifth step involves improving parental awareness of and involvement in working on the problem. Parents need to model positive, respectful, and supportive behaviors, help child develop strong sense of self, teach them how to make friends, and how to become part of a group. Kids need to be taught how to relate to others in positive and respectful way, to be assertive, and to stand up and speak out against injustices. The best way to safeguard children from becoming a victim of a bully is to teach them how to be assertive. This involves encouraging your children to express their feelings clearly, to say no when they feel pressured or uncomfortable, to stand up for themselves verbally without fighting, and to walk away in more dangerous situations. Bullies are less likely to intimidate children who are confident and resourceful. Kids can’t stop the bullying they experience or witness all by themselves. They need adults at home, in the school, and in community programs committed to breaking this cycle of violence wherever they see it and whenever they hear about it. Parents can volunteer to help create a greater presence of caring adult in the schools, work with educators to make sure policies are implemented, and serve as an advocate (Coloroso, 2003).
BULLY PREVENTION IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers can play a huge role in eliminating bullying in school by just educating their students in their classroom about it. Teachers can lead a class discussion on bullying to make sure students know what bullying is and why it is harmful. Educators can help create a setting where bullying is not accepted. They can help prepare children to welcome kids who look different, kids who have disabilities or special needs, into an environment. Chamberlain (2003) states “that the transition can be a very positive one if you empower, if you inform kids about this child and his or her disabilities, and if you talk about how the kids in the classroom or in the groups might be an especially good friend to this child.

Teachers can also create an unwelcome environment for hate speech and symbols. This is accomplished by setting clear prohibitions against the use of disrespectful language of all types, including those focused on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, social class, appearance, and disability (Van Dorn, 2002). These rules and the consequences for breaking them should be clearly stated on a poster in a classroom to remind the students. There should also be discussions about hate words and the meanings. Many children use hateful words but don’t really understand what they portray. If the kids are educated about what they are actually saying they will think twice about using those nasty words and phrases.

There should be books in the classroom with stories about situations about bullying. Quinn (2003) states that “literature is an accepted tool to help children confront their problems and work out developmental concerns… the use of a novel is a very natural way to open discussion and to increase awareness of the topic of bullying” (p. 583). When students see how the characters worked about the bullying problem maturely, they are more likely to follow the same steps. After reading the book there should be a class discussion about bullying and how
everyone is affected and what it does to people self-concepts. Students need to be aware that bullying is harmful and not fun. After the discussion students can write in their journals about their feeling on bullying.

Also teachers can talk with their students about the difference between teasing and taunting and flirting and sexual harassment and give examples of each. Student might not be aware that they are taunting someone when in their mind they are just teasing. If children learn the difference between the two then they are more likely to think before their actions.

Teasing allows the teaser and person teased to swap roles with ease, it isn’t intended to hurt the other person, it maintains the basic dignity of everyone involved, it pokes fun in a lighthearted, clever way, it gets both parties to laugh, it is only a small part of the activities shared by kids who have something in common, it is innocent, and it is discontinued when person teased becomes upset or objects (Coloroso, 2003). Taunting is based on an imbalance of power and is one-sided, it is intended to harm, it involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning, or bigoted comments thinly disguised as jokes, it includes laughter directed at the target, not with the target, it is meant to diminish the sense of self-worth of the target, it induces fear of further taunting or can be a lead to physical bullying, and it continues especially when targeted kid becomes distressed or objects to the taunt (Coloroso, 2003).

If kids are taught the difference between teasing and taunting, they are more readily able to distinguish between flirting and sexual bullying. Many children who are sexually harassed don’t even realize it and therefore do not seek help. If they know the difference then they can know if they are being sexually harassed or not. Flirting allows and invites both parties to swap role with ease, it isn’t intended to hurt the other person, it is an expression of desire, it maintains the basic dignity of both persons, is meant to be flattering and complimentary, is an invitation to
have fun together and enjoy each other’s company, invites sexual attention, is intended to make the other personal feel wanted, attractive, and in control, and it is discontinued when the person who is being flirted with becomes upset, objects to the flirting, or is not interested (Coloroso, 2003, 36). On the other hand, sexual bullying is based on an imbalance of power and is one-sided, it is intended to harm and exploit, it is invasive and intended to show the power of the bully, it is intended to be degrading and demeaning, it is intended to express control and domination, it is intended to violate the boundaries of the target, it is intended to make the other person feel rejected, ugly, degraded, and powerless, or uncomfortable, and it continues especially when targeted kid becomes distressed or objects to the sexual comment (Coloroso, 2003).

Teachers need to write a specific no-bullying policy into their classroom rules and make it just as important as any other classroom rules. They need to teach social skills through lessons and other activities throughout the day that focus on making friends, being assertive, and learning to take turns. Students need to be taught how to avoid being a victim and what to do if they are victimized and taught phrases like, “I don’t like the way you are talking to me. You sound mean. Stop doing it.” Children need to be taught to seek help from friends and adults and the teacher needs to identify herself as a resource (Chamberlain, 2003). Children need to be taught how to have a sense of humor, such as, “You’re right, this shirt is pretty ugly. I was too lazy to find another one this morning.” They need to be taught how to talk positively with their peers. The children need to know that they will be supported when they speak out about bullying and ask for extra adult help, and they should be taught to praise peers who come to them for help (Migliore, 2003, p.173).

When designing a curriculum, teachers need to use extra effort to include all students in class activities. All the children need to be given a role and the teacher needs to watch out for
kids who are being left out and try and bring them in with specific assignments or jobs. Also, make sure there are adequate materials for all students in order to minimize potential conflicts. Responsibility and positive behaviors should be reinforced in the classroom. Each week a student should be rewarded as one who was “caught caring”, and make it clear that this is how to achieve class status in the class (Migliore, 2003, p. 174). The teacher also needs to provide many other ways to gain recognition in the classroom, nonacademic and academic achievements. Every student’s efforts should especially be awarded.

Sometimes it helps to have a confidential message box for student suggestions or comments on classroom concerns because some students are shy or hesitant about bringing up bullying in person (Migliore, 2003, p. 175). And teachers need to make themselves available so they can talk to the students privately about their concerns. In the classroom there has to be a clear process to report bullying and it should be publicly displayed. It should be understood that reporting is expected and to not do so would be breaking a rule. Students must be taught that being silent about bullying is as bad as condoning it.

Teachers should always model respectful behavior towards the students and never use intimidation or sarcasm. They should always stay calm and in control. When there is a bullying incident, the teacher should intervene immediately with an approach that matches the incident. They should tell the bully that those words are offensive and we don’t talk like that here in the classroom. Then the bully should be instructed to make amends either by a sincere public apology, a face to face apology, or by doing a favor for the victim.

And last but not least, you can teach your students how to make and keep their friends. Tell them to show their friends kindness and respect, to stick up for them, to be supportive when their friends need help or advice, to tell the truth (but be kind about it). If they hurt a friend, say
they’re sorry, if a friend hurts them and apologizes, accept their apology, if they make a promise, keep it, put some effort into the friendship; otherwise their friends might feel neglected. Don’t try to change their friend - accept them the way they are, and treat their friends the way they want to be treated and always be thankful for their friends (Coloroso, 2003).

A few days after the shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, a group of Nashville, Tennessee, students created a web site (http://www.iwillpledge.nashville.com) and invited other students throughout the world to sign the following pledge:

As part of my community and my school, I WILL:

• Pledge to be a part of the solution
• Eliminate taunting from my own behavior
• Encourage others to do the same
• Do my part to make my community a safe place by being more sensitive to others
• Set the example for a caring individual
• Eliminate profanity toward others from my language
• Not let my words or actions hurt others…
• And if others won’t become a part of the solution, I WILL (Coloroso, 2003)

I think this would be an excellent agreement to have the students sign and also made into a poster for the classroom to help students remember their role in making a caring and safe bully-free community.
CHAPTER FOUR

Recommendations and Conclusions
CONCLUSION

Bullying has been accepted as being part of growing up for too long. We now know that bullying needs to be stopped and that it is a serious social issue, especially in the school. There are now specific programs to identify and reduce bullying, and as future educators and parents, it is our responsibility to use them effectively to protect our youth. A good analogy is that “every public swimming pool has lifeguards because we know that swimmers need supervision to be safe. Schools are no different in this respect” (Garbarino, deLara, 2003, p. 20). We, as a community, need to break the cycle of violence and create circles of caring where all children can thrive (Coloroso, 2003).

While doing this research I have learned how to be attentive to my students’ needs and feelings, and to identify the warning signs and calls for help from children who are being bullied. Also, as a future educator, I have learned how to create an anti-bully atmosphere in my classroom. I have come to understand that in building a caring bully-free school community everyone needs to be involved, the school staff, faculty, parents and even the students. I have learned that many children bully because they have been hurt themselves and need proper guidance. Also, I learned that many children bully out of ignorance because they were never taught by example from their parents how to show empathy and compassion.

With education, children can learn to understand what types of behavior are considered bullying behavior and how not to become a bully or what to do if they are being bullied. When bullied children are taught these concepts, they are more likely to be nice to their peers, because they finally understand the idea of empathy - how it feels to be in someone else’s shoes.

The main thing that stood out to me during my research is that children who bully are not bad kids, they just need role models. Bullies are not born bullies and there is no such thing as a
bad kid - but there are kids who show inappropriate behaviors who need to be led in the right direction and taught how to behave. This can be done through the combined efforts of teachers, parents and school counselors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Now that we are aware of programs to eliminating bullying in schools, these must be done. Schools need to act and put into place specific, written anti-bullying policies. They need to start working on creating a positive and caring atmosphere. Parents and teachers need to pay attention to each and every child/student and be aware of the warning signs and help them before it’s too late. Parents and teachers also need to be positive role models to teach kids about caring, making friends and conflict resolution - teach them how to be responsible human beings. Bully can be eliminated if everyone in the community agrees to participate.

I am definitely going to use the information I have learned from this research in my classroom. If the school I work at does not have a policy against bullying, or if their policy isn’t working, I will give the administration this capstone paper to read, and work with them to create a policy and set up programs. I will educate my students and the parents of my students about bullying and show them what they all can do to help. I will be an advocate for eliminating bullying.
CHAPTER FIVE

Possible Lesson Plans
ANTI-BULLYING LESSON PLANS

The following pages are possible anti-bullying lesson plans for teachers to use in their classroom. These lesson plans will help children learn about bullying and how they can stop it from happening in their school. With the first lesson plan, children will learn how to be a friend and to compliment their peers. The second lesson plan will teach the students to not judge people from the outside, but to find good qualities inside them. The third lesson plan will help children learn to develop empathy by putting themselves in another person’s shoes. The last lesson plan instructs children about the three roles in bullying: the bully, the victim, and the bystander, and how they all contribute to the violence at school. Through these lesson plans children will have a better understanding about what bullying is and what they can do to help.
2-3. EXCLAMATIONS!
2-4. BALLOOSTERS
2-5. WOW

Objective:
Children are given the opportunity to give compliments to their peers in these activities. These will be pages many of your students will save and treasure.

Materials Needed:
- “EXCLAMATIONS!” “BALLOOSTERS” and “WOW” activity sheets
- Colored markers; pens; scissors; paste; optional: colorful paper for backgrounds if cut out, paste

Directions:
1. Discuss with your class qualities they like about other kids. Responses: “A good sport.” “Keeps secrets.” “Fun.” “Helpful.” As they volunteer answers, write their qualities on the board.
2. Tell students the activity sheets they are going to receive will give them the opportunity to tell others things they like about kids. Write the term “validation” on the board, explaining it is another word for a compliment. You may want to do each of these activities three different times (a different sheet each time with the same procedure) throughout the school year. The students are placed in different groups of six for each different sheet used so the opportunity is given for different validations. This rotation of groups takes some planning if you use all three sheets throughout the year.
3. Below are ideas for using each of the three activity sheets.
   “EXCLAMATIONS!” activity sheet: Ask students why they think these activity sheets have exclamation marks on them. Response: “An exclamation point shows excitement! We’re going to write compliments about our classmates. I’m going to be excited when I read what they wrote about me!”
   “BALLOOSTERS” activity sheet: This activity sheet has balloons for children to write to the others in their groups their positive qualities. Explain the title is called “BALLOOSTERS!” as a fun way to express boosters on balloons. Ask students if they like the opportunity to tell their classmates compliments. Response: “We can tell our classmates something positive about them. When they get their sheets back, they will have good things written about themselves inside their balloons. And I’ll be happy when I get my balloons back with positive things about me, also!”
   “WOW” activity sheet: Ask your students to pass the “WOW” sheet to the kids in their group to write how the child whose name is on the sheet “wows” them. These sheets are especially enjoyed by students as they create designs inside the WOW after it has been signed. They are then cut out and mounted on colorful paper.

Note: The “WOW” activity sheets serve another popular validation activity. For Mother’s Day students turn the page upside down to form the word “MOM.” They
write inside the letters all the positive qualities about their mothers that wow them—perfect for a Mother’s Day gift!

4. The introductions for the three activity sheets are the same. For each of these peer-validation activities, decide how you want the groups in your class divided into groups of six. After passing out the activity sheets, the first step is to have each student write his or her name. If a name is not on a sheet that is passed, validations cannot be signed because students won’t know whose paper is passed to them.

5. Give your children time to think and discuss how they would feel if they got their papers back and someone in their group had not signed anything about them. They would have received only three or four compliments instead of five. Ask for these feelings to be shared. Response: “I’d wonder why they passed on me. I’d be sad they couldn’t think of even one good thing to say about me.”

6. It is also important to make sure nobody writes a put-down on a child’s sheet, thinking it would be funny. Ask how they would feel if they received their sheets back, excited to read what the kids in the group wrote and instead a put-down was on the sheet. Responses: “I might not let the other kids see it but I’d feel bad.” “I would wonder which one said the mean thing about me. I probably wouldn’t forget about it very easily.” “I’d feel like they think I’m a loser.” This activity requires your constant attention. You will need to watch all groups carefully to make sure the activity does not end up as a bad memory for any child who is ignored or put down by a classmate!

7. It’s a good idea to play background music for this activity. With music, students don’t feel the need to fill the silence while they are passing and signing. It also creates a calm mood if you choose a relaxing piece.

8. Make sure all groups are finished writing before you ask that all pages are passed back to their original owners. Notice the expressions on students’ faces as they read what their peers have said about them! For an added glow, collect the sheets and add your own positive observations about the children that they will treasure.

**Note:** Alternatively, these activity sheets could be used by individual students to write their positive qualities about themselves inside the illustrations.

**Bulletin Board Link:**

Here are some ideas for each of the three peer-validations activity sheets.

**EXCLAMATIONS:** A HUGE exclamation point is displayed in the classroom. Students’ photos or pictures of themselves are drawn to go inside the point. Each student writes one favorite positive quality about himself or herself beside or under the pictures. Captions are “We’re So Excited!” or “Here’s the Point!”

**“BALLOOSTERS:** Display a colorful balloon for each student along with the compliments he or she received in their small group validation activity. Hang curled ribbon under each balloon. The caption is “We Give Each Other BALLOOSTERS!”

**WOW:** Activity sheets are displayed with the caption “Here’s How We WOW Each Other.” WOWs make an impact in the room when designs are colored inside the sheets, cut out, and mounted on colorful paper.
EXCLAMATIONS!

Get into groups of six. Put your name on your page and pass it to the right to the other five in your group so they each can write inside your exclamation the points they like about you! You will do the same thing on each of their pages. See how you feel when you read the exclamations they have written about you!
Balloosters

Form a group of six. Pass your balloon sheet to each person in your group so that they can sign a booster about you. You can call these *balloosters! Then write a *ballooster for each one in your group.
Form a team of 5–6 students. Put your name on your sheet, then pass it to your left for each person to write inside your “WOW” one positive quality that “WOWS” them! Examples: you are kind, lots of fun, try hard at sports, help at home. Decorate your WOWS and brighten up your classroom!
2-22. THROW IT OUT!

Objective:

Children realize they sometimes judge others by outside factors; they need to focus on getting to know people on the inside as they “throw out” their judgments.

Materials Needed:

- “Throw It Out!” activity sheet
- Pens, markers
- Optional for bulletin board link: light brown paper; black markers; rope

Directions:

1. Have a discussion with children about how we think about people before we get to actually know them. Write the words “different,” “prejudice,” “judge,” “inferior,” and “superior” on the board. Ask for a student to tell you what these words have in common. Response: “All these words mean when people first see somebody who looks different from them, they are prejudiced and judge them by thinking they are inferior or lower than they are. They feel superior by putting them down, making fun of them or ignoring them by not letting them join in.”

2. Pass activity sheets to your class. Ask children to read each question carefully and to fill out the checklist. After completing the checklist, answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

3. After students have completed their sheets, form cooperative groups to decide upon which situations from the activity sheets they choose to role-play. Students in each group may decide how many situations they will act out. This is followed by each group practicing role-playing the situations on the activity sheet. Students then perform their role-plays for the class.

Bulletin Board Link:

Wilbert’s picture with the basketball net (from the activity sheet) is enlarged and displayed. Or a facsimile basketball net could be made with ropes knotted and plastic spiral bindings put together to form a hoop top. Under the net, basketballs made from light brown paper and designed with black markers contain the words each student will be “throwing out.” They may choose additional words to those given in the activity above such as “stereotype,” “rascism,” and other words they use to deal with judging people before getting to know them.
THROW IT OUT!

Sometimes we think *something* about a person before we even get to know that person! Have you judged people by the way they dress, the color of their skin, their weight, or something else you can see? What about the things you can’t see—like their hearts, what it’s like for them at home, what they think about? If you get to know them inside, not just what you see outside, you will be *throwing out your old way* of getting to know people. Differences in people don’t mean there have to be conflicts!

What do you think about when you see a person for the first time? Put a check in front of the things you have thought about people when you’ve only seen them on the *outside*:

1. _____ I think if a person’s skin color is different from mine, that person is probably slow to learn.
2. _____ If someone’s clothes are too short, dirty or old, I think I’m a little bit better and don’t want to be with that person.
3. _____ If another kid is small or fat, I join others who are making fun, saying “shorty” or “fatty.”
4. _____ Somebody who doesn’t speak English well doesn’t really belong with my friends and me.
5. _____ Somebody who dresses in the style of another country should go back to that country!

If you checked off any of the above, *write* below how you would think differently about the person if you look *inside* the person—not just what you see on the outside:

I will think differently for number(s): ____________________________

Here’s why: __________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

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3-40. MY FEELINGS RUN DEEP

3-41. HERE'S HOW MY FEELINGS RUN DEEP

**Objective:**

Children learn how to put themselves in the other person’s place when hurt to develop feelings of empathy.

**Materials Needed:**

- “My Feelings Run Deep” and “Here’s How My Feelings Run Deep” activity sheets
- optional: paper, stapler for booklet

**Directions:**

1. Ask your children to think about a recent time they saw someone hurt physically or emotionally. After they recall an incident, ask them to remember how they felt for the person who was hurt. Write the term “empathy” on the board and explain that it means they put themselves in the place of the person who is hurt and feel sorry for that person.

2. Take time to share stories from children about times when they felt sorry for someone who was hurt. As the stories are told, children will get the idea of what it means to have empathy for others. Some children do not understand what it means to put themselves in someone else’s place and to feel sorry for them, so this will be a valuable introduction for them.

3. Pass “My Feelings Run Deep” activity sheets to students. The story, “Laughing at Lee,” can be role-played in two scenes. The first scene is played out with Lee being humiliated as in the activity sheet. Then another scene should follow with two or three students helping Lee after he is made fun of and falls down. It is up to the students to make up the dialogue and gestures (arm around shoulder or a pat on the back) for this follow-up scene. Role-plays should be rehearsed before being performed for the class.

4. Have a class discussion about how Lee felt after the kids made fun of him. Response: “Lee’s head was low so the other kids couldn’t see he was ready to cry. He was so embarrassed! If I’d been him, I would have felt so humiliated!”

5. Point out that Lee’s story has a double put-down because not only is Lee made fun of, but Lee’s mom is also ridiculed for the way she dresses. Ask students how they think that put-down made Lee feel. Response: “Having your mom put-down really hurts. Lee probably felt worse hearing bad things about his mom than he felt about his own put-downs.”

6. Give students the opportunity to volunteer what they would have done to make Lee feel better if they had witnessed this scene. Responses: “I would go up to him and offer to take him inside to fix up his skinned knee.” “I’d tell him to forget about what the kids said and maybe that’s the way they try to act big by putting others down.” “I’d ask my Mom to donate some clothes to our school to privately give to his family.”

7. Direct students’ attention to their activity sheets to answer the questions either individually or together as a class.
"Here's How My Feelings Run Deep" Booklet:

Pass out "Here's How My Feelings Run Deep" as pages for booklets to be made by children after keeping track of their feelings for others. They are to take notes about their feelings when they see others hurt. You may want to give them a period of two or three weeks to observe others and to try to put themselves in their places when others are hurt. Taking notes and then writing their feelings down helps to teach children empathy for others. Before the booklet is due, students' notes could be printed on the computer for the final draft. Pages are attached to the cover page and bound together with blue yarn for a booklet.

Bulletin Board Link:

A deep-sea theme on blue background with fish made of gold foil features students' goggles displayed with the caption "My Feelings Run Deep" or "Sea' Our World of Feelings."
MY FEELINGS RUN DEEP

Read the “Laughing at Lee” story below. We need to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes and see the problem from his or her point of view. We then feel empathy for the person who is hurt—the victim. Think how you would feel if you were in Lee’s shoes.

Laughing at Lee

Lee is wearing pants that are too short for him. His single mom is out of work and she can’t afford to buy him new pants. Chelsea and Sam laugh at him at recess. Chelsea says, “Lee, you look so geeky! Are those pants your little sister’s? Did your mom buy them at the Second Hands Clothes Store where she probably gets her clothes, too?” Chelsea and Sam laugh harder as Lee hangs his head low and wishes all the kids listening would disappear. A few of the kids standing around start making fun of Lee’s mom’s clothes. Lee runs away from the laughter. He tries hard not to let anybody see him start to cry. As he runs he trips and falls down, ripping his pants and skinnning his knee. This makes the kids laugh even harder at him.

1. How would you feel if you had been in Lee’s shoes and teased for your clothes? ____________________________

2. How would Lee feel after this happened? ____________________________

3. How do you feel about the way Lee was treated at recess? ____________________________

4. What would you do to make Lee feel better? ____________________________

5. Write on the back of this sheet about a time you saw someone hurt by others and how you would handle it now. ____________________________

Name ____________________________
4-2. BULLY BUSTERS! POSTER
4-3. WHY DO KIDS BULLY?
4-4. ARE YOU A BULLY BUSTER?

Objective:

Children learn how the three roles involved in the bullying process—the bully, the victim and the bully watchers (or bystanders) enable bullying acts.

Materials Needed:

- Markers; crayons; paper for poster contest

Directions:

1. Pass out “BULLY BUSTERS!” posters containing six anti-bullying points to your class. Enlarge the page to poster size to display in your classroom. Divide students into small groups to discuss the points on the poster and to ask questions. After the groups have completed their discussions, hold a class discussion on points and questions that came up in small groups. Don’t rush this session as you wait for children’s concerns to emerge.

   For example, children may not realize that reporting a bullying incident is not tattling. Children may fear reporting an incident for fear the bully may come after them. Encourage groups of children to stick together and get help from an adult if a bullying incident occurs. Explain that is why you want to make anti-bullying a classroom and, if possible, a whole school effort after gaining the support of the entire school to discourage bullying.

2. The “Why Do Kids Bully?” activity sheets, and the “Are You a “Bully Buster?” surveys are passed to your students to complete individually after you have introduced them and fully discussed the poster steps.

3. Children should be encouraged to express an experience they have had either as a victim of a bully or as a bully to others. After they finish their activity sheets, ask volunteers to discuss their personal experiences. Choose volunteers to share any of the answers on their activity sheets. Avoid calling on any child who is reluctant to relate an experience about either being a victim or about bullying other children. Have a private time with any of these children.

4. Have a “BULLY BUSTERS!” poster contest. Display posters all around the school. If bullies see lots of anti-bullying information surrounding them, they may re-think bullying as a way to get others’ attention. The posters will also make bully victims and bully watchers aware of taking responsibility for their roles in the bullying process.

Bulletin Board Link:

Have students draw a large fence to display in the classroom above the boards or make a bulletin board display with a winding fence long enough so that children can make small replicas of themselves (class pictures could be used with children attaching their bodies). Each student’s replica has a quotation (above or below) of his or her own best idea for discouraging bullying in your school.
BULLY BUSTERS!

NEWS "BULLY-TIN"

Bullies can’t bully without any victims or anybody to watch them bully!

1. Ask an adult for help immediately if you are ever physically hurt or if you see anyone being hurt.

2. If you are often made fun of or have your family made fun of, or if you are hurt in any way, you have been a bully victim. Get help from an adult.

3. Don’t blame yourself if a bully keeps putting you down. The bully has a problem; not you. Your problem is only if you allow a bully to put you down.

4. Be firm when you are victimized or put down by making eye contact with the bully and saying, “I won’t take your abuse.”

5. Understand the bully is trying to have power over you. You need to show the bully that you will not be controlled. Say, “You can’t control me!”

6. Let the bully know you won’t stand around and watch bullying happen to somebody else. You will not be a bully watcher. Get help as a group from adults.

7. Most of all, make the bully realize you are NOT a good choice for a victim!
WHY DO KIDS BULLY?

Have you ever been pushed around or threatened or teased? If it happened several times by the same person, you may have been the victim of a bully. Write below about a time you were bullied and tell what you did and how you felt about the bully.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Read the Bully Busters! poster. Write how you would handle a bullying situation now that you know what to do. If you have bullied somebody else, write what you would do next time you feel like being a bully.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
ARE YOU A "BULLY BUSTER"?

These questions and answers will help your school with bullies, their victims, and bully watchers. It is your choice to sign your name on this sheet. If you are in danger of being hurt, let an adult know right away. Look at the dark words and circle your answers.

1. I think I am a bully; victim; bully watcher; none of these.
2. I feel safe or scared by other(s) in my classroom. If scared, explain why.

3. I feel safe or scared on the playground at recesses. If scared, explain why.

4. I feel safe or scared coming to and going home from school. If scared, explain why.

5. Somebody has hurt me more than twice since school began this year: YES or NO. If yes, explain what happened.

6. Do you feel you can ask for and get help if you are bullied? YES or NO. Explain your answer.

8. Where would you get help if you saw someone else being bullied? Explain your answer.

9. Have you hurt someone since the start of school? YES or NO. Explain your answer.

10. On the back of this page write a good “bully buster” idea you have to help get rid of bullying.
REFERENCES


Heinrichs, R. (2003, March). A Whole-School Approach to Bullying. Intervention in School and


FULFILLMENT OF MAJOR LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

While doing my Capstone I fulfilled six major learning outcomes for my Liberal Studies Capstone class.

The first outcome was to “participate actively and responsibly in building a community of scholars.” I fulfilled this by researching, analyzing and writing a research paper. I spent four months working on this capstone paper and have become an expert on the topic of bullying. I know what it is, what it looks like, and how to prevent it. I have shared my knowledge with the public by presenting it in PowerPoint and archiving it on the campus website. I hope that when people read my research they will take what they have learned and use it to prevent bullying in their community and schools.

The second outcome was to “integrate and synthesize knowledge and skills across two or more disciplines.” I used both the knowledge gained from my Liberal Studies degree and my emphasis on Child Development to come up with my research topic on bullying. The knowledge I have gained as a Liberal Studies major has helped me better analyze and critique how children are affected by bullying and why they choose to bully. I am very pleased to have learned so much about the topic, because bullying is something I need to be very aware of as a future teacher. I do not want it happening in my classroom, and now I know how to prevent it.

The third outcome was to “apply effective writing and critical thinking skills across various genres.” My research paper is very informational with many facts about bullying and concrete concepts that can be used to help eliminate bullying in schools. I analyze why children bully and how it can affect them in later life. My personal narrative speaks about why the topic of bullying interests me and my own history of being bullied in school that inspired me to do research about it.
The fourth outcome was to “formulate a research question or problem”. For my research on bullying I formulated five questions. The questions were: 1) What types of bullying are there?; 2) Why do children bully?; 3) What are the later effects of bullying?; 4) What children are more at risk of being bullied?; and 5) How can bullying be prevented? These questions helped guide my research and organize my paper. I also wrote a problem statement as an introduction to my paper saying that in the past people saw bullying as a normal part of growing up, but now it is seen as a serious issue because children have acted out in rage and have caused physical violence to themselves and their peers because they were bullied in school.

The fifth outcome was to “conduct research pertinent to the student’s area of interest.” To write this Capstone research paper I had to conduct scholarly research to be proficient in the topic. My research on bullying was from reading scholarly journals and reviewing materials on the internet. I also watched a movie dealing with violence in schools. I was very interested in the topic of bullying prior to doing the research and was happy that I had an opportunity to conduct the research and write the paper. I had fun writing this Capstone paper, even though it was very time consuming.

The sixth and final outcome for the class was to “produce a scholarly paper that demonstrates construction of a more sophisticated understanding of both the question and the new knowledge gained about a research issue.” My paper fully researched the topic of bullying and analyzed why kids bully and how it affects them later in life. In my conclusion I wrote about what I am going to do as an educator with the knowledge I have gained from this intensive research project, and recommended what others - parents, schools, and communities - can do to identify and prevent bullying.