

5-2021

## **Increasing Elementary School Childrens' Awareness of Bullying and Bullying Prevention Techniques**

Emily Spencer  
*California State University, Monterey Bay*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps\\_thes\\_all](https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Spencer, Emily, "Increasing Elementary School Childrens' Awareness of Bullying and Bullying Prevention Techniques" (2021). *Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 984.  
[https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps\\_thes\\_all/984](https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all/984)

This Capstone Project (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Capstone Projects and Master's Theses at Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@csumb.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@csumb.edu).

INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

Increasing Elementary School Childrens' Awareness of Bullying and Bullying Prevention

Techniques

Emily Spencer

A Capstone project for the Bachelors of Arts in Human Development and Family Sciences

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

### Increasing Elementary School Childrens' Awareness of Bullying and Bullying Prevention Techniques

#### **Introduction**

Elementary age children often do not know how to address the topic of bullying and prevent it from happening. Children who are exposed to bullying are at risk of many negative developmental impacts, especially related to their socioemotional and mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and low self esteem. When children learn how to address bullying it can help prevent these negative consequences in their development. In order to address this issue, I have created a three-day lesson plan on bullying and bullying prevention for the Sunday school class at Shoreline Church in Monterey, California.

#### **Needs Statement**

During the years that children are in elementary school, bullying is one of the most prevalent types of violence expression that is found, yet many elementary age children do not know how to address bullying and prevent it from happening. Bullying is the most common form of violence experienced by youth and is defined as any unwanted verbal or physical behaviors that occur repeatedly over time. According to a wide scale study of Western countries, "4-9% of youth engage in bullying behaviors and 9-25% of school aged children are bullied" (Menesini et al, 2017).. School aged children who are exposed to bullying are subject to social, emotional, and physical setbacks (Brewer et al, 2018). Due to the fact that bullying has become so prevalent for elementary age children and causes so many negative health consequences, there are now many anti-bullying prevention techniques to address this issue of bullying.

Bullying has many effects on socioemotional and mental health. Victims of bullying are at high risk of depression, anxiety, and low self esteem. They also struggle with difficulties such

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

as “peer rejection, low peer acceptance, school achievement issues, loneliness, poorer health, and having negative friendship qualities (Menesini et al, 2017). Being bullied causes severe mental health problems that can persist into late adolescence. Between the ages of seven and sixteen, bullies and victims have a much higher risk of psychological issues compared to children not involved in bullying situations (Menesini et al, 2017). Overall, bullying causes many negative impacts on an individual’s life that includes short term consequences such as peer rejection and school achievement issues and long term consequences such as depression and anxiety.

Anti-bullying preventions may be successful in changing children’s behavior that comes with bullying. In Finland, the KiVa program has been found very successful, to the extent that it has been adopted nationally. This program puts strong emphasis on the role of peers and bystanders to step in and challenge bullying (Smith et al, 2011). One anti-bullying prevention technique that has been found successful is educating elementary age children about bullying with four approaches: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors. Children can gain knowledge by learning the definition of bullying, what harm bullying does, why it's unacceptable, how to prevent it, and how to address it when it happens. Children can learn the attitudes and values of feeling empathetic towards other children who are bullied, how to feel shame if they have bullied someone, learn to feel responsible for helping those who are bullied, and learn to accept others who are different from themselves. Skills that children should learn are how to protect other children who are bullied, how to control their negative emotions, and conflict resolution skills to help children resolve differences. Children should also be encouraged to have behaviors that refrain from bullying, resolve disputes, discourage those who bully, and provide help and support to others who have been bullied (Levine et al, 2014).

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

Educators can also use children's books that relate to the topic of bullying to help review how a person of good character should act (Levine et al, 2014). Reading books with a bullying theme can help children develop a better understanding of bullying characteristics and strategies to help them deal with bullying. Reading these books and learning the characteristics of a bully and how to deal with bullying situations helps children become more aware and prepared to deal with bullying scenarios (Freeman et al, 2014).

Different kinds of intervention can also complement one another. Such as how some interventions help victims with coping strategies and some encourage bystanders to be defenders. A range of interventions are likely to be successful (Smith et al, 2011).

Bullying in schools continues to be a concern among school aged children in the United States and worldwide. Bullying causes many negative health consequences in children that can persist into adulthood. Given that depression, anxiety, and low self esteem are consequences of bullying, I am creating a three-day lesson plan for first graders at Shoreline Church in Monterey, California.

### **Theory**

Between the ages of six to eleven, children are in the Industry vs Inferiority stage of Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Development. Children are learning and performing many more complex skills and tasks (Cherry, 2020). Children who are encouraged and motivated by their caregivers and teachers develop a sense of competence and belief in their abilities. However, when children don't receive this encouragement, they will begin to doubt their abilities to become successful. If children struggle to develop competence and are discouraged in their abilities to succeed, they will develop feelings of inferiority. They may be less likely to try new things in the future because they are afraid their efforts won't be successful.

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

This theory applies to my content because I will be teaching First graders who are ages six to seven that are in this stage of industry vs inferiority. This stage strongly relates to my content of bullying because during this stage children can lose their self confidence and self esteem if they feel inferior. Bullies are quite often children who are struggling with low self esteem and don't feel confident in completing new skills and tasks because they are lacking the proper encouragement and motivation from their caregivers and teachers. Children become bullies to feel powerful and gain self esteem and confidence in a negative way (Cherry, 2020). According to [stompoutbullying.org](http://stompoutbullying.org) (2020) "A common reason that a kid is a bully is because he/she lacks attention from a parent at home and lashes out at others for attention." Bullies crave power and attention that they do not receive from their caregivers or siblings. Parents and caregivers are a big part of children's development and if children are not given adequate attention and support while learning life skills they might deflect from learning skills successfully by bullying others. Bullies might feel jealous of other students' success and no longer want to feel inferior. Bullies main goals are to feel stronger, smarter, and better than the person they are bullying ([stompoutbullying.org](http://stompoutbullying.org), 2020). If children are having feelings of inferiority, caregivers and teachers should show them more love and support to encourage them to become successful in their new abilities or skills that they are struggling with. A little encouragement can go a long way in helping children who feel inferior to become motivated to achieve a new accomplishment. In knowing about this stage of development and how critical it is to elementary age children, I am creating a series of lessons to teach First grade children on the topic of bullying behaviors and how to prevent it from happening.

### **Consideration of Diversity**

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

My project will be conducted at Shoreline Community Church in Monterey, CA with the First grade class of Sunday school students. These students attend Shoreline Church on Sundays only and go elsewhere for school. The first issue of diversity of the participants is they are only First grade children who attend Shoreline Church so I would not expect my participants to be reflective of all the First grade children who live in Monterey County. The second issue of diversity of the participants is that they are all children in Christian-raised families. This might influence their learning of the content if their Christian beliefs reflect my content on bullying. The first issue of diversity with my project content is that I will be conducting my project in English, so my participants will have to be English proficient enough to understand the content and complete the given tasks. The church does have some people who are not English proficient who attend, although, not many based on previously teaching the First grade class at Shoreline Church, so students who are not English proficient should not be a huge issue of diversity. The second issue of diversity with my project content is that it is geared towards younger children who still do not have any experience with bullying and bullying prevention. With this in mind, the content would not work well with older aged children who have already gained knowledge on the topic and would probably find the content simplistic for their age level. You could make this content age appropriate for older children in the future by having the older children write short essays or by having them give speeches on how to prevent bullying.

### **Learning Outcomes**

I intend to provide 3, 1 hour lessons to first grade students at Shoreline Church in Monterey, CA.

By the end of my project, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the character traits of a bully and what a bully might do.
2. Identify how to avoid becoming a bully and how to be a buddy instead.

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

3. Identify how to react and address in a bullying situation and know who to report to in a bullying situation.

**Method****Day 1:**

First, I will introduce myself to the First grade class and tell them about why I am there. Second, I will read them the poem *No Bully* (See Appendix A) written by Nikki Askamit which will take about 2 minutes. Third, we will discuss it as a group for about 20 minutes. We will discuss things a bully might do, who to tell if they or a friend is being bullied, and how to avoid becoming a bully. I will ask students for examples of bully characteristics and how to avoid having these characteristics. Fourth, I will pass out a worksheet titled "Anti-Bullying Poem" (see Appendix B) that was created to go along with the poem *No Bully* and I will have the class fill it out collectively with me for 10 minutes. Fifth, we will discuss the worksheet as a class for 20 minutes to see if they understand the questions. This lesson will meet all 3 of my learning outcome requirements of "describing character traits of a bully, identifying how to avoid becoming a bully and how to be a buddy instead, and what individuals to report to in a scenario of bullying" that were all discussed in the *No Bully* poem and "Anti-Bullying Poem" worksheet.

**Day 2**

First, I will summarize day one's content for a refresher for 10 minutes. The refresher will include all three learning outcome points of "describing character traits of a bully, identifying how to avoid becoming a bully, and what individuals to report to in a scenario of bullying." Second, I will read the book, *Llama Llama and the Bully Goat* written by Anna Dewdney (See Appendix C) which will take about 5 minutes. Third, we will discuss it as a group for about 10 minutes. We will discuss what it means to not be a bully and how they can show



## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

character traits of being a “buddy.” Being a “buddy” will include character traits such as standing up for your friends and not having bully character traits such as teasing. Fourth, I will pass out a worksheet titled “I Pledge to be a Buddy, not a Bully” (See Appendix D) and have the class fill it out for 10 minutes. After discussing the book *Llama Llama and the Bully Goat*, children will be prepared to draw pictures of friends playing together nicely such as sharing their toys or saying something nice to their friends. Fifth, I will have the children share what they drew on their worksheets as a class for 20 minutes to see if they understood the questions. This lesson will meet my learning outcome 2 requirement of “identifying how to avoid becoming a bully and how to be a buddy instead.”

**Day 3:**

First, I will summarize day two’s content for a refresher for 10 minutes. The refresher will include discussing what it means to not be a bully and how they can show character traits of being a “buddy.” Second, I will read the book *Bully Beans* by Julia Cook (See Appendix E) which will take about 10 minutes. Third, we will discuss the book as a class for 10 minutes. We will discuss ways to stop a bully by knowing what to say and how to say it which refers to my learning outcome 3 of “identifying how to react and address in a bullying situation and what individuals to report to.” Fourth, I will pass out the worksheet titled “Bully Beans Worksheet Extension Activity” (See Appendix F) and I will have the class fill it out for 10 minutes. Fifth, we will discuss the worksheet as a class for 20 minutes to see if they understand how to react and address in a bullying situation. This lesson will meet my learning outcome 3 requirement of “identifying how to react and address in a bullying situation and knowing who to report to in a bullying situation. I will close my 3 day lesson by having each class member stand up and say one way that they will be a “buddy” to someone they care about this week.

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

### **Results**

Due to COVID-19, I was not able to execute my project.

### **Discussion**

Due to COVID-19, I was not able to execute my project.

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

**References**

- Bradshaw, Catherine P. (2015). Translating research to practice in bullying prevention. *The American Psychologist*, 70(4), 322–332. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039114>
- Brewer, Steven L, Brewer, Hannah J, & Kulik, Keri S. (2018). Bullying victimization in schools: why the whole school, whole community, whole child model is essential. *The Journal of School Health*, 88(11), 794–802. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12686>
- Freeman, Greta Griffin, & Freeman, Greta Griffin. (2014). The implementation of character education and children's literature to teach bullying characteristics and prevention strategies to preschool children: An action research project. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 42(5), 305–316. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-013-0614-5>
- Levine, Emily, Levine, Emily, Tamburrino, Melissa, & Tamburrino, Melissa. (2014). Bullying among young children: Strategies for prevention. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 42(4), 271–278. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-013-0600-y>
- Li, Yiqiong, Chen, Peter Y, Chen, Fu-Li, & Chen, Ying-Lin. (2017). Preventing school bullying: Investigation of the link between anti-bullying strategies, prevention ownership, prevention climate, and prevention leadership. *Applied Psychology*, 66(4), 577–598. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12107>
- Menesini, Ersilia, & Salmivalli, Christina. (2017). Bullying in schools: the state of knowledge and effective interventions. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22(sup1), 240–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2017.1279740>
- Smith, Peter K. (2011). Why interventions to reduce bullying and violence in schools may (or may not) succeed: Comments on this special section. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 35(5), 419–423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025411407459>

## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

## Appendices

## Appendix A

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Anti-Bullying Poem

No. Bully!

## Written by

A bully is a boy or a girl  
Who makes you feel bad.  
Who says things or does things  
That make you feel sad.

A bully may laugh  
When you make a mistake.  
Or call you mean names  
Push you, shove you or shake.

What do you do  
If you're bullied today?

You must try to stay calm  
And just walk away.

Go tell a grown up,  
They'll know what to do.  
Teachers and parents  
Are there to help you.

What if you see  
A bully pick on a friend?  
How do you make  
The meanness come to an end?

Tell the bully to stop!  
Take your friend by the  
hand.

Go find a grown up,  
They will understand.

School is a safe place  
To learn, grow and play



## INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

If you speak up and stand up  
Bullies can't ruin the day!

INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

Appendix B

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Anti-Bullying Poem No, Bully!

Written by Nikki Aksamit

1. The second stanza of the poem reads:

A bully may laugh  
When you make a mistake.  
Or call you mean names  
Push you, shove you or shake.

Make a list of some other things that a bully might do.



2. The fourth stanza of the poem reads:

Go tell a grown up,  
They'll know what to do.  
Teachers and parents  
Are there to help you.

If you were being bullied, what grown-ups could you turn to for help?  
List three adults that you would trust.

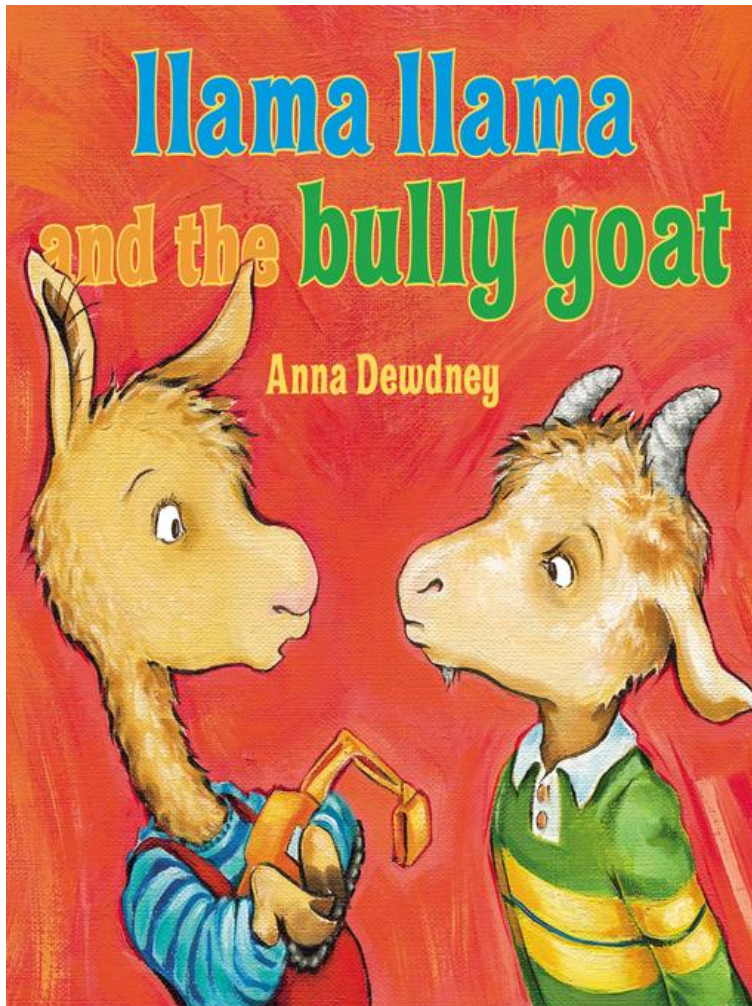
a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Tell what you can do if you see a bully picking on a friend.

4. How can you avoid becoming a bully?

INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

Appendix C




INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

Appendix D

I pledge to be a  
**BUDDY** not a bully.

I can always get help from a grownup when friends aren't being buddies.



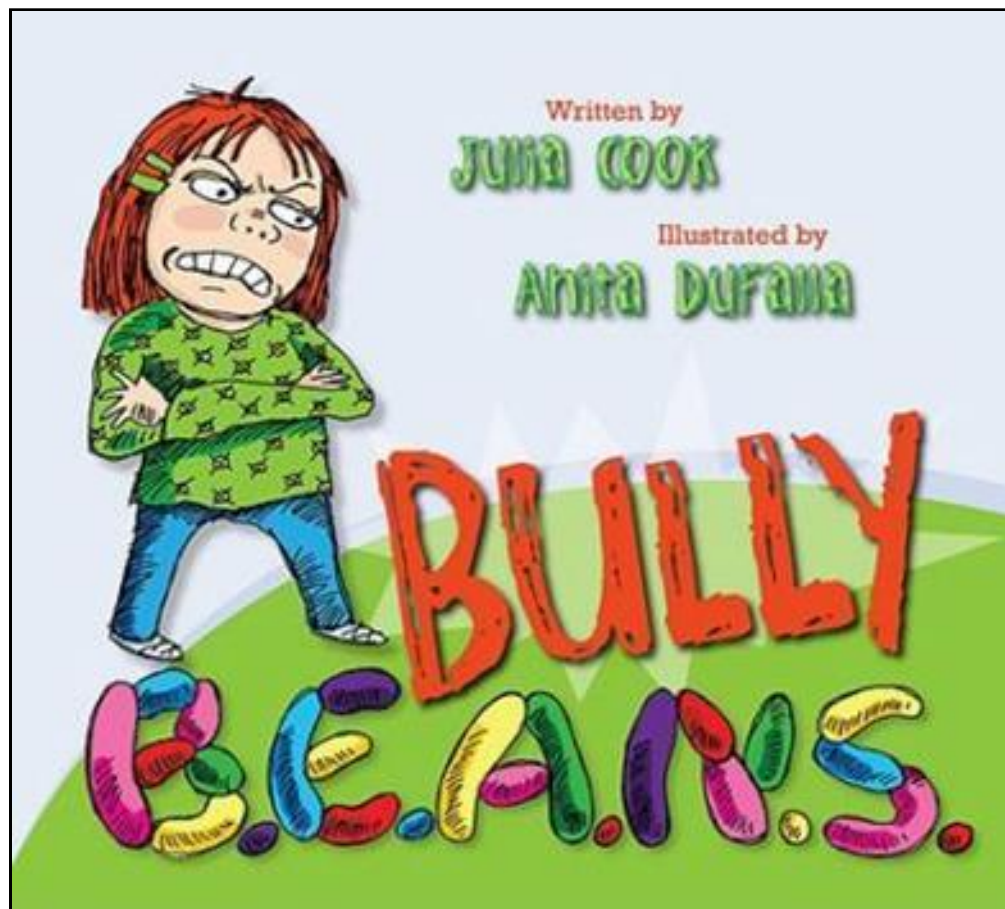
Here's a picture of me being a BUDDY  
with Liana Liana!

In Counselor Lesson today, we read Liana Liana and the Bear Goat.  
We talked about being a buddy and getting help when others are showing bullying behaviors.



INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

Appendix E



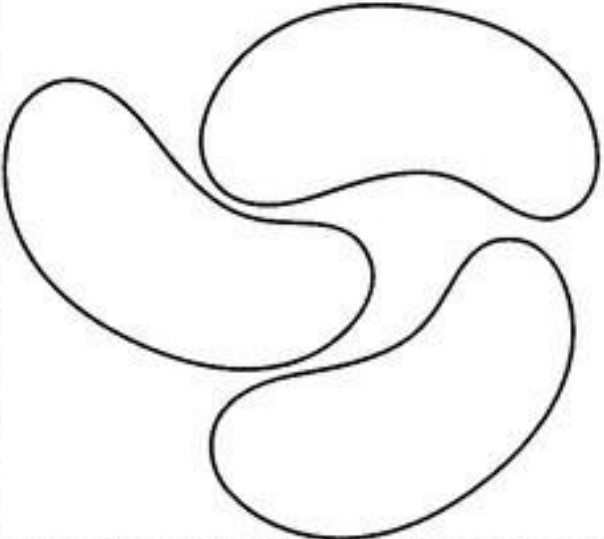
INCREASING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDRENS' AWARENESS BULLYING

Appendix F

**BULLY BEANS** by Julia Cook

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Inside of the beans, write three ways to stop a bully.

A dashed rectangular box containing three bean-shaped outlines. The beans are arranged in a cluster: one at the top right, one on the left, and one at the bottom right. Each bean is an empty outline intended for a student to write three ways to stop a bully inside of them.

Are "bully beans" a real thing? \_\_\_\_\_

Did Mom give good advice for dealing with bullies? \_\_\_\_\_