

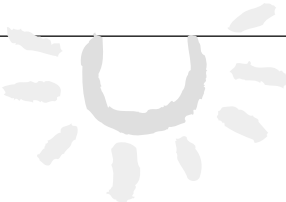
BULLYING

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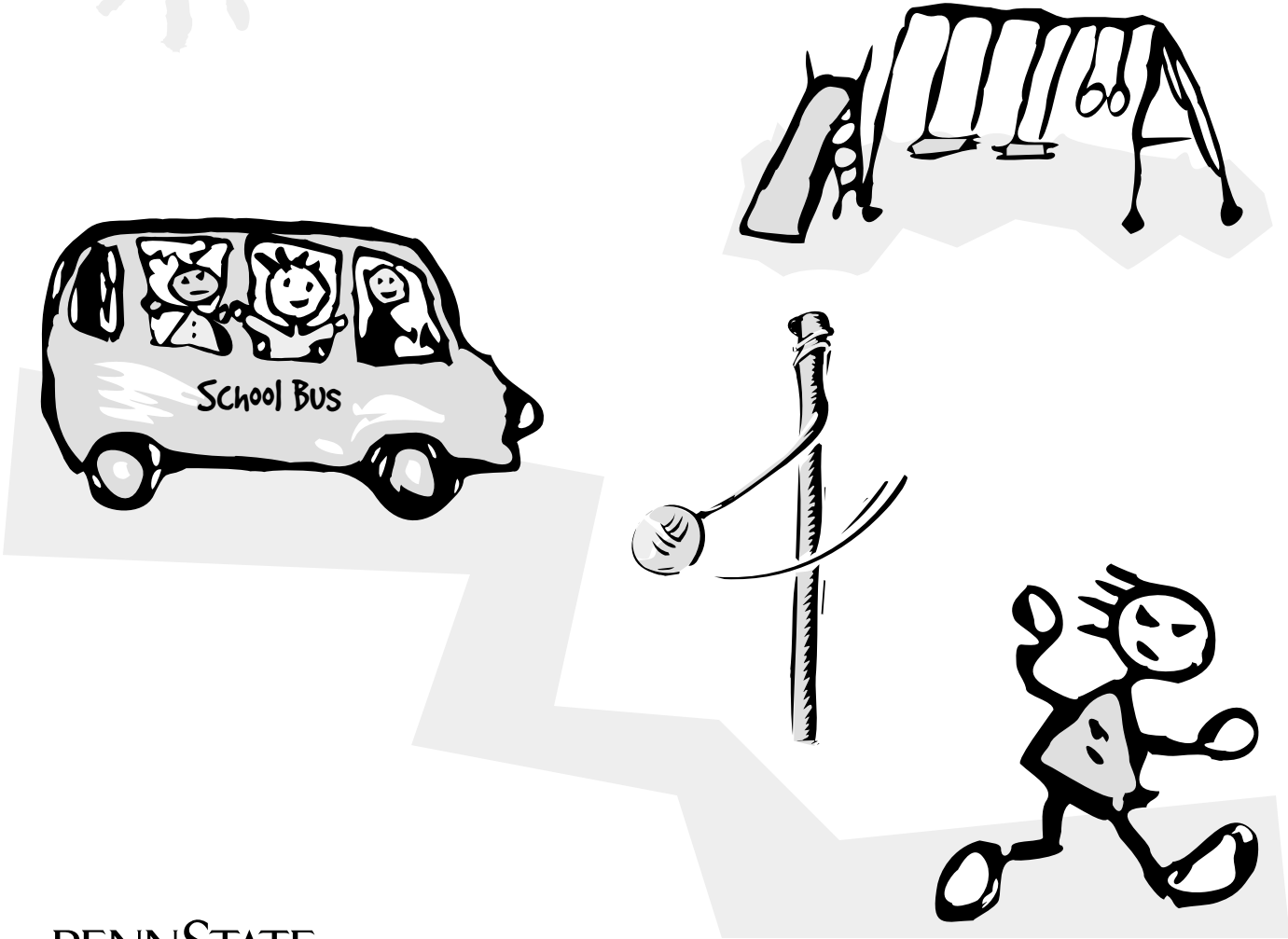
BULLYING

BULLYING

It's not just
child's play!



What Educators Can Do About It



PENNSSTATE



College of Agricultural Sciences
Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension

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About this Bulletin . . .

Bullying: What Educators Can Do About It is a resource developed particularly for elementary school teachers. The bulletin includes activities and tips about what teachers can do to prevent or stop bullying. As part of this bulletin there is an annotated bibliography of children's books related to the topic of bullying. A PowerPoint presentation about bullying is available at: <http://resiliency.cas.psu.edu/> (click on the button labeled "bullying"). In addition, a companion bulletin entitled *Bullying: What Parents Can Do About It* is a resource that addresses what can be done by parents to prevent or stop bullying among children.

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BULLYING

What Educators Can Do About It

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a form of violence common among children. Bullying can be found in schools, neighborhoods, and homes throughout the United States. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice, bullying is frequently misunderstood by adults as an unavoidable part of growing up and, as a result, often occurs in the presence of adults who fail to do anything about it. The focus of this publication is about bullying at school and what can be done about it.

Bullying affects a school and students in many ways. Bullying has a negative effect on the social environment of a school and creates an atmosphere of fear among students. Bullying also reduces students' abilities to learn. A child who bullies is also more likely to engage in other negative behavior (such as stealing and taking drugs). More than 16 percent of U.S. school children said that they had been bullied by other students during a school term, according to a study by Ericson (2001). The survey, funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, included 15,686 students in grades six through ten in public, parochial, and private schools throughout the United States. The researchers found that bullying occurred most

frequently in sixth through eighth grades, with little variation between urban, suburban, town, and rural areas. Males were both more likely to bully others and more likely to be victims of bullying than were females. In addition, males were more likely to say they had been bullied physically (being hit, slapped, or pushed), while females more frequently said they were bullied verbally and psychologically (through sexual comments or rumors).

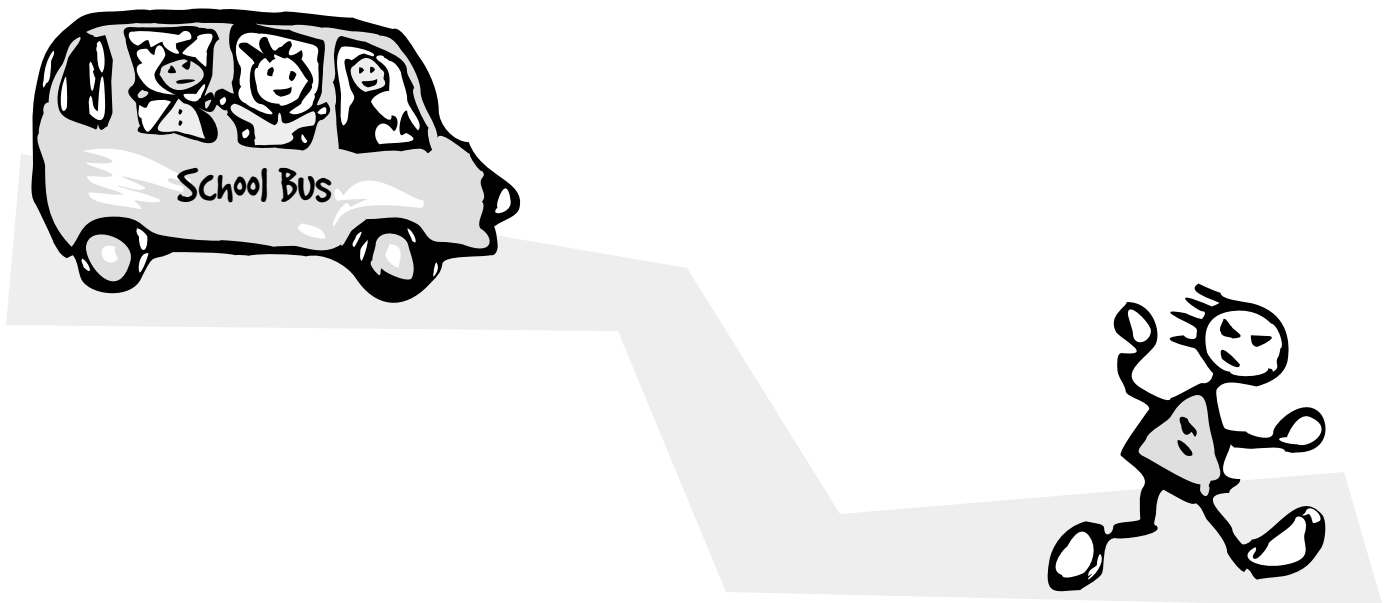
THREE FORMS OF BULLYING

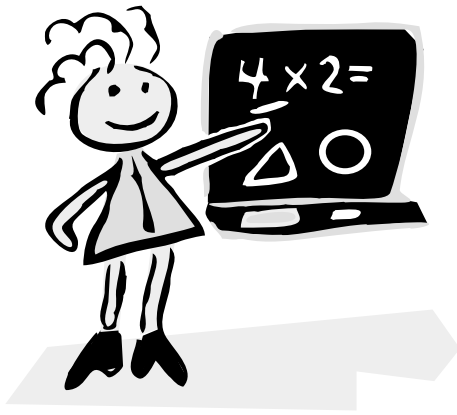
According to researchers, there are three forms of bullying:

Physical: the most commonly known form; includes hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and taking personal belongings.

Verbal: includes taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, and making threats.

Psychological: involves spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, and engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation.





STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

Up to half of today's children are victims of school bullying. Parents, educators, and students alike must work together to help stop bullying in their classrooms, playgrounds, and schools. The following strategies can help teachers and administrators to combat bullying in their schools.

Plan and Make Consequences Clear

An effective strategy for schools to reduce bullying is to have a policy outlining how teachers and school staff address the issue of bullying in the classroom and how incidents are dealt with after they have happened. All students need to be aware of the consequences of bullying.

Safeguard Honesty

Students feel safe reporting bullying when teachers, administrators, and other school personnel respect the anonymity of the victim and/or reporting students.

Create a Bullying Policy

An effective strategy to reduce bullying is to create a school-wide policy that defines bullying, outlines how teachers and school staff should address the issue of bullying in the classroom, and delineates how incidents are to be dealt with after they occur. All students need to be aware of the consequences of bullying.

The school policy must clearly define all forms of bullying behavior. Bullying behavior can be classified under four main headings: Physical Bullying, Verbal Bullying, Relational Bullying, and Sexual Harassment (Bullying). Many bullies try to pass off acts of aggression as roughhousing between friends, or just having fun. However, there is a difference

between play and bullying. An episode of bullying has three identifying characteristics:

- A power difference between the individual being bullied and the bully
- A negative intent on the part of the bully to hurt, embarrass, or humiliate the other
- Repeated behavior—with others, with the same person, and/or with the same person over time

Inclusion and Discussion

Involve all members of a school community including pupils, parents, teachers, and non-teaching staff in the formation of the bullying policy. Provide a range of opportunities for pupils to talk about bullying.

Adopt effective strategies

Effective strategies include:

- **No-blame approach:** A step-by-step technique that allows early intervention because it does not require that anyone is proved to be at fault. A group of young people, which includes bystanders as well as possible bullies, is made aware of a victim's distress and is asked to suggest solutions. This approach is particularly useful in dealing with group bullying and name-calling.
- **Peer-support efforts:** Mobilize students to take a stand against bullying behavior.
- **Circle-time discussions:** Bring students, teachers, and school professionals to address the issue of bullying, explore the effect of bullying on the school atmosphere, and brainstorm solutions when problems arise.

Power of Students

Mobilize the masses of students who are neither victims nor bullies to take action against bullying. Students can take action in many different ways: refusing to watch bullying, reporting bullying incidents, initiating conflict resolution strategies, using distraction with either the bully or the victim.



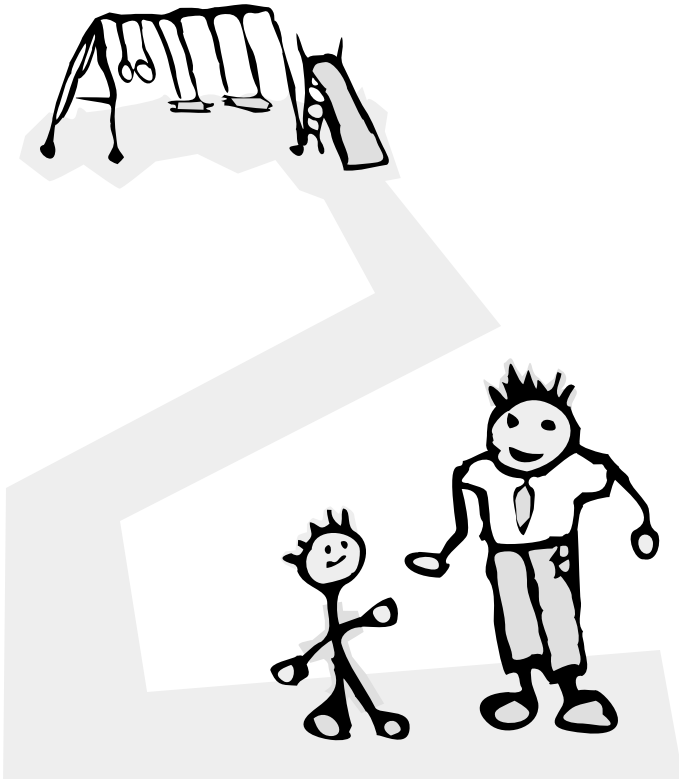
Ask

An initial step that schools can take to combat bullying is to distribute a questionnaire that asks students, parents, and teachers to describe any bullying that they are aware of in their school. The results can be used to increase awareness of the extent of the problem, justify intervention efforts, and serve as a benchmark to measure the impact of improvements in school climate once an intervention is initiated.

- The results from the questionnaire can be used to conduct a bullying-awareness campaign. The campaign can be conducted during parent-teacher conference days, through parent newsletters, and at PTA meetings. Potential goals of a campaign include: increasing parental awareness of the problem, highlighting the importance of parental involvement for program success, and encouraging parental support of program goals.

In-Class Strategies

Teachers can work with students at the class level to develop rules against bullying. Engage students in a series of formal role-playing exercises and related assignments that teach bullies alternative methods of interaction, implement cooperative learning activities to reduce social isolation, and increase adult supervision at key times (such as recess or lunch).



STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS

The following are some specific measures that have met with success in schools efforts to combat bullying:

- **Bully boxes.** Children can anonymously write down their concerns and post them in a bully box.
- **Bully courts.** This idea remains controversial, but it has met with success in some progressive schools. Young people are involved in making school rules against bullying and in making judgments about punishment when the rules are broken. For it to work, adults must play an active and guiding role to protect the welfare of all the young people involved.
- **Mediation.** Some schools have introduced schemes where two parties in a relationship problem agree that a third person, who may be either an adult or another young person, helps to negotiate a solution. This seems to be helpful in many situations, especially where there is not too large an imbalance of power between the protagonists.
- **Peer counseling.** A small number of secondary schools have used older teenagers as peer counselors. Good training and continuing support are vital if these young volunteers are to be able to help victims who may be coping with serious emotional and mental distress.

OTHER RESOURCES

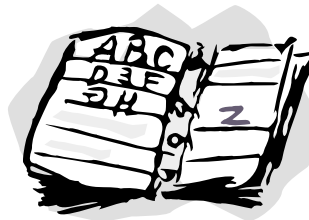
For more information, visit the Web sites listed below:

- <http://www.bullybeware.com/tips.html>. This Web site was created by a group of teachers who have dedicated their careers to studying the subject of bullying. All hold advanced degrees in education and have written books on the subject of bullying based on both practical experience and research.
- <http://www.antibullying.net/>. This is the Web site of the Anti-Bullying Network, a part of the Positive School Ethos Program that is based at the Moray House Institute of Education, University of Edinburgh. The Anti-Bullying Network offers research-based newsletters on bullying, conferences, and training sessions for teachers and other education professionals.
- http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed407154.html. This article, entitled “Bullying in Schools,” is from the Eric Clearinghouse on Elementary Education. The author, Ron Banks, offers a survey of the current research on bullying and the most effective solutions to the problem.
- <http://www.gold.ac.uk/euconf/>. This Web site contains summaries of the keynote addresses at the European Conference on Initiatives to Stop School Bullying. Educators, psychologists, and youth professionals from countries across Europe came together to discuss the problem of bullying and the methods that scholars from their countries had found most effective in combating the behavior.
- <http://www.successunlimited.co.uk/bullicide/school.htm>. This is the official Web site of school bully on-line, a part of the U.K. National Workplace Bullying Advice Line. The Web site offers research-based tips on combating bullying as well as suggestions of other bullying resources.
- <http://www.childsafetyexperts.com/school/school-bullies.shtml>. This page appears on the Web site of the Child Safety Experts organization, which offers safety advice and information for parents from child experts. The page offers general guidelines on bullying, and also offers a recommended reading list of books on bullying by child experts.

REFERENCES

Ericson, N. (June 2001). Addressing the problem of juvenile bullying. *Fact Sheet #200127*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among U.S. youth: prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(16), 2094–2100.



Sample Classroom Activities to Help Prevent Bullying

Before starting any activity that involves potentially sensitive material, it is important to begin by creating rules. Having ground rules can help students to feel safe. Discuss possible rules with the students who will participate in the activity. Rules might include:

- No one has to talk unless they want to
- Respect what other people say; no laughing
- One person talks at a time

Post rules in a visible place during any activity and encourage students to hold one another accountable to the rules. This prevents the teacher from becoming the referee of the activity.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Before any of these activities, form a circle with chairs or allow children to sit on the floor. This will help to create an atmosphere that encourages discussion. Remind students that they are expected to respect the group rules that have been previously decided on.

Defining Bullying

Prepare a list of simple scenarios to present to children in your class. Scenarios should describe an interaction between children that could be perceived either as teasing or bullying. For example, “John took the basketball from Bob during recess and wouldn’t let him play basketball,” or “During gym class Tom purposely tripped David while they were playing a game,” or “Sarah refused to allow Sue to sit at the lunch table even though there was plenty of room.” Create a variety of scenarios that deal with many different problems—exclusion, name-calling, fighting, and so on. Read each scenario to the group and have the children vote whether the problem described is bullying or harmless teasing. Encourage discussion of each scenario. Ask questions such as, “How would that make David feel?” or “What should Sue do in that situation?” This activity is a good place to begin. It allows teachers to better understand their students’ perceptions of bullying. It will also help students begin to think critically about conflict, feelings, bullying, and so forth.

All-about-Me Books

Creating “All-about-Me Books” is a wonderful opportunity to build esteem in children and help them to identify their strengths. It can also help students understand the importance of diversity and respecting differences. Distribute blank pages to each child. Instruct them to write the following titles on each page: “My Name Is,” “I Live With,” “My Favorite Color (food, sport, hobby, TV show, etc.) Is,” “When I Grow up I Will,” and so on. After each page has been titled, allow children to answer the questions. Students can cut pictures from magazines, draw pictures, or write answers depending on their grade level. After books are complete, return to the group circle and allow each student to share his or her book with others. Do not force students to share. After a child has shared the book, allow others to ask questions about what was in it. Offer encouraging words. Point out students who have similar likes or goals. Point out students who have differences and emphasize the value in respecting these differences.

Cooperative Learning Projects

Cooperative learning projects are a creative way to combine academic learning with socialization and group-building skills. Rather than allowing students to form their own groups, assign students to groups. For lower elementary-aged students, assign a project such as a group book report. Instruct children to create a diorama or a skit about the book. For upper elementary students, assign more involved projects. For example, allow children to plan an imaginary vacation. Outline the resources they have available to them, including a budget. Instruct children to choose a destination, plan meals, purchase supplies, and so forth. A project such as this can enhance math and geography skills, as well as planning, problem-solving, and life skills. Teachers can observe groups but should not intervene with the group process unless it becomes too problematic. This will allow students to learn the value in working through their problems, compromise, and even arguing effectively.

Classroom-Level Interventions for Bully/Victim Problems

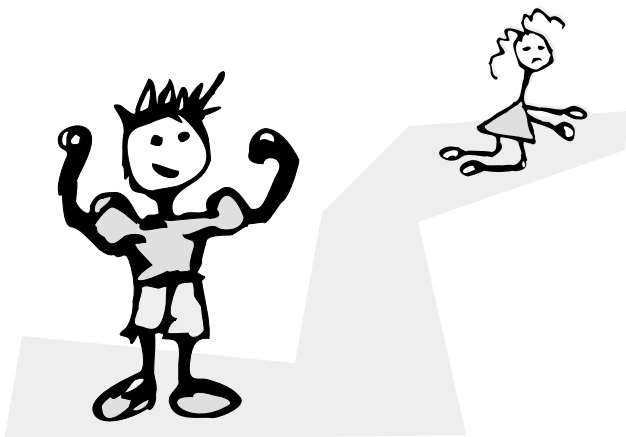
RULE-BASED STRATEGIES

One strategy to combat problems involving bullying or ostracism involves the development of classroom rules against various forms of intolerant or negative peer behaviors. This approach requires the identification of unacceptable behaviors that may be operating in a classroom, some system to enable monitoring or possible rule infractions, and some set of consequences. Two techniques that might be helpful in implementing this sort of intervention is the Problem-Solving Meeting (to elicit peer involvement in and support for the identification of rules and consequences) and the use of the Problem Box (to provide a mechanism to monitor peer problem behaviors) (see reference below).

Questions to Ask Yourself

1. If you were to select this approach to classroom-level intervention to deal with physical or verbal bullying or ostracism, how might you develop and implement classroom rules and a monitoring system?
2. What goals could be met by pursuing this type of intervention strategy?
3. How do classroom rules alone limit solving the problem of bullying/exclusion?

REFERENCE: Greenbreg, M. T., & Kusche, C. A. (1993). "Promoting social and emotional development in deaf children." *Final report to the National Institute of Mental Health Grant No. R01MH42131*.



INSIGHT-ORIENTED STRATEGIES

Another strategy to combat problems involving bullying or ostracism involves attempts to raise the consciousness of children in the classroom—encouraging children to consider the effects of bullying on the victims, emphasizing the value of respecting individual differences, and reinforcing the importance of standing up for what is right.



Questions to Ask Yourself

1. If you were to select an insight-oriented approach to classroom-level intervention, how might you do it?
2. What goals could be met by pursuing this type of intervention strategy?
3. What limits might there be to insight-oriented strategies?

GROUPING REARRANGEMENT STRATEGIES

A third strategy to reduce bullying involves attempts to decrease alliances among children that are supporting bullying and exclusion (for example, breakdown the unification of the bullying group or ostracizing clique) and increase positive contact between the rejected child/children and potential friends.

Questions to Ask Yourself

1. If you wanted to use grouping strategies in the classroom to realign relationships among children (weakening some alliances while strengthening others), how might you go about it?
2. What goals could be met by pursuing grouping rearrangement in the classroom?
3. What limits might there be to grouping rearrangement strategies?

CHILDREN'S BOOKS RELATED TO BULLYING
(listed by ascending age-group)

The Sneetches

Dr. Seuss

All ages

This Dr. Seuss tale deals with the common peer problems of exclusion and prejudice. The Star Belly Sneetches have a star on their bellies to symbolize superiority and prestige, and they reject the Plain Belly sort. All of the Sneetches fall prey to a money-hungry stranger, and as a result join together and learn a lesson about inclusion and tolerance in the end.

Move Over Twerp

Martha Alexander

Ages 4-7

The first day that Jeffrey rides the bus to school, older boys shout at the youngster and remove him from his seat in the back of the bus. Jeffrey makes a daring plan to deal with the boys, and he gets just what he wants.

The Big Bad Bully Bear

Ginnie Hofmann

Ages 4-7

Arthur and his friend Emmy Bear teach Bully Bear an important lesson when they recruit all of their friends to join together. Bully Bear learns what he needs to do to make friends and keep them.



The Berenstain Bears, No Girls Allowed

Stan and Jan Berenstain

Ages 4-8

In this classic tale of sibling rivalry, Brother Bear and the other male cubs try to exclude Sister from their new club after she beats them at baseball and other "boy" activities. Sister then plans a way to win the guys over.

The Berenstain Bears and the Bully

Stan and Jan Berenstain

Ages 4-8

Sister Bear learns self-defense after she is beaten up by a class bully, and together they learn about forgiveness and getting along. Brother teaches Sister Bear the basics of self-defense while reminding her to avoid the Bully, but Sister and the Bully do fight. Children can discuss other non-aggressive ways to deal with bullies and get along with peers.

Mean Maxine

Barbara Bottner

Age 5-7

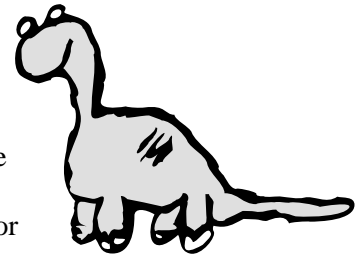
Ralph works up enough courage to confront Mean Maxine who has called him names and picked on him repeatedly. The ending of the story takes an interesting and friendly turn.

Tyrone the Horrible

Hans Wilhelm

Age 5-8

The earth's first bully, Tyrone the Horrible, bullies little Boland dinosaur. Tyrone teases, punches, and steals from Boland who seeks the advice of his dinosaur friends. He solves the problem in a way that provides an opportunity for discussion.



Maxine in the Middle

Holly Keller

Ages 5-8

In this easy-to-read story, Maxine, the middle child, often feels left out and rejected. She believes that her older sister and younger brother are the only children who get new clothes and toys. Maxine runs away to the family tree house, where she later becomes cold and hungry. Maxine returns home and realizes how much she enjoys spending time with her brother and sister and that "sometimes middle things are best."

Chrysanthemum

Kevin Henkes

Ages 5-8

Chrysanthemum is a brightly illustrated book that addresses the troubles a young girl faces after being picked on because of her unique name. Before going to school, she is proud of her name and loves the way it sounds. After being taunted by her peers, Chrysanthemum wants to change her name. Not until a teacher that the children admire compliments Chrysanthemum on her name do the other children accept her.



Loudmouth George and the Sixth Grade Bully

Nancy Carlson

Age 5-8

On the first day of school, a huge sixth grader startles George on his way to school and steals his lunch. From then on, every day starts the same way. By the end of the week, George is a nervous wreck and hungry all of the time. George turns the tables with a little help from his friend Harriet. Discussion could include other ways for George to deal with Big Mike, the bully.

Camp Big Paw

Doug Cushman

Ages 5-8

Cyril and his friends run into trouble with the bully of Camp Big Paw, Nigel Snootbutter. During field day competitions, Nigel sets out to make sure Cyril and his cabin mates lose every field day event, but Cyril saves the day with some smart thinking.

Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Bully

Teddy Slater

Ages 6-8

In this easy-to-read chapter book, big, mean Bertha threatens everyone, especially Max. Max learns self-defense, but he is reluctant to stand up to the bully until she tries to take his dog, Fang. Max is assertive and, along with his friends, refuses to hand over his puppy. At the end of the book, the children are getting along with the reformed bully.

The Berenstain Bears and the In Crowd

Stan and Jan Berenstain

Ages 6-10

In this Berenstain Bears tale, Sister Bear is teased by the new cub in town, Queenie McBear. Queenie steals Sister's Double Dutch partners before the big jump rope tournament and excludes Sister from their fun. The tournament proves to be a success for Sister as she learns how to deal with being left out.

What a Wimp!

Carol Carrick

Age 7-10

Barney and his family move from the city to the country where his Mom said that people were so friendly. But, he soon becomes the target of Lenny Coots who targets Barney as his easy, smaller, and younger victim. Lenny waits for Barney daily after school. Although his teacher, mother, and brother are sympathetic and intervene, Barney learns he must face up to Lenny and do something on his own.

Joshua T. Bates Takes Charge

Susan Shreve

Age 7-10

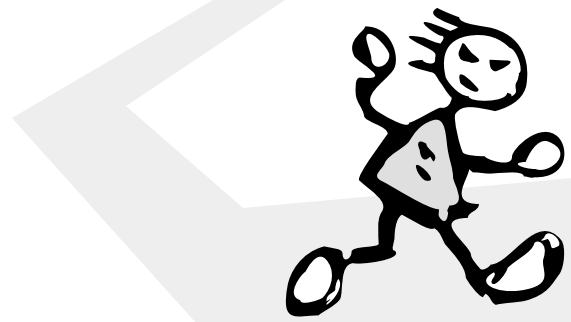
Joshua T. Bates struggles with the biggest decision of his life as he decides whether to disclose who is victimizing the new kid in fifth grade, Sean O'Malley. No stranger to bullies, Joshua flunked third grade and knows what it is like to be the target of Tommy Wilhelm and his gang, the Nerds Out. An excellent book that tells what it is like to be an outcast and what it takes to be a hero.

Bully on the Bus

Carl W. Bosch

Ages 7-11

Written in a "choose your own ending" format, the reader decides what action to take while dealing with a bully. The reader can choose from many alternatives that include ignoring, talking to an adult, confronting the bully, fighting, and reconciling. There are many options and opportunities for excellent discussions with this book.



Finding the Green Stone

Alice Walker

Ages 7-11

In this tale set in a friendly rural neighborhood, Katie and her brother Johnny each possess an iridescent green stone with special powers. When Johnny loses his stone, he accuses Katie of stealing it. Later, he tries to steal her stone, and the stone immediately loses its luster. When he finds the stone, Johnny learns that it embodies his character and integrity. The stone loses its power and radiance as a result of its owner's failings and mean-spirited actions.

Mitch and Amy

Beverly Cleary

Ages 8-12

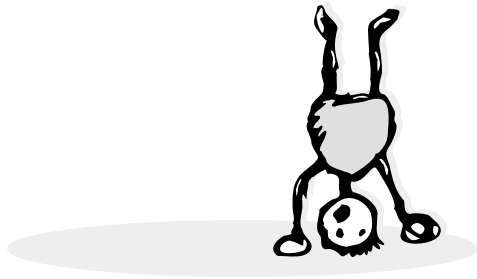
In this amusing book, twins Mitch and Amy put aside their squabbles and rivalry and join together to deal with a neighborhood bully, Alan Hibbler. Mitch and Amy try various ways of dealing with Alan, even choosing fist fighting. There are numerous opportunities to discuss the benefits and consequences of all of the possible ways to handle Alan.

Bullies are a Pain in the Brain

Trevor Romain

Ages 8-13

Funny and easy to read, this book describes truths about bullies and offers advice on how to effectively cope with them. For bullies, this book also helps explain how to get along with other kids and feel good about yourself. The book is loaded with practical suggestions for kids to help them gain the confidence to handle themselves and become more “bully proof.”

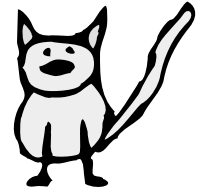


Fourth Grade Rats

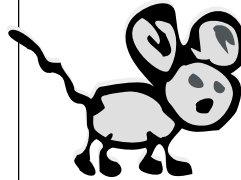
Jerry Spinelli

Ages 9-12

A lighthearted Spinelli story about some boys recently promoted to fourth grade. The narrator, Suds, who acquired his name because he enjoys taking warm baths to relax, is having a difficult time complying with his friend Joey's demand that he grow up and follow the



familiar chant, “First grade babies. Second grade cats. Third grade angels. Fourth grade rats!” Suds learns that he doesn't have to be a tough guy in order to grow up.



Crash

Jerry Spinelli

Ages 9-12

Crash is a seventh grader who loves football and tormenting his geeky neighbor. The story follows Crash as he grows from an obnoxious teenaged jock into a more mature and accepting young man. Spinelli deals with real issues like bullying and illness in a lighthearted but realistic manner.



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