



Pointers For Parents And Teachers

Popular Kids Can Help Curb Bullying

by Dr. Colleen Logan

(NAPSA)—Contrary to previous research that suggested that as students' popularity increased so did their bullying behavior, many parents may be surprised to learn the results of a recent study from Princeton, Rutgers and Yale Universities. It found that popular kids who publicly stand up against bullying may actually help more than school officials' efforts to curb the behavior. While this new research is hopeful, targets of bullying are more likely than nontargets to consider suicide, which leads to nearly 4,600 young lives lost each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Signs Your Child Has Been Bullied

Warning signs that children have experienced bullying include depression, anxiety, loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. They may also experience a decrease in academic achievement and participation.

Long-Term Effects Of Bullying

Those who were bullied and survive the challenging tween and teenage years may face mental health issues in adulthood, including from anxiety and depression, and may even consider self-harm and suicide later in life.

While all children face conflict, disagreements among peers can usually be resolved in some way; however, experts say, it's the repetitive nature of bullying that can cause harm. Even as kids start standing up for each other, parents must remain involved and watch what their kids say and do face-to-face and online. Consistent and early intervention at schools and in the home can help mental health issues in adulthood as a result of bullying.

During October, which is Bullying Prevention Month, and throughout the year, you can encourage your children to stand up for their peers. One way is to approach bullying from a strength stance and teach youths to be upstanders, not bystanders.



Teaching kids to be upstanders—not bystanders—when they see bullying can have a lifelong effect.

What Kids Can Do

- Children should be encouraged to say something if they see bullying behavior. By standing up and saying that it's not OK, they will show others that bullying will not be tolerated.

- Kids should also get a responsible adult involved and properly report the bullying incident. Bystander silence won't help curb the bullying behavior.

- Befriending those who are bullied can go a long way. While there are many reasons bullies pick their targets, those who seem less vulnerable may no longer be targets.

- Participating in school zero-tolerance policies can help shape the future of bully prevention methods. As kids are empowered to stand up for each other, administration and faculty as well as parents should reward the good behavior instead of only punishing the bad behavior.

- To help even more, children can actively participate in anti-bullying activities and projects.

Dr. Logan, program director for the MS in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling at Walden University, specializes in bullying issues, including personal and societal impacts along with effects within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. She is a past-president of the American Counseling Association. Learn more about encouraging upstander behavior at www.WaldenU.edu/bullyprevention.