

Bullies Make Life Miserable for Many Kids

There's nothing new about bullies. Most people remember some experience with a bully while growing up. In a study of 7-to-12-year-olds in rural Minnesota, 69% said there were bullies in their town. Over 50% said they had been picked on by these bullies. What is bullying? Bullying includes swearing, teasing, throwing things, knocking people down, name-calling and beating. Bullying is most frequent in grades 2 through 6, most serious in grades 7 through 9, and then tapers off after that. Bullying involves three players: the bully, the bystander and the bullied. Providers can be a part of prevention by helping children learn what it is to “walk in another person’s shoes.” Here are some specific things to do:

- Teach children to recognize and express emotions nonviolently.
- Emphasize talking out the issue rather than hitting.
- Help children solve problems by working together.
- Model the kind of behavior you want children to exhibit. Be clear that aggressive behavior will not be tolerated.
- Promote empathy by pointing out the consequences for others of the child's verbal and physical actions.
- Choose toys, games and any TV shows or videos that do not include violence.
- Work with parents if their child has behaved too aggressively.
- Work on building children’s self-esteem.

Bullying behavior can happen in the child care setting so providers need to be part of prevention.

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