



BULLYING 101:

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Elementary school children have lots of questions, so be prepared with good answers! Here's what you'll want to know about bullying before you present the lesson plan, role plays, suggested reading, and improv theater activities to younger students.

> **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

> **WHO IS INVOLVED?**

> **WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is different from disagreements or the usual childhood conflicts. What's the difference?

It's bullying if:

- one person is **hurting** another with words or actions
- **on purpose**
- and the kid who is doing it has **more power**.

Power can include such things as being older, being physically bigger or stronger, having more social status, or having a higher sense of self-esteem.

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TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can take lots of forms. Here are four common types of bullying.


Physical: This one's easy to recognize. Examples include pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling, inappropriate touch, breaking objects, and taking or damaging another's stuff.

Verbal: It's really common because it's quick, direct, and easy to do. Examples include teasing, name calling, threats, intimidation, demeaning jokes, rumors, gossip, and slander.

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TYPES OF BULLYING



Emotional: This type of bullying is more sophisticated. It's calculated and often done by a group. Nasty stuff. It hurts people on the inside and makes them feel bad about themselves. Examples include leaving someone out on purpose, telling lies to hurt someone's reputation, and humiliating someone publicly.

Cyberbullying: Using technology is the newest way to bully. Examples include sending mean text messages, posting videos, stories, or photos that ridicule someone, and spreading rumors through social networking sites.

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WHEN DOES BULLYING HAPPEN?

Bullying can begin as early as preschool. It increases in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and then decreases in high school.

The types of bullying differ over the years, but the effects are the same.

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MYTHS ABOUT BULLYING

Until recently, bullying was actually seen as acceptable behavior. People used to say things like:

Boys will be boys.

Reality check: Aggression toward others is never okay.

Girls don't bully.

Reality check: Girls do bully, usually with words and verbal aggression.

Words will never hurt you.

Reality check: Words may not leave bruises or broken bones, but they can leave internal scars.

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MYTHS ABOUT BULLYING

Bullying is a natural part of childhood.

Reality check: There is nothing natural about being bullied.

Some people deserve to be bullied.

Reality check: No one deserves to be hurt or harmed.

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect.

Bullying will make students tougher.

Reality check: Bullying lowers a student's sense of self-esteem and self worth.

It was only teasing.

Reality check: Teasing is bullying when it hurts someone.

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BULLYING PREVENTION MATTERS

Each school day **160,000 students** in the U.S. stay home from fear of being bullied. They are scared to go to school. That means those students lose the opportunity to learn. It is every student's right to feel safe in school.

Students who are bullied also can have lower self-esteem, less self-confidence, increased fear and anxiety, depression, and lower grades.

It's not just the targets of bullying who suffer and pay a price. Students who bully grow up to have a greater risk of getting in trouble with the law. By the age of 25, one in four students who bully will have spent time in jail.

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WHO IS TARGETED?

Students can be picked on because they're different in some way—like their looks, language, race, religion, or disability, for example.

It's their reaction to the bullying that can determine if it continues, however. Students who are repeatedly bullied typically have some of these traits. They:

- **Seem weak.** They act vulnerable, scared, angry, hurt, or sad—just what the bully wants.
- **Are less assertive.** That makes them seem weak or easily dominated.

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WHO IS TARGETED?

- **Have few or no close friends.** Kids who are socially isolated are easier to bully because they're less likely to have anyone stick up for them.
- **Have lower self-esteem or self-confidence.** They may feel they deserve the abuse.

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WHO BULLIES?

Think the bully is the big guy who wears black, has low self-esteem, and sneers a lot? Could be, but it could also be the petite cheerleader or the quiet honor student. It's not appearance that defines someone who bullies; it's behavior. Students who bully can be any size, race, religion, or gender.

Students who bully often have some of these characteristics:

- Want to demonstrate power. They can be aggressive, remorseless, and intentional in wanting to hurt others.
- Lack empathy for others and think bullying is okay.

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WHO BULLIES?

- Have high self-esteem and are popular, smart, and charming to adults.
- Thrive on dominance and control.

Boys generally bully both boys and girls, and they tend to use physical means. Girls usually bully other girls and tend to use teasing and social exclusion.

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TELLING VS. TATTLING

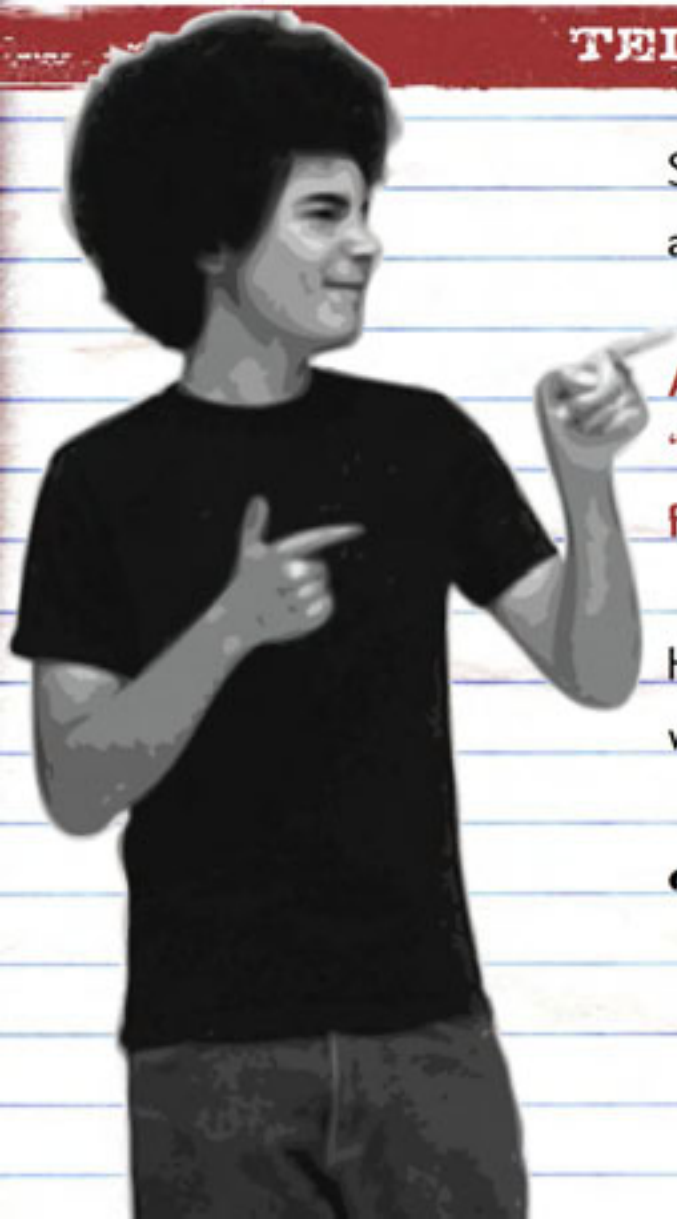
Students need to understand the difference between telling and tattling.

A general guideline is:

“Telling is done to protect yourself or another student from harm. Tattling is done to get the person in trouble.”

Help the students understand that it’s okay to tell an adult when they see bullying.

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TARGETS OF BULLYING

Help the children understand there's a lot they can do if they are being bullied:

- Avoid situations where bullying occurs.
- Hang out with classmates, friends, peers, or siblings.
- Tell the child who is bullying to stop.
- Do something the bully does not expect or want: yell, blow a whistle, laugh.

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STUDENTS WHO BULLY

You can teach compassion by helping the children understand that people who bully often:

- Feel bad about themselves.
- Have been bullied by someone else.
- Feel scared and angry.
- Don't know how to handle feelings.

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STUDENTS WHO BULLY

Without singling anyone out, let the group know that kids who bully can learn to stop doing it. They can:

- Learn new ways to handle their feelings (fear, anger).
- Talk with their mom and dad or other trusted adult.
- Do something else instead of bullying (ride a bike, write down feelings, draw pictures, talk to someone who cares about them, walk away).
- Buy a treat when they don't bully.

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STUDENTS WHO BULLY

- Role-play with their mom or dad to understand how kids who are bullied feel.
- Think up different ways they could act in a situation.

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WITNESSES

Help children understand there's a lot they can do if they see bullying. They can:

Speak Up!

- When someone is willing to say they think something is wrong, they can make a difference.
- If they tell other kids that bullying is not cool, the others will be more willing to speak up, too.
- If they see bullying, they can tell a grown-up. Telling is not tattling. It's okay to tell.

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WITNESSES

Reach Out!

- Tell the kid who is being bullied that he or she don't deserve to be treated that way. No one does.
- Ask friends to join them in being a kid against bullying.

Be a Friend!

- Invite the kid who is being bullied to play with them.
- Create a “bully-free zone” on the playground where everyone is welcome.

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BULLYING 101:



Okay, got it? You're good to go! Here are your cool tools:

- > Help kids learn more about bullying! Here are bunches of books you can recommend or read to younger children.
- > Be a great teacher! This lesson plan gives you a step-by-step way to talk with kids about bullying.
- > Be a star! Check out the role play you can perform for younger students.