

WIFACETS

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for
Education, Training & Support, Inc.
(WIFACETS)

Presents:

Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?

Intervention Strategies for Parents of Children with Disabilities



Outcomes of Bullying



- At risk of short and long-term effects such as:
- School avoidance
 - Low self-esteem
 - Increased fear or anxiety
 - Depression
 - Lower grades
 - Increased violence in the school

Defining Bullying Behavior



“Bullying among children is commonly defined as intentional, repeated, hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more children against another.”

U.S. Department of Education Bullying Prevention Manual

Defining Disability “Harassment”



“Disability harassment . . . is intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on disability that creates a hostile environment . . .”

*Excerpt from “Dear Colleague” letter from
U.S. Department of Education (2000)*

Common Views about Bullying



- “Boys will be boys”
- “Girls don’t bully”
- “Words will never hurt you”
- “It is a natural part of childhood”
- “Some people deserve to be bullied”
- “Bullying will make kids tougher”
- “It was only teasing”

Adapted “The Bully-Free Classroom” Beane, Allan L (1999)

Children Who Bully

“Bullies can come in all shapes, sizes, races, and gender.”

The most common characteristic of children who bully — *they seek to demonstrate power.*

Adapted from www.bullybeware.com

Children Who Are Targets



Children who are bullied are **not** victims, they are *targets* — who can change what is happening to them with help from parents and school staff.

Types of Bullying—Physical

- Hitting, kicking, or pushing
- Taking property
- Damaging property
- Forced or unwelcome contact
- Perceived intent to harm

Types of Bullying—Verbal

- Teasing with the intent to hurt/harm
- Name calling
- Threats against the target
- Intimidation
- Demeaning jokes, stories or remarks about another's differences
- Gossiping
- Spreading rumors that hurt one's reputation

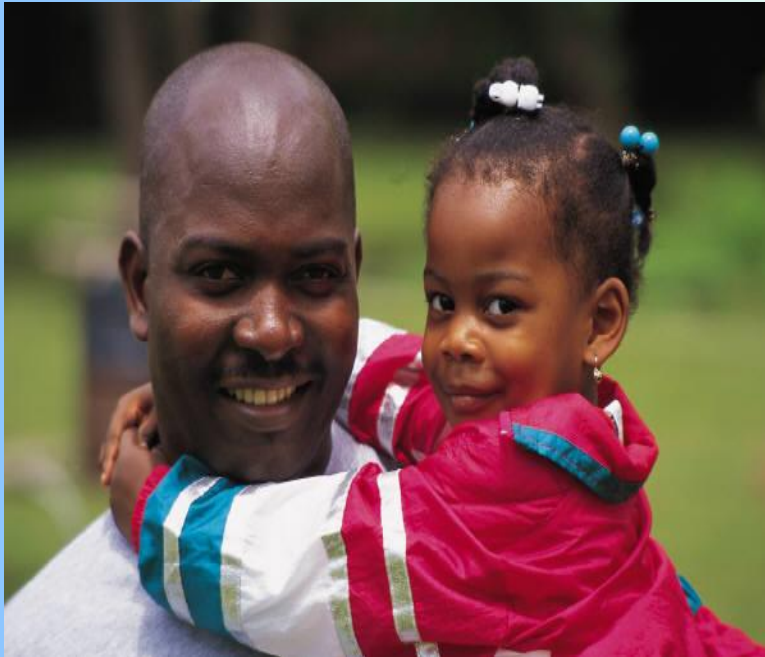
Types of Bullying—Emotional

- Alienation or exclusion from groups
- Manipulation done to harm acceptance into groups
- Damage to reputation
- Public humiliation
- Creating a sense of unease for the target
- “Flaming” or posting slander to the Internet

Types of Bullying—Sexual

- Sexually charged comments
- Inappropriate or lewd glances
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Exhibitionism
- Sexual assault

Planning Ahead



- Teach self advocacy skills
- Help your child understand their disability
- Encourage social development
- Build support systems

Talk with Your Child about Bullying



- Listen
- Believe
- Be supportive
- Be patient
- Provide information
- Explore strategies

Questions to Ask Your Child



- Did the child hurt you on purpose?
- Was it done more than once?
- Did it make you feel bad or angry?
- Did the child know you were being hurt?
- Is the other child more powerful than you in some way?

(Adapted from Your Child: Bully or Victim? Understanding and Ending Schoolyard Tyranny" Peter Sheras, Ph.D., 2002)

Deciding Appropriate Strategies



Strategies should be appropriate for:

- The situation
- The age of the child
- The child's ability and comfort level
- The supports available for the child

Reactions to Bullying—Indirect



- Disregard the bully
- Use self-talk
- Practice role-playing and problem solving
- Move away from the situation
- Stay with a peer

Reactions to Bullying—Direct



- Educate the bully
- Agree with the bully
- Seek the help of an adult
- Do something the bully would not anticipate
- Ask the bully to stop

Encourage Group Involvement



Studies show children who interact with their peers are less likely to be bullied.

Be Involved at School



Parents can take an active role in their child's school. Let the teachers and students know who you are and that you are interested in your child's safety and well-being.

Promote Change in the School



“Research indicates that creating a supportive school climate is the most important step in preventing harassment.”

U.S. Department of Education; Office for Civil Rights, January 1999, Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools

Use the Child's IEP



Develop goals and interventions in the IEP to build skills that prevent bullying and develop methods to intervene against bullying behavior.

Laws that Apply to Disability Harassment



Federal:

- Section 504
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
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State:

- Pupil Nondiscrimination Law - Section 118.13

Respond to Disability Harassment— The Role of School Policy



The school district has responsibility to take effective action to respond to disability harassment.

Keep a Record



When a child is a target of bullying, based on disability, parents need to **document** the events and develop a record of what is happening to their child.

Notifying School Administrators



Ten steps for notifying school administrators of harassment concerns.

How to file a complaint

- ✓ You must file a complaint with the school district first
- ✓ The complain must be in writing
- ✓ Get a copy of your district's complaint procedure

TIP: Send a copy of the complaint to OCR

The letter should include:

- The disability of the child
- Information & documentation about the discrimination
- Explain what you would like to see happen as a result of the complaint

TIP: The person filing the complaint has the burden of proving there was a violation

Parents Are Their Child's Best Advocate



Parents are the people most familiar with their child's strengths, abilities, and vulnerabilities.