A Parent's Guide to Bullying Prevention

Presented by:
Advocates for Justice & Education, Inc.

TRAINING AGENDA

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II. Bullying Trends

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What is Bullying?

"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

(Dan Olweus, creator of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program)

Bullying Fast Facts

- An estimated 160,000 children miss school every day out of fear of attack or intimidation by other students. (National Education Association, 1995)
- Bullying is the most common form of violence; between 15% and 30% of students are bullies or victims.
- Some 3.7 million youth engage in bullying, and more than 3.2 million are victims of bullying annually.
- More than two-thirds of students believe that schools respond poorly to bullying, with a high percentage of students believing that adult help is infrequent and ineffective.

More Bullying Facts

- Direct, physical bullying increases in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and declines in high school. Verbal abuse, on the other hand, remains constant.
- 25% of teachers see nothing wrong with bullying or putdowns and consequently intervene in only 4% of bullying incidents.

Cyberbullying

"Cyberbullying" is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the ***Internet***, interactive and ***digital technologies*** or ***mobile phones***.

Cyberbullying Statistics

- 42% of children have been bullied while online. Once in 4 have had it happen more than once.
- 35% of children have been threatened online. Nearly 1 in 5 have had it happen more than once.
- 58% of children admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out of 10 say it has happened more than once.
- 53% of children have admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online. More than 1 in 3 have done it more than once.

Cyberbullying statistics are based on a 2004 i-Safe survey of 1,500 students grades 4-8

Protecting your Child from Cyber bullying

- **Educate your children** about appropriate internet based behaviors
- **Model appropriate technology usage**. Don't harass or joke about others while online, especially around your children. Your kids are watching and learning!
- **Monitor your child's online activities**
- **Cultivate and maintain an open line of communication with your child**
- **Utilize an "Internet Use Contract" or "Cell Phone Use Contract"** to foster a clear understanding of what is appropriate and what is not with respect to the use of communications technology.

Source: Cyberbullying Research Center
www.cyberbullying.us

Common Views about Bullying

In spite of the significant impact that bullying can have on a student, it often continues to be viewed as acceptable behavior. There are many misperceptions that adults may have about bullying.

- *Boys will be boys*
- *Girls don't bully*
- *Words will never hurt you*
- *Bullying is a natural part of childhood*
- *Some people deserve to be bullied*
- *Bullying will make kids tougher*
- *Telling a teacher about bullying is tattling*
- *It was only teasing*

Common Views about Bullying

Teasing IS Bullying when a child with a *disability* does not understand they are being teased and the intent of the action is to hurt or harm.

Talk with Your Child about Bullying

- **Listen** – Let your child tell their story.
- **Believe** – React in a way that encourages your child to trust.
- **Be Supportive** – Tell the child it is not his or her fault and that they don't deserve to be bullied. Empower your child and avoid judgmental comments.
- **Be Patient** – Children may not be ready to open up right away.
- **Provide Information** – Educate your child about bullying by providing information at a level that the child can understand.
- **Explore options for interventions** – Discuss with your child options they may have in dealing with bullying behavior.

Warning Signs…

Watch for warning signs, such as:

- Suddenly wanting to be driven to school instead of taking the bus
- Unexplained stomachaches or headaches
- Changes in sleep routines of temperament

Questions to Ask Your Child about Bullying

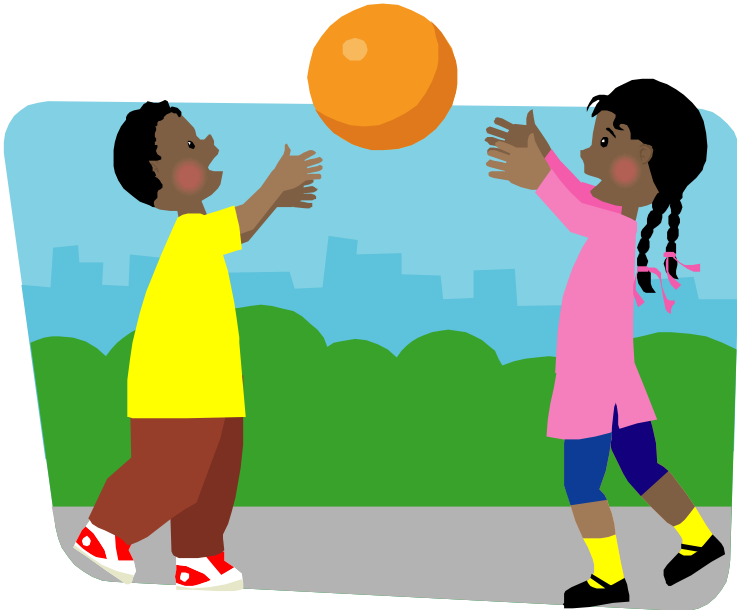
- Did the child hurt you on purpose?
- Was it done more than once?
- How do you feel about the behavior?
- Did the child know you were being hurt?
- Is the child more powerful (i.e. bigger, scarier) than you in some way?

Other options for helping your child discuss bullying include:

- Reading stories with the child about bullying situations
- Talking about recent events in the news
- Discussing bullying incidents on TV or in a movie

What Every Child Needs to Know about Bullying

- Speak Up!
- Reach out!
- Be a Friend!



Record Keeping and Bullying

- When a child is a target of bullying, parents need to document the events and develop a record (or history) of what is happening to their child.

- Data is IMPORTANT. **Remember, if it is not in writing, it does not exist!**

Record Keeping and Bullying

Content should include:

- written information about the bullying incidents
- the date of the event,
- the persons involved,
- and the child's account of the event.

Also include:

- all communication with professionals (teachers, administrators, etc.)
- date of the communication
- discussion (summary) of the event
- responses of professionals / action taken
- reports filed by the school in accordance with the school district policy

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Bullying

The IEP team can work together to develop goals, benchmarks or short-term objectives, and identify supplementary aids and services or program modifications or supports to help prevent and intervene against bullying.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Bullying

Goals and objectives can address:

- Improving social skills (sharing, taking turns, etc.)
- Identify & practice direct and indirect ways to react to, handle, and avoid bullying behavior
- Increase self-advocacy skills
- Participate in friendship groups to practice social skills with peers under direction of school staff

Examples of supplementary aids & other supports

- In-service school staff to understand child's disability and vulnerability
- Educate peers about school district policies on bullying behavior
- Allowing child to leave class early to avoid hallway incidents
- Use social stories to help child understand difficult situations when they occur

Notifying School Administrators

- Notify them of the situation in **writing**.
- Mention how the situation is impacting your child.
  - Does not want to come to school
  - Fearful he or she will be hurt
  - Complaints of stomach aches, headaches, etc.
  - Has other new behaviors as a result of bullying
- Ask if the school has a written policy on bullying and harassment. If so, ask for a written copy.

Notifying School Administrators

- Discuss ways the school can help, such as by developing a bullying awareness program.
- Ask what the school can do to keep your child safe at school, on school bus, etc.

and….

- REMEMBER, schools are obligated to respond to bullying.

File a Complaint

- The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces five federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability and age in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (ED).
- These civil rights laws extend to all state education agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, colleges and universities, vocational schools, proprietary schools, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, libraries and museums that receive federal financial assistance from ED.

Who Can File a Discrimination Complaint

- Anyone who believes that an education institution that receives federal financial assistance has discriminated against someone on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age.
- The person or organization filing the complaint need not be a victim of the alleged discrimination but may complain on behalf of another person or group.
- A complaint must be filed within **180** calendar days of the date of the alleged discrimination, unless the time for filing is extended by OCR for good cause shown under certain circumstances.

How to File a Complaint

Complainants wishing to file a complaint may do so by:

- **Mail or Facsimile:**
  - OCR's Discrimination Complaint Form is available at OCR's enforcement offices.
- In your correspondence include: The complainant's name, address and, if possible (although not required), a telephone number where the complainant may be reached during business hours;
- Information about the person(s) or class of persons injured by the alleged discriminatory act(s) (names of the injured person(s) are not required);
- The name and location of the institution that committed the alleged discriminatory act(s); and
- A description of the alleged discriminatory act(s) in sufficient detail to enable OCR to understand what occurred, when it occurred, and the basis for the alleged discrimination.

Office of Civil Rights

Office for Civil Rights,
District of Columbia Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-1475
Telephone: (202) 453-6020
Facsimile: (202) 453-6021
Email: OCR.DC@ed.gov

In Summary

- Educate your child about bullying and be prepared to handle your child's questions and emotions.
- Be a part of your child's school. Join the PTA and raise awareness of bullying as an issue.
- If your child has a disability, build bullying prevention goals into your child's IEP.
- Help your child to join an after-school program or activity.
- Help your child to develop a hobby that allows interaction with other positive peers.

For more information:

Call or Visit AJE!

www.aje-dc.org

<u>Two Locations:</u>

1. The Campbell Building - 1012 Pennsylvania A
2. The Murrell Building - 4201 Georgia Ave NW

(202) 678-8060 (SE)

(202) 265-1432 (NW)

Presentation content is adapted from
PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center