



Nebraska Newsbriefs

Learning Disabilities Association of Nebraska

Winter 2007

BULLYING IN NEBRASKA SCHOOLS

By Joan Reznicek, Superintendent, Red Cloud, Nebraska; Ken Nelson, Associate Professor Department of Education Administration, University of Nebraska at Kearney; and Marlene Kuskie, Professor, Department of School Counseling, University of Nebraska at Kearney

In this era of standards-based reform, it might seem that social and emotional learning has taken a subordinate role in our schools. Yet even No Child Left Behind-the most prominent academic reform of recent years-holds districts responsible for problems that are closely tied to students' emotional health, such as what the act terms "persistently dangerous" schools. One significant challenge to maintaining a safe and orderly school is bullying.

Although it has always been the responsibility of the school principal to create and maintain a safe school environment, recent requirements of the Nebraska Department of Education (2003) and the No Child Left Behind Act have made this responsibility of primary importance. This legislation stipulates that students who attend unsafe schools must be allowed to transfer to safer schools. Thus, the school principal, in collaboration with the school counselor and teachers, must have the ability to assess the potential for school violence and bullying within their own school and take steps to prevent it. The research and focus on bullying within the school environment began over twenty years ago with studies in Norway, Italy, Great Britain, Spain, Sweden and Australia (Smith, Morita, Jungerk-Tas, Olweus, Catalano & Slee, 1999). Olweus (2003), an expert in the field of research on bullying, defined it as when a student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. Yet it took the Columbine tragedy and recent high profile bullying situations in Nebraska to bring this significant problem to the forefront.

The Study

In an effort to secure data on the effect of bullying in Nebraska, Ms. Joan Reznicek (2004), in conjunction with the University of Nebraska at Kearney, surveyed the opinions of selected Nebraska public school principals on bullying incidents within the school.

The purpose of the study was to compare public elementary and secondary principals' data and perceptions concerning the observed, weekly number of bullying incidents, the

seriousness of the bullying in their school, whether boys or girls are more involved in bullying, and situations where bullying is most likely to occur. Correlations between school district enrollments and reported weekly averages of bullying incidents and ratings of seriousness of bullying were examined as well. A random, electronic sample of 50 school districts was used and an elementary and a secondary school principal were surveyed in each district. The size of the school districts surveyed ranged in enrollment from 498 to 3,284 students. There was a 96% return rate during the winter of 2004 and significant differences were found.

In this study, principals reported that bullying incidents were found to occur a mean of 2.304 times per week in the elementary and 1.979 times per week in the surveyed secondary schools. Statistically significant ($p < .05$) findings were as follows: (a) the average weekly number of bullying incidents were significantly higher in larger school districts.

(b) secondary principal mean ratings of the seriousness of bullying were higher than those of elementary principals; and (c) elementary principals were more likely than secondary principals to identify boys as being more involved in bullying than girls. Although elementary principals reported a greater average number of weekly bullying incidents, the difference was not significant ($p > .05$).

Although there were more reported bullying incidents from larger districts, they did not appear to be significantly more serious than incidents in smaller districts.

The study also surveyed principals' perceptions of where bullying activities took place. Of the eight situations identified, elementary principals indicated that "on the way to school" was the number one situation where bullying is most likely to occur. However, secondary principals indicated that "in the hallways, during the day" was the number one location where bullying took place. Both principal groups reported that "classrooms during the day" was the setting where bullying was least likely to occur.

In summary, this research supports findings in the literature that indicates bullying starts in the elementary grades, that boys are more likely than girls to be identified as bullies at a young age, and that older students become involved in more serious incidents of bullying.

Implications for the administrator

The long-term effects of victimization have a significant impact on the society as survivors of bullying attain fewer years of post-secondary education, are less likely to be employed after graduation and make less money (as cited by Murphy, 2004). These survivors of bullying exhibit such behaviors as higher rates of absenteeism, lower academic performance and feelings of apprehension, loneliness and abandonment (Roberts S. Coursol, 1966).

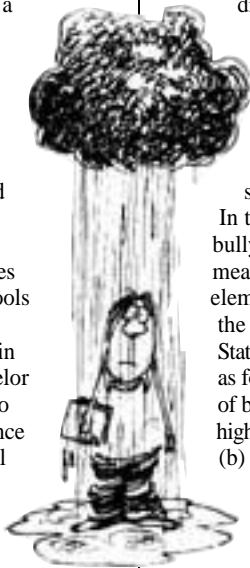
The role of the principal in reducing harmful environmental conditions such as bullying must be accomplished in coordination with counselors and teachers. Administrators hold the power and are the key to using counselors and teachers to positively impact school environments.

Creating a plan

The challenge for the school principal is to seek qualified individuals to implement educational and intervention programs that have a significant impact on the behavior of students towards other students. The primary goal is to involve school personnel in the development of these programs. Olweus (1999) as cited by Baldry (2004), a program is more likely to be effective if it is supervised in all phases and school personnel are not left alone in delivering the programs. Constant supervision and technical assistance is also needed. Thus, curriculum and program development efforts must be system-wide. Clark and Kiselica (1997) stated that an in-depth orientation to the facts about bullying and the creation of an organizational environment in which all school personnel unite to discourage the menacing behaviors of bullies is essential, if positive change is to occur.

The research and literature supports the premise that "this culture is not of the schools' making, but schools are perhaps the only social institution, beyond the family, capable of addressing it effectively" (Murphy, 2004, pg 18). The American Counseling Association has

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From the President...

In the last newsletter we were able to review books that might be helpful for parents, teachers, and older. While considering what information we might share with you this time, the topic of books for young people came to the fore. As parents of the LD child, we often want to give them books to read or educational games to play. Why not try one of these books to let your LD child have fun with reading and writing? The books we would like to bring to your attention include: Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes. Chrysanthemum thinks she has the perfect name until she goes to school and gets teased about her name. You can apply the lessons learned from this book to many things your child may receive grief over. Miss Bindergarten Has a Wild Day in Kindergarten is a fun book for 1st thru 3rd graders to read because it has great colorful pictures and great story lines about 26 wild little kids. The alphabet is also used in the book and act as page "a", etc. Older kids will like to look and read the simple lines in The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg. The book consists of wonderful drawings with mysterious titles and one line descriptions that will get most imaginations thinking. It is a great book to begin discussions and writing. Dr. Seuss wrote one of the best tongue twister books created when he wrote Fox in Socks. Even high school students laugh when asked to read a page from this book; after all, the book opens with the warning, "Take it Slowly. This Book is Dangerous!" This is a great book to share and read as a family. Fairy tales will never be the same for you if you read The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by John Scieska. Children, adults, and adolescents love this book; the story is written by the Wolf and is very entertaining. Scieska has many other books that are just as funny. With summer coming soon, please take the time to look at some of these different titles because they may entertain and also spark an interest in reading.

We also encourage you to be alert to the new law that prohibits bullying in schools. LB205 was signed as law by Governor Heineman. This is going to be a very important step to making things better for the children who are constantly harassed because they learn differently or suffer from some other disability. We will work to get you more information on this new legislation so you will be aware of your rights and your child's rights in this area.

Have a wonderful spring and summer and know that the volunteers at LDA Nebraska continue to work on your behalf.

Stephanie Cain; President, LDA of Nebraska

Meet A Board Member

The Learning Disabilities Association of Nebraska board includes parents, educators and other professionals. They all have one thing in common, they volunteer their time to inform other parents, educators, professionals and the general public about the hidden handicap of learning disabilities.

*Meet Maureen Penton, board member,
co-host of the Omaha LDA support group and
editor of Nebraska Newsbriefs.*

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I am a single mom with one child, Alex. Well, not a child anymore, he is a young adult now. He works full time in the construction trade. Along the way we have been blessed to have teachers, counselors, administrators and so many others in our corner. Alex's success story should be the norm, not the exception, that is my goal. I co host the only learning disabilities support group in Omaha once a month. It is both challenging and rewarding to help other parents find their way in the journey of finding services, information and support for their child.

How did you get involved in LDA?

I was a member of a special education advisory committee in Omaha when my son was in school. Once he graduated I knew I had to reach out to other parents as others had reached out to me. I have memories of feeling like I was the only one out there, the only one battling the education system or the medical community. LDA lets me use the knowledge and experience I

have gained over the years to help other parents and educator, or anyone else who works with our kids.

What changes have you seen in special education since your child first started receiving services?

Wow, special education has changed so much since my son started receiving services at age 2. He received home based services until he was 3, then he went to special education preschool for half days until he was 5. After that he went to school all day. I can remember sitting down with his teacher while she wrote out his IEP by hand. All his teachers from preschool through third grade were speech pathologists with teaching certification. I know that intensive language education had a lot to do with where he is now. He changed schools every year until 5th grade when OPS went to the neighborhood schools model. That was the first time he had ever attended a school he could walk to. I'm glad that kids now get to go to the same school as neighbors and siblings.

What concerns you most about the current trends in special education?

I think what concerns me most is the push for full inclusion. I know my son would have been lost in a regular classroom full time. He really needed the one on one learning in an environment where he could feel success and the teacher knew his learning style. Simply putting a child with learning disabilities into a classroom with regular ed students does not mean he/she will learn any faster or better. It can be a very depressing situation for a student to never really understand what everyone else does.

Dyslexia and Driving an Automobile

By: Dale S. Brown (2006)

Tom, a handsome twenty-seven-year old man who had dyslexia faced serious problems learning to drive a car. He failed his driving test several times in high school. He worked on learning to drive in college, but never bothered to take the test again. Now as an adult, he realized he would have to learn driving the same slow, steady and disciplined way that he learned to read. He was determined to learn however.

He would have to drill himself on the location of the accelerator and brake. Learning park, reverse, neutral and drive would take extra practice. He would also have improve his navigation abilities, such as reading maps, and locating and reading signs quickly enough to use the information.

Learning to read took several tutors, lots of practice, and disciplined persistence. It was big step in his life. He thought reading would solve all of his problems! Well, it did help. He had a good job, was married, and had a child. But issues involving his learning disabilities kept on coming up. And his inability to drive was a major one, even though his home was a bus-ride away from his job. He knew that he would need to learn to drive - or depend on his wife and friends for mobility.

Tom has perceptual problems, which are a major cause of learning disabilities and sometimes co-exist with dyslexia. Perceptual problems can cause great difficulty in learning to drive. People with perceptual problems receive inaccurate information through their senses and/or have trouble processing that information. Like static on the radio or a bad TV picture, the information becomes garbled as it travels from the eye, ear, skin or the brain.

Many people with dyslexia do not have perceptual problems. As a matter of fact, many people with dyslexia have strengths in the areas of spatial relationships and/or eye hand coordination. They find driving an automobile easy. Some people with dyslexia are superior at driving and even take jobs such as truck driving. However, there are some dyslexics who find it difficult to drive. Tom is presented as a composite character of such a person.

For those people who can drive but have severe difficulty reading, the driver's test is a key barrier. Fortunately, it is often possible to take the test orally. The Americans with Disabilities Act can be used to make a strong request for reasonable accommodation.

Tom had bad memories of his experience in the driver's education class in his high school. Students went out with four other students and the instructor in a car to learn to drive. He found it overwhelming and scary. He felt as if there was too much going on at once. The seat shook, the car seemed to lurch forward when his foot touched the accelerator, and the road, the fence around the driving range, and the grass seemed to be moving quickly around the car. The car motor was roaring, the driving instructor was shouting, and his hands were slick with sweat from gripping the steering wheel. His fellow students calmed down after some initial nervousness and he did his best to keep his fears to himself.

Some of Tom's problems were due to his difficulty in controlling his attention. Most people automatically sort out the important sensations from the irrelevant ones. But Tom's brain could not do that with ease. He was paying attention to everything at once, which made him feel scattered and confused. He had to consciously slow his breathing, relax his muscles, and look and listen carefully. He had to work to be relaxed, alert, and aware. Some people with perceptual problems have the opposite reaction. They have to push themselves to pay enough attention to see and hear what they need to drive.

Tom also had trouble seeing accurately and associating the movement of the car with the actions of his hands on the steering wheel. As a youngster, he had difficulty learning to ride a bike and kept falling down. As a young adult, he had difficulty steering a canoe. He

hoped that his hard work mastering the canoe would help him drive.

Tom looked for a driving instructor. He found that most driving instructors did not have experience with perceptual problems and dyslexia. Many commercial driving instructors do not have training in how to teach driving. The job of driving instructor is often part-time and is sometimes used as a way of earning a salary between jobs.

It took a long time to find someone. He checked with local groups that worked with people who have dyslexia. Finally, he heard from a mother of a dyslexic teenager who had trouble learning to drive. He contacted the driving instructor. The driving instructor knew about dyslexia and had taught his dyslexic daughter to drive.

Tom was pleased to be able to work in a car that had dual controls. He could practice driving, but the instructor also had a brake and steering wheel and could take over if necessary. The instructor had him practice on a winding, flat road to learn to turn the steering wheel the right amount for each curve of the street.

Then he practiced on a hilly but straight road to learn to keep a constant speed by pressing down on the accelerator when he went up a hill and releasing it a bit when going down. Then he practiced on roads that were both hilly and winding. This step-by-step learning process is the best way to teach many people with dyslexia. The driving instructor carefully taught him merges, passing another vehicle, backing up, right-of-way rules, parallel parking, and many other skills of competent driving.

Tom also had difficulty intuitively knowing left from right. That is why he had to work hard learning to reliably distinguish the accelerator from the brake. It took a lot of drill and practice. He practiced left and right turns over and over again to remember that right turns are close to the curve (right's tight.) And that left turns were away from the curve (left's loose). Sometimes, he stopped on corners while he was walking and scanned the environment as if he were a driver. He would imagine himself making left and right turns.

Tom spent a full six months learning to drive. He showed courage and determination, particularly when you consider his disability was invisible. Nobody but his close friends and the driving instructor recognized his extra effort. He was enormously proud when he finally passed his driver's test and received his license.

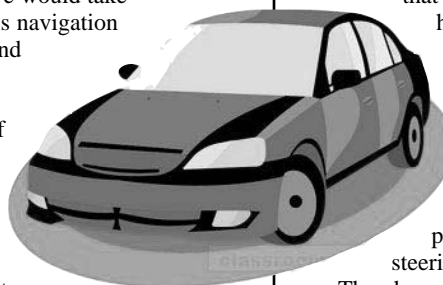
This story, written to illustrate the challenges and supports needed by some people with dyslexia as they learn to drive, is an optimistic one. Most learning disabled young adults struggle through many driver education efforts. Driver educators have not been exposed to current information on learning disabilities.

Tom and people like Tom can become safe and responsible drivers. Tom commutes to and from his job and drives his wife and small children on outings. In many ways, he still has to be careful, particularly in urban driving environments. He tries to get his wife or other passenger to navigate. He only drives when completely alert. If he is exhausted or upset, he finds another form of transportation. He sticks to the speed limit, unless he is obviously blocking traffic.

Many drivers with dyslexia over compensate and become better drivers than non-dyslexics.

About the Author

Dale S. Brown is the Senior Manager of LD OnLine. This article was adapted slightly from an article that first appeared in "Perspectives" a publication of the International Dyslexia Association.



**Kids don't care that you know the facts
but they know the fact that you care.**

Schools in Which All Kinds of Minds Can Grow

By: Mel Levine (2006)

As we discover more about how students learn and how different minds learn differently, our schools have a golden opportunity to increase the percentage of their students who experience true academic success.

Armed with these new insights into brain function, educators can help all children and adolescents develop their unique strengths while overcoming the negative effects of their weaknesses. In doing so, they will have created schools for all kinds of minds. Let us consider some prominent features of such optimal educational environments:

- Teachers would be well trained in how learning works and would be knowledgeable about the specific brain functions that are critical for the age group and/or subject matter they teach.
- Teachers would have learned about the revealing signs of specific differences in learning, how to identify these in the classroom and how to manage students with learning problems more effectively.
- Teachers would be trained to "diagnose" students' strengths and special affinities (areas of strong interest), so as to make sure that these positive qualities are being recognized, celebrated, and enhanced.
- Students would be learning about learning while they are learning; they would study the different brain processes and acquire the terminology needed to think about and understand their own minds.
- All students would be expected to select a topic and study it as an independent study activity (with a



mentor) for at least 3 years; in this way they would experience "expertise" and gain from its positive effects on mind and skill development.

- Students could be evaluated in more than one way; they could choose from various forms of testing or other assessment modes to demonstrate what they have learned or accomplished.
 - Classrooms would offer an atmosphere in which it is safe to make mistakes and take some risks in one's thinking and expression; public

humiliation of students would not take place.

- Parents and schools would be close partners in educating students; their specific educational roles would be well defined.
- Every classroom would target the strengthening of some specific brain functions (such as attention controls, higher thinking abilities, or problem solving skills).
- Peer pressure would be reduced, and students would be taught about social cognition.
- Verbal and physical abuse of students by other students would be considered a significant offense.
- All students would be held accountable for being productive, for having a high level of academic output, although not every student would be expected to produce the same "products."
- Struggling children would not be burdened with diagnostic labels but instead their profiles of strengths and weaknesses in relevant neurodevelopmental

functions and academic learning would be determined and managed effectively in school.

- There would be a stress on inclusion of students with learning problems in regular education settings, but some pullout services would still be required for a small number of children.
- Schools would be flexible in their curricular requirements, offering accommodations as needed.
- Students who benefit from accommodations could be expected to compensate by performing additional work in an area of their strength or affinity.
- While there would be a concerted stress on raising academic standards for all students, such standards would not be met or demonstrated in exactly the same manner by all students in the school.

The features delineated above are attainable. Some schools are already moving swiftly in these directions. Implementation requires strong support from parents, building principals, and school boards. In some communities a public school might seek the needed waivers from certain existing regulations in order to establish a demonstration model of a school for all kinds of minds. In some instances, a charter school might be based on this model.

We are talking about a strongly humanitarian movement in education. We would be acknowledging that our society desperately needs diverse kinds of minds among its adult population. We want no child to feel hopeless because of the way his brain is wired. We are hoping that every single student can see abundantly rewarding possibilities for her kind of mind while becoming an educated person.

Levine, M. Schools in Which All Kinds of Minds Can Grow in All Kinds of Good Ways. All Kinds of Minds Newsletter, May 2006.

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LDA of Nebraska is a non-profit nationally affiliated volunteer organization of parents and professionals dedicated to helping children and adults with learning disabilities. LDA does not endorse or recommend any institution, school, treatment or person. We provide support, information and advocacy for our members.

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A Child's View of ADHD

What does it feel like to have attention deficit disorder?

The answer to that question can be found in a fascinating new report from the Journal of Pediatric Nursing called "I Have Always Felt Different." The article gives a glimpse into the experience of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, or A.D.H.D., from a child's perspective.

Assistant professors Robin Bartlett and Mona M. Shattell, from the School of Nursing at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, interviewed 16 college students who had been diagnosed with A.D.H.D. as children. The investigators talked to them about how the disorder affected life at home, school and friendships.

Like most kids, the students described a life of both conflict with and support from their parents. But in their case, fighting with parents was often triggered by attention-related problems like failing to complete laundry chores or cleaning their rooms.

Doing things for my parents and being aware of what needs to be done around the house, that's the only time it really gets to me or hurts me.

Despite the conflict, many students viewed their parents as supportive. One student noted that support from parents often felt like "nagging," but they had little choice.

They had to play 20 questions. I wasn't trying to withhold information; it just took 20 questions to get the full description. You couldn't ask, "What do you have for homework?" It was like, "Do you have any homework?" "Yes." "What is it?" "Math." "What's it on?" "This stuff." "Do you have English



homework?" "Yes." They had to go through a much larger spectrum of questions just to get the answer to, "Do you have any homework?"

Students also noted that their mothers often made flash cards, helped them organize and prioritize, gave them books on tape, proofread papers and developed numerous other strategies to help them in school.

Children with A.D.H.D. felt different from their classmates. One student told the story of being called over the public address system to report to the "special ed" office. Teachers who spent extra time to help them soothed their feelings of isolation, they said.

The students said they ended up "missing a lot of stuff" at school because of trouble listening, paying attention and completing homework. However, the students also described developing coping strategies like taking a test on a computer rather than on paper or recording lectures they could later listen to on their iPods.

The students' recollections about friendships in childhood show that while their struggles with schoolwork were obvious, their attention problems also affected their ability to make friends.

People looked at me differently, like, oh, she has a disability, oh she's stupid, she's retarded. I mean...I just don't get things as easily as others. And I don't think they understood that." Not only do I have a tendency to interrupt...but the main problem I have is, you need to think before you say something that can offend other people, or when you ask too many

questions...they'll say it makes them feel uncomfortable.

Students noted that even their friends would sometimes mock their disability. *I have friends who say, "Oh, it's my A.D.D. and I don't want to do my work. It's my A.D.D. kicking in."...and they'll say it in front of me when they know I have it...and I'll have it the rest of my life.*

But friends could also help them cope, the students noted.

Get a friend who understands, who can call out your name, or tap you or something to get you to focus when you're zoned out.

While the report gives insights into the sadness and frustration felt by kids with attention deficits, Dr. Bartlett said she chose the students because they had "achieved some measure of success by virtue of now being college students." She said she hopes the research can be used to help identify strategies and coping skills students found helpful "as they were growing up and struggling with A.D.H.D. symptoms."

One student gave a particularly moving description of how her mother helped her adjust to life with the disorder.

I remember just breaking down....And she was like, "Kerri, I did not know any of this. I'm so sorry." And she just held me and I just cried and cried. And she said "You are not different. You are beautiful and sweet." ...It didn't take away the problem, but it affirmed to me that she cared. No matter how much I went to school and felt like...nobody liked me...when I went home, I knew it wasn't fake. And it was a good place. There I was loved; I fit in and I was fine.

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Communication makes families stronger Inspiring a lifelong love of reading

Maintaining a loving and supportive family environment is the best way parents can prevent violence and ensure the well-being and safety of their children. More than anything, children need to feel loved and appreciated through frequent displays of affection. Daily expressions of love create a trusting and caring parent-child relationship, strengthen children's self-esteem, and expand their ability to love and respect others. As a result, children and youth are less likely to be influenced by peer pressure or engage in negative behavior.

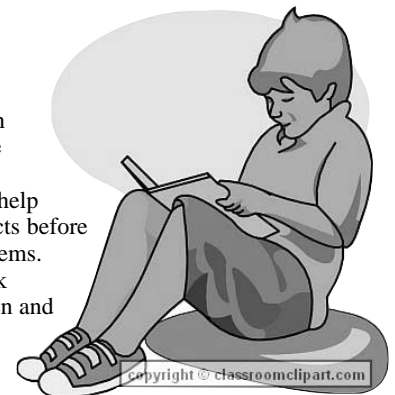
Communication is an important key to creating a loving family environment. When parents and children can express their feelings and concerns openly and honestly with each other, their respect for each other grows and the family bond is strengthened. Sometimes children need help in sorting out their strong feelings. Parents can gently encourage their children to express emotions by saying, "It looks like something is bothering you. Do you want to talk?"

Listening is perhaps the most important part of family communication. Research shows that parents have a greater impact on

their children by how they listen than by what they say. Attentive listening helps children feel understood and valued and can help identify and short-circuit conflicts before they erupt into full-blown problems.

Parents' actions always speak louder than their words. Children and youth are constantly learning from their parents how to relate to others and deal with anger, frustration, and disappointment.

When children observe parents expressing anger with verbal aggression or physical attacks, children are more likely to imitate this negative behavior. But when parents model positive and nonviolent behavior and are consistent in what they say and do, children are less likely to behave in aggressive or violent ways.



What if your child IS the bully?

By: Marcia Kelly

The word "bullying" often conjures up an image of a schoolyard scene, with a big, intimidating student towering over a small, cowering child. That's just one face of bullying-and of children who bully.

Another face of a bully might be...that of your child. Surprised? Many parents are. Often they have no idea that their child is harassing other children. Yet knowing the facts-and acting to change the situation-is vitally important in making the future safer for your child and all children.

Here's why. Children who bully suffer as much as those they target. They are significantly more likely than others to lead lives marked by school failure, depression, violence, crime, and other problems, according to experts. The message is clear: Bullying is too important to ignore.

Could your child be bullying others? Would you know? Once you found out, would you know what to do? Here is some

information that can help:

What is bullying?

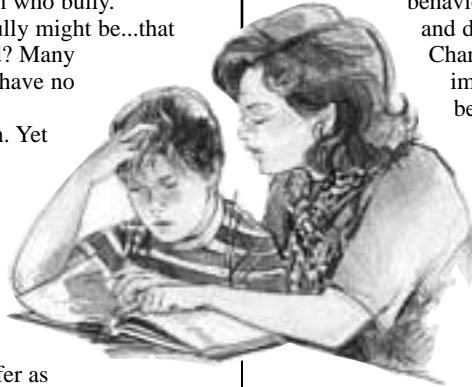
Bullying is different from the routine conflicts of childhood. It is intentional behavior that is meant to hurt and dominate another person. Characterized by an imbalance of power between the child who bullies and the target, bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional (social), or sexual. It includes harassment via e-mail and instant messaging.

Who does it?

Children who bully come in a variety of packages-the waif-like second grader, the big sixth-grade boy, the child with a disability, the popular girl, the loner. They can come from any background, race, income level, family situation, gender, or religion. Research has shown that despite their differences children who bully typically have one or more of the following traits. They may:

- be quick to blame others and unwilling to accept responsibility for their actions
- lack empathy, compassion, and understanding for others' feelings
- be bullied themselves
- have immature social and interpersonal skills
- want to be in control
- be frustrated and anxious
- come from families where parents or siblings bully
- find themselves trying to fit in with a peer group that encourages bullying.
- have parents who are unable to set limits, are inconsistent with discipline, do not provide supervision, or do not take an interest in their child's life.

If you see these traits in your child or hear from others that your child is bullying, you may want to look in to the issue. If your child is bullying, take heart. There's a lot you can do to help correct the problem. Remember, bullying is a learned behavior--and it can be "unlearned". By talking with your child and seeking help, you can teach your child more appropriate ways of handling feelings, peer pressure and conflicts.



Help your child to stop bullying

Talk with your child. Find out why he or she is bullying others. You might explore how your child is feeling about himself or herself, ask if he or she is being bullied by someone else, and invite discussion about bullying. Find out if your child's friends are also bullying. Ask how you can help.

Confirm that your child's behavior is bullying and not the result of a disability. Sometimes, children with disabilities bully other children. Other times, children with certain behavioral disorders or limited social skills may act in ways that are mistaken for bullying. Whether the behavior is intentional bullying or is due to a disability, it still needs to be addressed. If your child with a disability is bullying, you may want to include bullying prevention goals in his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Teach empathy, respect, and compassion. Children who bully often lack awareness of how others feel. Try to understand your child's feelings, and help your child appreciate how others feel when they are bullied. Let your child know that everyone has feelings and that feelings matter.

Make your expectations clear. Let your child know that bullying is not okay under any circumstances and that you will not tolerate it. Take immediate action if you learn that he or she is involved in a bullying incident.

Provide clear, consistent consequences for

bullying. Be specific about what will happen if the bullying continues. Try to find meaningful consequences, such as loss of privileges or a face-to-face meeting with the child being bullied.

Teach by example. Model nonviolent behavior and encourage cooperative, noncompetitive play. Help your child learn different ways to resolve conflict and deal with feelings such as anger, insecurity, or frustration. Teach and reward appropriate behavior.

Role play. Help your child practice different ways of handling situations. You can take turns playing the part of the child who does the bullying and the one who is bullied. Doing so will help your child understand what it's like to be in the other person's shoes.

Provide positive feedback. When your child handles conflict well, shows compassion for others, or finds a positive way to deal with feelings, provide praise and recognition. Positive reinforcement goes a long way toward improving behavior. It is more effective than punishment.

Be realistic. It takes time to change behavior. Be patient as your child learns new ways of handling feelings and conflict. Keep your love and support visible.

Seek help. Your child's doctor, teacher, school principal, school social worker, or a psychologist can help you and your child learn how to understand and deal with

bullying behavior. Ask if your school offers a bullying prevention program. Bullying hurts everyone. Parents can play a significant role in stopping the behavior, and the rewards will be immeasurable for all children.

reprinted from Pacesetter, Fall 2005

Tips for Strengthening Communication

Show your children you love them by hugging them or saying "I love you" often.

Give your children responsibilities that are appropriate for their age or abilities.

Help your children set realistic goals. Encourage them to do the best they can.

Accept your children's feelings.

Teach your children that anger is a normal and acceptable feeling. Encourage them to express anger using safe, effective and appropriate ways.

Be an active listener by encouraging your children to express their feelings and thoughts, asking respectful questions to better understand their experience, and offering feedback and guidance rather than advice. Give your children nonverbal support and encouragement such as a hug, a pat on the shoulder, nodding your head, or making eye contact.

Help your children learn from their mistakes by asking questions such as "What can you learn from that?" or "What can you do differently next time?"

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LDA-NEBRASKA Membership Application

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and have to be remailed.

"If your address label has a red circle on it, it's time to renew your membership!"

Membership Memo

**CHECK OUT
Our New Website**
<http://www.ldanebraska.org>

*It is still under
construction
but you can check for
Events, Library List, etc.*

Bullying in Nebraska Schools

(Continued from Page 1)

recommended programs (Counseling Today, 2004) such as: Second Step Violence Prevention Program: Steps to Respect; Bully-Proofing Your School; and, Ribbon of Promise Program.

Data supports that bullying is an issue in Nebraska schools and the resources are available to re mediate the issue. The challenge before school administrators is to create opportunities to use the abilities and resources of school counselors to lead the teachers and other school personnel in addressing the problem systematically.

The school counselor and faculty have the shared responsibility of enhancing the educational, emotional and behavioral needs of every student. The school counselor can be used, and has the responsibility of assisting the development of curricular and environmental conditions that impact the educational process for each student (ASCA, 2003).

*Reprinted from NCSA Today
December 2004/January 2005*

SAVE THE DATE!!!

The LDA Nebraska annual state conference is scheduled for

October 18, 2008 at ESU #3 in Omaha.
The keynote speaker will be **Chris Dendy**.

Chris Dendy is an author, former educator, school psychologist and children's mental health professional with over 40 years experience. She is also the mother of two grown sons and a daughter who have ADHD. Her highly acclaimed books include: "Teenagers with ADD and ADHD," 2nd edition (100,000+), "Teaching Teens with ADD and ADHD," and "A Bird's-Eye View of Life with ADD and ADHD," a teen survival guide she co-authored with her son Alex.

Mark your calendar!

BULLETIN BOARD

Omaha LDA update:

Omaha LDA, your learning disabilities support group for the Omaha metro area, will host a Transition Forum on April 15, 2008, at the First Christian Church, 6630 Dodge St, from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Representatives from Omaha Public Schools, The Nebraska Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and Metropolitan Community College will present information on preparing your child/student for life after high school. Please join us for this informative meeting! (there will be no meeting in May 2008) For more information email us at ldaomaha@yahoo.com or check our webpage <http://geocities.com/ldaomaha.countryside.html>

Do you have a child or student challenged by money management?

Get a free computer based instruction CD from the FDIC. Go to www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/order.html for further information.

Brenda Elson nominated for volunteer of the year

Stephanie Cain, President of LDA of Nebraska nominated Brenda Elson for LDA volunteer of the year. She wrote:

Brenda Elson is an amazing volunteer for LDA of Nebraska. Brenda works in numerous activities that support individuals with learning disabilities. Brenda serves on the Executive Board of LDA Nebraska; she is a very important contributor at every meeting. Brenda has served in every volunteer capacity needed. Brenda has been a member of LDA for over eleven years. Brenda spends her time and money to tutor many students suffering from a reading learning disability. Brenda has purchased numerous kits, materials, and attended many classes to learn how to help people with reading issues and she does all of this at her own cost. She is a wonderful person. LDA Nebraska salutes Brenda Elson as an OUTSTANDING volunteer.

Learning Opportunities at PTI Nebraska

Did you know PTI Nebraska offers free workshops for families and professionals who work with children and young adults who have unique learning needs? For a information about upcoming workshops check their website, www.pti-nebraska.org, or call 346-0525 in Omaha, (800) 284-8520 outside Omaha.



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