

IV. Intervention Strategies/Model Programs

C. Programs to Combat Bullying

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101 SW Main, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204

Telephone: 1-800-547-6339 ext. 477 | Fax: (503) 275-0444

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Bullying occurs throughout the school, though teachers and parents are generally unaware of its extent. Making the situation worse, adults often believe that bullying is "part of growing up" and that they should not intervene. In one study, 71 percent of students reported that adults in the classroom ignored bullying. When asked, students uniformly said that they wanted teachers to intervene to stop bullying and teasing. Faced with adult indifference, children are either reluctant to get involved or do not know how to obtain help. Adults in schools must intervene to stop bullies.

Bullying must be fought throughout the school community, using a "whole-school" approach. Effective interventions focus on more than the perpetrators and victims. Schoolwide bullying policies need to include curricular measures such as teaching conflict resolution and assertiveness training, peer and professional counseling, and improvement of the physical school environment, allowing easier adult supervision...

A number of principles can be worked into the regular curriculum:

- Discuss how kids are different and how they are the same
- Examine the meaning of courage and lead students beyond the "superhero" image of bravery
- Promote friendship between students who are different from each other
- Promote friendship between boys and girls
- Talk about teasing and bullying throughout the year, not just following an incident

Listen to Your Child About Bullying

If your children are being bullied, it is vital to listen to what they tell you. Parents should make it clear that bullying is not the victim's fault, and that children do not have to face bullying on their own. Ask how they have been dealing with bullies, and talk about other ways to deal with them...