

# Who's the Bully... Not My Child!

Studies on bullying have been done around the world. Norway, Sweden, France, Ireland, Japan, Denmark, United States, Canada, England and Germany have all conducted research into the problems of bullying and its effects on education and on society in general. There are conclusions that we can make from this research. Bullying will only be stopped by the intervention of adults in authority positions, such as educators and parents. Victims of bullying must have a support system that makes them feel safe and comfortable in

order to report intimidation to those authority figures. This means that any program that is put into effect must have a very strong background that is based on cooperation between various organizations so that the bully cannot play one system against the other. Bullies cannot be allowed to continue bullying. They need immediate consequences so that they know that their school has no tolerance for bullying behavior. Consequences should be non-hostile and non-physical. If we can stop bullying behavior at

an early age, perhaps, our youth can make wiser choices later in life and stay out of the judicial system. "Approximately 60% of boys who were characterized as bullies in grades sixth through ninth had at least one conviction by the age of 24. Even more dramatically, as much as 35% to 40% of former bullies had three or more convictions at this age," (Olweus, 1991). Given this data, we feel compelled to make every effort to interrupt this behavior pattern in children. We are encouraged. Research shows that adult interventions work.

## Shattering the Myths of Bullying

- Bullying behavior can't be changed... use a positive approach to change behavior by awarding good behavior in students.
- Bullies have low self-esteem... research shows many bullies have high self-esteem.
- Bullies are only from poor backgrounds... bullies can be from any background.
- Bullies are all large males... 1 out of 5 students admits to being a bully or doing some "bullying."
- Bullies are usually poor students... bullies are not always poor students and they do not always pick on the "good" students.
- Most bullying happens on the way to and from school... 43% of fear harassment occurs in the bathroom at school.
- If you stand up to stop bullies they will quit bothering you... Sometimes standing up to the bully or doing to the bully what the bully has done to you is not a wise strategy because it provokes the bully.
- If you stop the behavior at school, it will still go on outside of school... Stopping the behavior at school will deter the behavior elsewhere.
- If you tell an adult, it will only make the situation worse... bullying can best be stopped by the intervention of adults in authority.

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