What is NOT Bullying?

Not bullying

This incidents on this list are NOT considered bullying:

1. Not liking someone – It is very natural that people do not like everyone around them and, as unpleasant as it may be to know someone does not like you, verbal and non-verbal messages of "I don't like you" are not acts of bullying.

2. Being excluded – Again, it is very natural for people to gather around a group of friends and we cannot be friends with everyone, so it is acceptable that when kids have a party or play a game at the playground, they will include their friends and exclude others. It is very important to remind kids they do the same thing sometimes too and, although exclusion is unpleasant, it is not an act of bullying.
3. Accidentally bumping into someone – When people bump into others, the reaction depends mostly on the bumped person's mood. If they have had a bad day, they think it was an act of aggressive behavior, but if they are in the good mood, they smile back and attract an apology. This is also relevant for playing sport, like when kids throwing the ball at each other hit someone on the head. It is very important for teachers and parents to explain that some accidents happen without any bad intention and it is important not to create a big conflict, because it was NOT an act of bullying.
4. Making other kids play things a certain way – Again, this is very natural behavior. Wanting things to be done our way is normal and is not an act of bullying. To make sure kids do not fall into considering it as an aggressive or "bossy" behavior, we need to teach them assertiveness. If your kids come home and complain that Jane is very bossy and she always wants things to be done her way, you can show them that they want it too and that Jane is miserable, because she is not flexible enough and she will suffer in life for insisting that things be done her way. Again, although it is not fun or pleasant, this is NOT bullying.
5. A single act of telling a joke about someone – Making fun of other people is not fun for them, but the difference between having a sense of humor and making fun of someone is very fine. It is important to teach kids (and grownups) that things they say as jokes should also be amusing for the others. If not, they should stop. Unless it happens over and over again and done deliberately to hurt someone, telling jokes about people is NOT bullying.

6. Arguments – Arguments are just heated disagreements between two (or more) people (or groups). It is natural that people have different interests and disagree on many things. Think about it, most of us have disagreements with ourselves, so it is very understandable to have disagreements with others. The argument itself is NOT a form of bullying, although some people turn arguments into bullying, because they want to win the argument so much. They use every means to get what they want and find a weakness in the other person, abuse knowledge or trust they have gained and use it against the other person. It is very important to distinguish between natural disagreements and bullying during an argument.

7. Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others – Again, communication requires at least two players. Although it may be unpleasant to hear what someone thinks about you, it is NOT a form of bullying but a very natural thing. In every communication, there are disagreements and some form of judgment about each other's attitude and behavior. If someone says to you, "I think this was not a nice gesture" or "You insulted me when you said this", this is NOT bullying but an expression of thoughts and feelings.

8. Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation or meanness – The definition of bullying states that there is repetition in the behavior. Bullying is a conscious, repeated, hostile, aggressive behavior of an individual or a group abusing their position with the intention to harm others or gain real or perceived power. Therefore, anything that happens once is NOT an act of bullying. As a parent, it is important that you pay attention to what your kids are telling you and find out if things are happening more than once. Yet, because they happen more than once, there has to be other factors such as Repeated harm, intention, purpose act, and one or the other wants to gain power.

All the behaviors above are unpleasant and need to be addressed, but they are not to be treated as bullying. Many times, labeling a single act of aggression can turn it into bullying just by perceiving it that way.

Now, let's consider the ages and stages of children's development, children are learning a lot of new things, but they will not always grow and develop at the same rate as other children. They may be faster or slower than other children his age and social development aligns to this development.

According to the developmental areas, here are these developmental stages:

Typical Child Development: 5 to 8 Years

This time in a child's life is usually referred to as the "middle childhood." It brings a lot of its own change and developing independence. At this age, your child can dress himself, likes to have his own friends, and social skills are important to him. Physical changes happen quickly, and he's ready to explore on his own more. This is a critical time for your child to gain confidence with his friends, at school, in sports and play, and at life in general. Your child should feel confident in her ability to meet the challenges in her life. This sense of personal power evolves from having successful life experiences in solving problems independently, being creative and getting results for her efforts. **These qualities are developeed within family dynamic and interaction with siblings and parents.**

At 5 to 8 Years, I. . .

1. Am curious about people and how the world works. I start putting together pieces of knowledge and begin to understand concepts.
2. Am interested in numbers, letters, reading, and writing. This is a great time to get me to read on my own.
3. Have more confidence in my physical skills.
4. Use my words to express my feelings and to cope. I might cry on occasion, but that's not my response to every problem like it was when I was two.
5. Like grown-up activities. I still play, but I also play at being a grown-up.
6. Like to meet and play with more kids and I play more cooperatively now.

Any other questions, feel free to contact Mr. Watkins or Mr. Meza.