

1. Introduction - Play Video (4 mins)

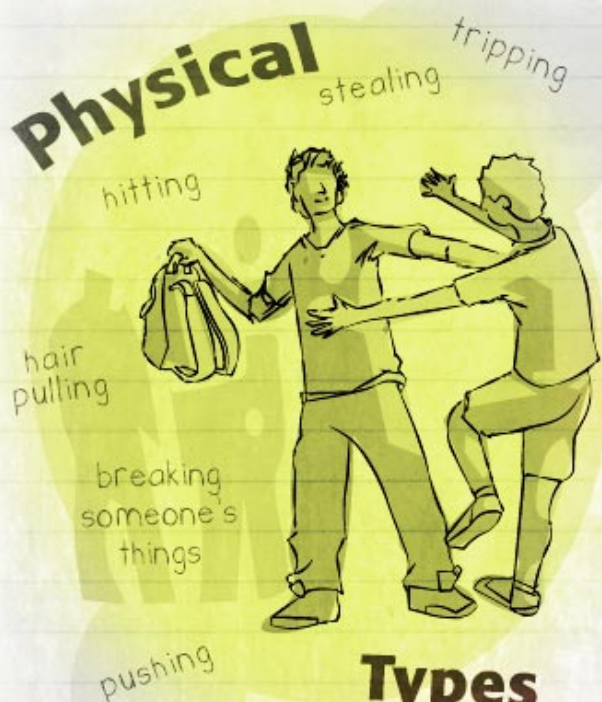
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xleR-JUVbDA>

- What happened?
- How does this relate to bullying?
- What can we do as a community to prevent this?

2. Understanding Bullying

- What bully is/is not.
 - Bullying is repeated, meant to gain power, and happens even when told to stop.
 - Bullying is NOT arguing with friends.
- 4 Types of bullying (Show visual)
 - Ask for examples
- Understanding difference
 - No one deserves to be bullied
 - Different than you doesn't equal bad
- What can we do if we witness bullying?
 - Tell a grownup

Physical



Social



Types of Bullying

Verbal



mean texts

on the internet

Cyber



What is bullying?

By its definition, bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. While that sounds pretty straight forward, bullying can take many different forms:

There is verbal bullying, which can include:

- name-calling
- taunting
- threatening to cause harm
- spreading rumors about someone
- embarrassing someone in public

There is physical bullying, which can include (plus more)

- hitting/kicking/pinching
- spitting
- tripping/pushing
- taking or breaking someone's things

And of course, there is the newest form of bullying — cyberbullying. A lot of information is still emerging around cyberbullying, so it's a little more difficult to give it a clear cut definition, and further, to actually talk about way to prevent it, but we can at least say that cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology, like phones, computers and tablets, social media sites. That means it can take the form of text messages, a chat, comments on Facebook or Twitter, or even blog posts. Even more troubling, kids who are cyberbullied are often bullied in person as well, and they have a harder time getting away from the behavior. See why things get complicated?

1.) No one deserves to be bullied

It's easy for not only our kids, but for us to get in the mindset that the obnoxious people in this world — and of course everyone has a different definition of what obnoxious means to them — deserve to be ridiculed. This can be an opportunity to set a good example by thinking carefully about how you talk around your kids and how you handle conflicts, problems, and generally obnoxious people, and it can also be an educational opportunity as well. For example, while your child may believe the kid who constantly blurts out answers in class deserves to be ridiculed, remind them that passion for learning is not a bad thing. You can even take it one step further by encouraging your child to invite their overzealous classmate to share notes, study, or work together on a project as an alternative to snickering.

2.) Different doesn't equate to bad

For this one, I always think back to the first time my then 6-year-old niece met someone with a facial piercing. The lip ring was of course the first thing my inquisitive niece noticed, and she was not shy about pointing it out and asking about it. Now, things like piercings are a personal choice, but think about the students who encounter other children who, not by choice, are just somehow *different* than their classmates. More often than not, when students encounter other kids who dress different, talk different, look different, or are even from somewhere else, they shy away from these students and form cliques with students who are more familiar. It can be intimidating for kids to reach out to someone who speaks in a different dialect, wears a unique hair style, or comes from a different background, so you should explain to your child that each individual has something important to contribute to the group and that it is never acceptable to laugh at, mock, or exclude anyone.

3.) It's cool to be kind

Whether to avoid losing social status or to gain it in the first place, students often feel peer pressure to bully others, so teach your child that they should never cause others pain just as a means to fit in. Instead, popularity should be viewed a position to touch lives around school in a big way. Imagine if the high school quarterback decided to go have lunch with the kid who always sits alone. Might not seem like a big deal for the quarterback, but it would be a huge deal for his classmate. Even if your child isn't a quarterback, or student body president, or any of that fancy stuff, they can still make a difference just by making a daily effort to be kind to all students. It might even catch on.

Here is where we are going to switch gears a bit. Those first 3 are meant to be lessons for not only you, but also your child. These next 2 are geared towards parents specifically.

5.) Take bullying seriously — but understand it first

It's really easy to brand the kids who are bullies as inherently "bad kids," but the truth is that more often than not these kids have more problems than the ones who are being bullied, and that can mean anything from abuse and neglect at home, or even that they themselves are being bullied by an adult in their life. For these children, bullying is almost like a cry for help, so branding them as "bad kids" completely overlooks any underlying problems they have. With that in mind, take bullying seriously. Make sure your kids understand that you will not tolerate bullying at home or anywhere else, establish rules around bullying and stick to them, and on the flip-side, make sure other parents and school staff know that you will not tolerate bullying from their children either. Remember that bullying is a complex problem, and it really doesn't have a one-size fits all solution.