



BETTY DEBNAM – Founding Editor and Editor at Large

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A Problem for Many Kids

Put the Brakes on Bullying



School days are here, along with all the excitement of a new classroom. But for some kids, getting back to school means something different. For those who are picked on by bullies, school days can be scary, sad and lonely.

Bullying is a big concern for most school districts.

Many schools have strict rules about how kids are allowed to treat each other.

The Mini Page spoke with experts on bullying to find out more. We wanted to learn how kids, parents and teachers can work together to face this problem.



What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone repeatedly tries to hurt another person (the **target**) in order to feel more powerful. Bullies feel good when they harm someone who they think is weaker.

Bullying can be **physical**, **verbal** or **relational** (re-LAY-shun-al).

- Physical bullying is hurting another person's body — hitting, kicking, shoving or pinching.



- Verbal bullying is making fun of the target, calling her names or threatening her.

- Relational bullying affects relationships with other people. It includes gossiping, rolling your eyes, and leaving others out of groups or activities.



Teasing

Some kids have a hard time telling the difference between bullying and teasing. When someone teases another person, it may be just to have fun. But when teasing makes the target feel bad, and the teaser keeps doing it to hurt the target more, teasing becomes bullying.

A chance to learn

Experts say that bullying happens a lot and can start very young — as young as 3 years old! The good news is that kids who learn to face bullies can get along with other people better all through their lives. The more that kids can handle bullying situations on their own, the better they'll feel about themselves. Then they'll be less likely to be targeted by bullies.

Who can help?

Kids are sometimes afraid to ask for help with a bully because they don't want to make things worse. But parents and teachers can help without letting the bully know that the target told anyone.

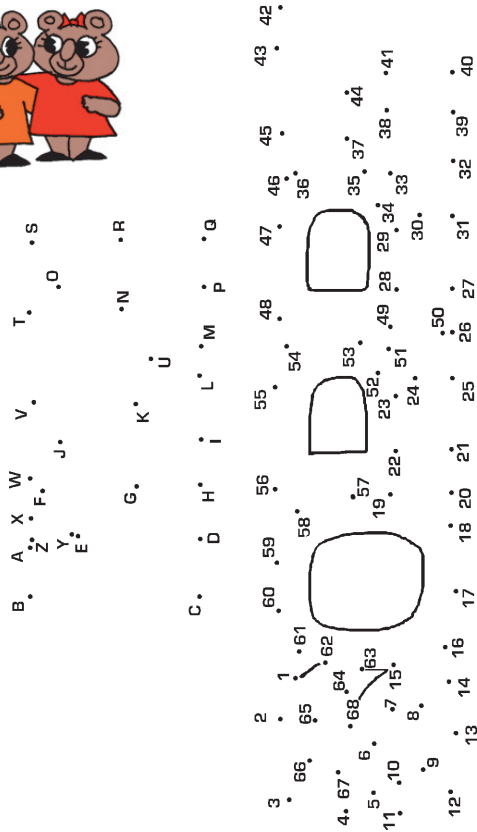
- Parents of a target can **role-play**, or act out, different scenes between the bully and the target. In this way, the target can learn new ways to avoid the bully or to react in a different way.



Experts say kids who role-play are more likely to remember and use these new strategies in real bullying situations.

- During school, teachers can keep a closer eye on kids during recess and lunchtime so that a bully has fewer chances to be mean.

Go dot to dot by letters and numbers and color.



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Buena Eggo Burrito

You'll need:

- Cooking spray
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 4 slices bacon, crumbled
- 2 (8-inch) tortillas
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons mild salsa



What to do:

1. Spray skillet with cooking spray. Scramble 2 eggs with cheese.
2. Cook bacon in microwave according to directions; crumble into small pieces. Spread 1 tablespoon cream cheese on each tortilla.
3. Microwave for 8 to 10 seconds to warm tortilla and cream cheese.
4. Divide eggs and crumbled bacon between the 2 tortillas.
5. Spoon 1 tablespoon of salsa on top of each tortilla. Roll each into a cylinder. Serves 2.

*You will need an adult's help with this recipe.

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Meet Ethan Bortnick



Ethan Bortnick, 7, is a professional pianist. He has just recorded some of Mozart's piano music for the Oct. 11 episode of the Disney Channel's "Little Einsteins."

Ethan taught himself to play the piano when he was only 3 years old. He learned by listening to the music on the "Baby Einsteins" DVDs. He began composing his own music when he was 5.

Ethan has appeared on several TV shows, including "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" and "Oprah." He is going to a private school in South Florida that has designed a special program for him. The school records all his classes and puts them on its Web site. That way, if he is on the road performing, he can still keep up with his schoolwork.

He has a younger brother. He loves to draw, play with animals and go to the zoo.

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Cyberbullying

High-tech trouble

Computers, cell phones and the Internet are tools that many kids use every day. But some kids have discovered that they can use e-mail, blogs, texting and instant messaging to hurt other people.



Words can hurt

Kids who might not bully someone in person may think it's easier to type mean words on a keyboard than say them face-to-face. But those words can stay on the Internet and get passed around for a long time. They can hurt the target over and over.



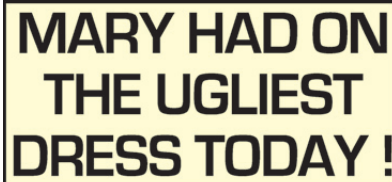
Experts say that kids who are bullied online should not write back. It's a good idea to print out and show the messages from the bully to your parents.

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Safe surfing

Experts tell us that following simple safety rules about using the Internet will also help you to avoid cyberbullies.

1. Never give out your full name or any other personal information online. This includes your address and town, school name, phone or cell phone number, and photos of yourself.
2. If you receive an instant message, text message or e-mail from someone you do not know, don't respond.
3. Choose passwords that are hard to guess. Use a combination of words and letters. Don't tell anyone except your parents your password.
4. Don't write anything in a chat room or on a social Web site (such as MySpace or Bebo) that you wouldn't mind seeing on a giant billboard in front of school the next day. Remember, anything you write can be copied and posted or forwarded to many other people.



Good computer manners

Remember that it's never OK to threaten or make fun of someone online. You should not post photos of anyone else or pretend to be someone else. Don't forward private e-mails or texts to a third person. Don't participate in online voting for who's the ugliest or fattest kid in the school.

All of these actions can be called cyberbullying.

The Mini Page thanks author and bullying consultant Joel Haber, Ph.D., and Dr. Joseph Wright, executive director of the Child Health Advocacy Institute at Children's National Medical Center, Washington, D.C., for help with this issue.

Goldie Goodsport's Report

Supersport: Amanda Blumenherst



Height: 5-9 Hometown: Scottsdale, Ariz.

Amanda Blumenherst is an amateur golfer who plays like a pro. That's the way she looked this summer, when the Duke University senior won the women's U.S. Amateur and tied for the lowest qualifying score.

Blumenherst's triumph wasn't a surprise. She started playing golf as a child and won 14 national junior titles before enrolling at Duke, where she's majoring in history and minoring in English and theater studies.

Speaking of theater, Blumenherst has produced an award-winning college golfing act. She has claimed three straight National Player of the Year honors, helped Duke capture two NCAA championships, and will be putting for more titles in 2008-2009.

Keep an eye on amazing Amanda. Chances are you'll see her playing as an official tour pro in 2009.

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Clues You Can Use to Get Along

Emotions and clues

To understand more about bullying, we have to learn about **emotions**, or feelings.

Look at the faces below and fill in the blanks with the emotion you think the kid is feeling. You might use words such as **happy**, **calm**, **frustrated**, **sad** or **scared**.



What were your clues about how the kid in each picture was feeling? You might have noticed:

- someone rolling her eyes.
- someone with his arms crossed.
- someone smiling or laughing.
- someone frowning.

Facial expression, or the look on a kid's face, is a clue to other people about how that person is feeling.

Along with expressions, people use their bodies to tell us how they're feeling. We call that **body language**.

People who are feeling sad or lonely might have rounded shoulders, or they might look at the floor most of the time.



If you are playing soccer with other kids and you accidentally knock another player down, empathy is what allows you to stop, say you're sorry and help the person.

Empathy

Empathy is a skill that we learn as we grow up. It means that we can imagine how another person is feeling and then change how we behave in response.

Empathy helps us understand clues from one another about how we are affecting other people.

Some people don't develop empathy as soon as others. They may feel good when they've hurt someone because it makes them feel powerful. These types of people can become bullies.

Learning how to react

Experts say that some targets don't understand why they're being bullied. Some may get very upset. Others may stand there and take the bullying or pretend not to hear.

Instead, the target should try to seem confident and not show any emotion. The bully should get the message that his actions don't have any effect. The target should stand up straight and speak calmly. She might smile and say:

- "You could be right."
- "Think what you want."
- "Thanks!"

Are you a bully?

Most people act like a bully at one time or another, but they don't like the feeling it gives them, so they stop.

Some kids think that bullying helps them be more popular with other kids and adults. In fact, many bullies are smart and have many friends.

But experts say that if they continue bullying, they may get in trouble when they're older.

Bullies are more likely to:

- steal
- skip or drop out of school
- smoke
- use illegal drugs

Take steps to stop

If you have been bullying other kids, ask your family or a teacher to help you stop. You can also:

1. Practice empathy. Try to imagine how the target feels.
2. Do something positive to show the target you're sorry. You might write a letter or stand up for him when others are being mean.
3. Learn about positive, less hurtful ways to make and keep friends.



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MIGHTY FUNNY'S Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

- Barra:** Why did the band leader bring the bull into the marching band?
- Beth:** He wanted to take the bull by the horns!
- Bill:** What should you do if a bull charges you?
- Ben:** Pay him cash, fast!
- Bob:** What did the bull have to get when he broke his leg?
- Betty:** An ox-ray!



BULLYING

TRY 'N FIND

Words that remind us of preventing bullying are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: BULLY, RULES, POWER, TARGET, PHYSICAL, TEASE, VERBAL, RELATIONAL, ROLE-PLAY, TEACHERS, COMPUTER, BLOG, E-MAIL, TEXT, SAFE, THREATEN, EMOTION, EXPRESSION, EMPATHY, SORRY.



Mini Spy ...

Mini Spy and her friends talk over their differences and find solutions without fighting. See if you can find:

- man in the moon
- letter D
- fish • acorn
- feather • ruler
- sailboat
- ring • olive
- umbrella
- number 3
- question mark
- bread loaf
- letter A
- mushroom
- number 8