



Connect with Kids

Baby Bullies

Group Leader Guide & Meeting Resources

from

Connect with Kids

Elementary Parent Series 1

Leader Discussion Tips

This is your guide to facilitating a one-hour parent meeting to view and discuss *Baby Bullies*. You can choose to extend the meeting to allow for fellowship time before or after the video and discussion.

Program Overview

Bullying has become such a serious problem that experts are now calling it an *epidemic*. According to new research, bullying can begin as early as preschool. Based on instances of aggression and victimization of 266 elementary school students from kindergarten to the end of first grade, researchers from Wichita State University found that children were on average the targets of bullying about once every three to six minutes.

In the video, *Baby Bullies*, parents will hear from experts about how to correct bullying behavior when it occurs and how to talk to their child about stopping bullying behavior. The program also features stories from real children who were victims of bullying, and describes programs available to help children overcome the challenges of bullying.

By watching, learning and talking together, parents will have a greater understanding of how to overcoming bullying.

Materials Included

1. Group Leader Guidelines for the *Elementary Parent Series*
2. *Baby Bullies* video
3. Parent Handouts
4. Children's Handouts

Preparation

1. Review the Group Leader Guidelines.
2. Preview *Baby Bullies* and take note of things you think are important to highlight during the Parent Group session.
3. Read the participant handouts and complete them as if you were a group member.
4. Read through and/or have your children complete the children's handouts and activities.

Before the Group Begins

1. Make the room inviting by arranging chairs in a circle.
2. Be sure you have a working TV/VCR.
3. Have plenty of copies of the parent handouts available.
4. If you have a childcare provider, be sure there are plenty of copies of the children's handouts to use in the childcare session.
5. Have a host or registration table where group members can pick up nametags and materials.

Suggested Group Outline

1. Welcome the group and start with an icebreaker to encourage group participation. (5 Minutes)
 - Recommended icebreaker: Ask the group for their definition of bullying and/or what it means to them. According to the U.S. Department of Education, bullying is the act of threatening to hurt or frighten someone and may be physical, psychological or relational.
 - Optional icebreaker: Ask the group to share how they have experienced bullying, either their own experience or their child's.
2. Watch the video *Baby Bullies* together. (25 minutes)
 - Be sure everyone has a copy of *While you Watch* Handout #1 and a pen or pencil.
3. Group Discussion (15 Minutes)
 - a. Give parents a few minutes to complete the *While You Watch* handout and then begin discussion by asking a leading question such as:
 - *At what age can bullying begin?*
 - *What are the three ways bullying can affect victims?*
 - b. Refer to the story about 7-year old Norma Gowans:
 - *When did Norma begin bullying others? What are some of the ways she bullied others?*
 - *Why do you think Norma bullied others?*
 - c. Begin a discussion about how all of us can become "agents of civil behavior:"
 - *What are some of the successful programs available to help victims of bullying?*
 - *Of the strategies you heard, what are the ones you can implement?*
4. Bringing It Home (15 minutes)
(*Refer to Handouts #2 and #3)
 - a. Ask the following questions:
 - *Did you see yourself in any of the true stories – either as a parent or in the way your child is bullied or bullies others?*
 - *What did you learn from the video?*
 - *What changes are you going to make at home/at school?*
5. Invite the group to visit the *Connect with Kids* website (www.connectwithkids.com) If your group has subscribed to the *Connect with Kids WebSource*, be sure to visit the support materials designed specifically for this program in the Parent Outreach area.

While You Watch

Baby Bullies addresses the epidemic of bullying that occurs in school and on the playground. While you watch the video, write down your responses to the questions below. This will form a springboard for discussion with other parents, as well as help you formulate action plans for your family.

- How early does aggressive behavior occur? What are some of the long-term consequences of being bullied or being a bully?
- The video tells the story of Brianna Bryant. What did you learn about why she was bullied and her fighting back that led to her suspension? What changes can you make in your family based on Brianna's story?
- The Mosaic Project and the Olweus Program are two of the most successful programs in teaching children how to be more assertive in overcoming bullying. What methods do they use?
- What can you do to help stop bullying when it starts? **List your ideas here:**

Understanding Bullying

Bullying is a serious problem today – so serious that the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as dozens of other organizations, have websites and programs dedicated to helping victims of bullies, helping schools implement anti-bullying programs, and help parents and teachers prevent bullying behavior.

Types of bullying:

- ❖ **Physical:** hitting, kicking, tripping or pushing another child. It also involves taking or damaging other children's possessions, property, bags or personal items.
- ❖ **Psychological:** Name-calling, teasing or making remarks in relation to one's culture, religion, physical appearance, disabilities, or medical condition.
- ❖ **Relational:** socially isolating other children by intentionally excluding them or spreading rumors about them.

What to do if your child is engaging in bullying behavior: Review the types of bullying behavior with your child. Help him/her learn to show respect for others. Explain that bullying is unacceptable, and how it feels to another person. Establish consistent consequences for inappropriate behavior.

What to do if your child is the target of a bully: Your child may not tell you about the bully at school. According to the American Medical Association, children that are bullied may have some of the following indicators: frequent crying, low self-esteem, unexplained bouts of rage or sullenness, increased school absences, recurrent sleep problems, bed-wetting, and headaches.

If you think your child is being bullied, here are some tips to help him or her take a STAND against bullies:

- S Self-confidence is the best approach. Stand tall, hold your head up high, and look people in the eye when speaking to them.
- T Tell jokes or interrupt the bully and talk about something else. This might be hard, but typically bullies enjoy making others get upset. If someone is picking on you, show him or her that you aren't easily upset.
- A Always tell an adult. Make sure you tell a trusted person, a teacher or school counselor. If you are afraid to tell an adult alone, take a friend. Having someone there to support you makes all the difference.
- N Never be alone. Kids that are often alone are easy targets. Friends help each other out. Recess may be a hard time because kids are sometimes alone. Make a friend that can watch out for you and help you feel safe from the bully.
- D Don't hold in the hurt. Talk about the problem with others and come up with solutions about how you can stand up to the person who is bullying you.

Bringing It Home

Congratulations! By being a part of the *Baby Bullies* Elementary Parent Series, you have taken the first step in helping to prevent bullying. Now you may be ready to take action in your own family. In the video, there were suggestions about how to protect your child from bullying or prevent him/her from being a bully. What are the suggestions you think would work best for your child?

Review the *Parent Tips* Handout #2. Will you use the tips to talk with your child(ren) about bullying? As a family, write down some specific steps you and your family can take to address bullying at home and at school.

Consider having monthly family meetings to check in on your child(ren)'s feelings about bullying. Refer back to the steps you created and see if they are making a difference. Make time for fun by ending the meeting with a board game or ice cream treat, etc. Once you get rolling with monthly family meetings, let your children run the meetings. It will help them feel responsible and eager to share more of their lives with you.

Visit the *Connect with Kids* website (www.connectwithkids.com). If your group has subscribed to the *Connect with Kids* **WebSource**, be sure to visit the support materials designed specifically for this program in the Parent Outreach area.

Baby Bullies

Childcare Guide for Grades K-5

Listed below are three activities for children to do while parents are in the *Baby Bullies* group meeting. Make enough copies of each handout for all the children and have the recommended materials on hand.

ACTIVITY ONE: BALLOONS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

It's important for children to develop a healthy sense of self-confidence without becoming too boastful. This activity is designed to help children recognize that they are a valuable person with abilities and accomplishments that will help them develop a sense of purpose in life.

Materials: Copies of Children's Handout #1 and enough balloons for each child in the group.

Optional activity: After children have completed the balloon activity, facilitate balloon races by blowing up their balloons and, without tying them, letting them go to see which balloon goes the highest, longest distance, etc.

ACTIVITY TWO: ROCKY ATTITUDE

Using rocks, the children will learn not judge people/things by the way they look, and to look for the hidden treasure within a person and themselves.

Materials: Copies of Children's Handout #2 and enough rocks for each child. This activity can be done outside.

Warn the children not to throw the rocks at one another – safety first! Establish this rule with a consequence if someone breaks the rule.

ACTIVITY THREE: CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Talk about what a friend "looks like" *inside*. Discuss the characteristics of the friends each child has now, or friends they would like to have. (i.e. loyalty, funny, compassionate, kind, honest, trustworthy, etc.)

Materials needed: Copies of Children's Handout #3.

Balloons of Self-Confidence

Becoming more self-confident in your own abilities and accomplishments is one of the best ways to deflate a bully. Your leader will give you a balloon. Take turns trying to make your balloon the biggest by blowing into it each time you tell something good about yourself. Each time you tell something negative about yourself, let out a little air.

Here are some ideas to get you going:

I have set goals for your future.

I am on the soccer team.

I have a friend.

I am a friend.

My dog likes me just the way I am.

I studied hard for a test and earned a high mark.

I made my bed this morning.

I made someone feel special today.

After everyone has at least eight turns, check out the balloons and as group discuss the following:

- Which one is the biggest and why?
- Which one isn't as big as the others and why?
- How did it feel to make your balloon grow larger with the good things you have done?
- How did it feel when you had to deflate your balloon?
- Will the image of the bully deflating your balloon of self-confidence give you the courage to stand up for yourself the next time?

Rocky Attitudes

The group will explore new attitudes and learn about not judging others. Your leader will give each of you a rock or help you find a rock outside.

Once everyone has a rock, you will be divided into groups of three or four. In the groups, compare the rocks. Which one has more value? Why is this a tough decision to make based on what the rock looks like? Is this different than the way people decide if others have value?

Here are some of the "outside attributes" that bullies use as ways to hurt others with words:

1. Color of skin
2. Weight
3. Disability
4. Looks

Now imagine if we all looked the same. Boring, right? The world is growing more diverse everyday and one way to develop your full potential is to be comfortable with people who are different than you.

What about on the inside? Look at your rock again and imagine the possibilities that are inside it. Go beyond gold and diamonds and talk about what attributes the rock could have if it could share its talents with the group.

Circle of Friends

One of the best ways to deter a bully is to develop a positive circle of friends. Here are some ways you can develop a circle of friends that come from different backgrounds.

1. Give new people you meet a chance. You might learn something new.
2. Look for similarities in others. It may be a movie you both like or something unusual you both like to eat, such as sushi.
3. Go with a group of friends to as many international festivals or multi-cultural events as you can.
4. Talk positively about others and stand up for them when they are being bullied.

Talk about the poem below written by Beth Stuckwisch and what it means to have a circle of friends.

The Circle of Friendship

*The circle of friendship is
A place of warmth and caring.
Where people come together
For listening and sharing.
A place of kindness and trust
Of tears and laughter, too.
I'm glad to share that circle
With a Special Friend like you.*