What Can We Do To Reduce Bullying?

 by: News Canada (NC)-According to Family Services Canada, approximately 12% of children are bullies. Additional research confirms that bullying occurs frequently: once every seven minutes on the playground and once every twenty-five minutes in class (Craig and Pepler, 1997). To reduce and prevent bullying, it is important to consider not only the bully and victim, but also peers, school staff, parents, and the broader community. The best approach at school is to develop a clearly stated code of behaviour with consistent follow-through. All school staff should participate in educational sessions, together with parent and student representatives. Once adults learn to recognize problem behaviour and how to stop it, they can supervise and intervene more successfully. Parent meetings and newsletters should address the problems of bullying. Parents need to talk to their children about bullying and look for signs of potential victimization. Communication between parents and school is essential, as parents are often the first to find out that their children are being bullied. Peers also play a critical role in the reduction of bullying. If students are taught how to intervene appropriately, or get adult assistance, and to empathise with victims and condemn aggression, bullying can be reduced. Bullies and victims require individual attention. Bullies should be told that their behaviour is not acceptable and that they will suffer consequences established in the code of behaviour. If a group of children are being bullied, bullies and bystanders should be brought to task. Victims need to be encouraged to speak up and ensured that their school will protect them from further harassment. Parents of bullies should be informed of their children's behaviour and enlisted to discipline the behaviour and mentor their child to help prevent further occurrences of bullying or victimization. For more information on bullying and how early childhood intervention programs are helping to reduce bullying in communities across Canada, visit the National Crime Prevention Centre Web site at www.crime-prevention.org or call toll-free 1-877-302-NCPC.

About the Author

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