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English 101 OA

04/17/2023

Bullying in U.S. schools

Bullying is a major problem in schools all over the United States and needs to be stopped. It happens to a lot of kids every year and hurts them physically, emotionally, and academically. Bullying can have long-lasting and damaging effects, not just on the people who are bullied but also on the bullies and the people. In this article, I will talk about children ages two to nine years old and some effective ways for schools in the U.S. to deal with bullying by looking at the results of different sources of information. I'll show how we can avoid or stop bullying and deal with it in a proactive and long-lasting way. In the next few lines, I'll first talk about what bullying is, what the causes and effects of bullying are, and then how it can be dealt with.

Definitions drawn from two (2) sources about bullying states, “ according to a Scandinavian researcher, Dan Olweus, bullying is repeated exposure to negative actions by one or more peers exerting an asymmetric power relationship. negative actions, which can include physical contact, words, making faces at dirty gestures, and intentional exclusion from a group” (Conn 4). And the second definition is” 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. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have

serious, lasting problem, Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose” (stopbullying.gov). When examined both definitions have some actions in common which are negative repeated aggressive behaviors by the perpetrator, and they are lasting negative consequences.

According to both sources the different types of bullying are the same which is physical, verbal and social (Lee 9-10, stopbullying.gov).

Physical bullying includes hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking someone’s things, and making mean or rude hand gestures.

Verbal bullying includes teasing, name-calling, taunting, and threatening to cause harm. Social bullying includes leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, and embarrassing someone in public.

Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like the playground or the bus. It can also happen traveling to or from school, in the youth’s neighborhood, or on the Internet. (stopbullying.gov).

I totally agree with the places where bullying can occur because my own second grader child who gets bussing, one day upon arrival at school was a victim. She was pushed down in the school bus upon disembarking by a male student of the school and the earmolds for her hearing aids fell out and couldn't find it because the matron hurried them out of the bus , she reported it to the teacher who took the matter to the deputy principal. I received a telephone call from the

deputy who informed me about the incident and stated the school has no tolerance for bullying and they will deal with it. My child told me the boy had to give an apology which he did but afterwards told her he will do it again. So the next morning I prayed with her about the situation and thank God he did not carry out his threat.

The root cause of bullying occurs from a few factors ranging from home to school. especially when the child(ren) comes from families where there is bullying, aggression, or violence at home. where there is low parental involvement in their lives, lack of emotional support or communication. They want to show their allegiance to and fit in with their peer group. have feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, so they bully to make themselves feel more powerful. They attend schools where problems and bullying are not properly addressed and don't know how to control their emotions, so they take out their feelings on other children can be considered contributing factors (stopbullying.gov). While another source attributed the cause to parental dysfunction, hostile parenting, parental conflict, emotional maltreatment, witnessing family violence, these factors are more prevalent from Kindergarten to Grade 6 students (Conn 5). When compared, the home environment indeed is responsible and sometimes the parents don't know better and this would have been because the professionals were not paying attention to behaviors. In the case of my own experience with my daughter a godly example is set before her, I do affirmations with her every morning before she leaves for school and on the day of the incident her ear molds were found and returned by the bus company , but she had to do without them for the day during instructional periods, however she said “mommy I ask God to help him, I am not afraid” I then complimented her. The effects of bullying can be fatal, detrimental or good depending on how its handled, as in the case reported of the 9 year old Montana who

suffered from quite a few developmental delays, struggled academically in school, was shoved at and called names repeatedly, and despite complaints over a period of time, nothing was done, and he committed suicide by hanging himself in school, (Conn 1 -2). Based on a survey conducted, there was lower achievement on standardized test scores, (Conn 3), findings indicated that the children later suffered from depression, anxiety, anger, and dissociation (Conn 5), in addition to the same effects were shared by “stopbullying.gov” they children who are victims are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school. Many bullies end up with criminal conviction (Lee 53).

The most effective way to deal with bullying is by implementing the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), which has a holistic approach that includes performing a needs assessment, identifying the problem, planning and performing and evaluating the interventions, and then modifying the plan based on results. All members of the school community are involved, from parents , bus drivers, from the head of school and cafeteria personnel. Then there is the "zero tolerance" method, which sends a message to students that certain behaviors are not acceptable. and alternative harsh disciplinary punishments will be issued. (Padgett, and Notar, charles 1), daily self esteem affirmation (Padgett,and Notar, Charles2). Raise awareness through the curriculum by promoting democratic values in the school. Allowing students to use their power constructively in group work (Lee 62). These recommendations have proven to be very successful based on research and to eradicate this major problem all schools should implement these programs and policies because bullying is a behavior that can be changed.

In conclusion In this article, children of Elementary school age were looked at for they are mostly affected by bullying and some effective ways for schools in the U.S. to deal with the

root cause of bullying and implement programs and policies because of the successful effects it has on students as a whole.

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