



A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for School Staff

Issue # 10

"Working the Yard"

Research shows that much of the bullying behaviour at school occurs on the playground. The good news is that more effective yard supervision reduces bullying problems.



When dealing with an "on the spot" playground intervention, it is important to assess behaviour observed in the yard. Use the following chart to decide if it's "rough & tumble" play, real fighting or bullying:

	Rough & Tumble Play	Real Fighting	Bullying
Relationship between parties	Usually friends	Usually not friends	Usually not friends
Number involved	Two or more	Usually two	Two or more against one
Expression/Atmosphere	Smiling, friendly, laughing, joking, yelling, squealing	Staring, serious face, tense, hostile, angry	<u>Child being bullied:</u> sad, crying, scared, despairing <u>Child doing the bullying:</u> May be laughing, taunting, have a scornful smile, serious, not friendly
Bystanders	None	Yes	Yes
Relations after episode	Remain friends, play at new activity	Leave each other, may go off angry or upset	Leave each other, but bullying often recurs as the power imbalance becomes entrenched ¹

¹ Olweus, "Bullying Prevention Program": Teacher Guide Document 3, Hazelden 2007 p.1/2



Imagine Newsletter

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To further enhance your positive school environment, staff should review the playground area and related student behaviour.

Consider the following:

- Review the layout of the playground and how it functions for the students. Map out the "hot spots". Are there hidden areas where bullying can take place without being seen by an adult?
- Rotate use of certain areas of the playground between different grades or groups of students to minimize competition for that "turf".
- Change supervision to meet needs arising from different seasons or different weather conditions.
- Develop positive relationships with students beyond your own classroom to help facilitate intervention on the playground.
- Provide activities, games or equipment that are fun for the students and encourage co-operative play between them.
- Track bullying behaviour. This will help to identify patterns of bullying behaviour and enable staff to identify those children who are frequently involved as either the target or the aggressor.
- Be sure to take all childrens' complaints seriously and follow up with home room teachers to ensure students get the support they need.



Playgrounds present frequent opportunities to solve bullying problems and prevent them from escalating. By doing this, adults communicate that they take bullying seriously and are "walking the talk" of making school a safe, respectful place for everyone. Together, these steps will make the playground a safer place and will decrease the "after recess rush" at the principal's office, resulting in a more positive school climate.

For Information on Playground Improvement:

www.cfchildren.org/support/teacherstips/skillsplayground

www.cfchildren.org/support/teacherstips/playground

www.trilliumfoundation.org (Grants may be available for greening projects & playground improvements)



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH

For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying