

ABOUT

"Be A Friend" Foundation is a nonprofit organization, established in July, 2017. Its primary goal is to fight against bullying, while supporting youth in developing new friendships, and building a culture of caring in schools and communities through awareness, education, and mentorship.

Be A Friend Foundation, promotes friendship and acceptance of each other no matter who they are. It also teaches all children the importance of having - and being - a good friend. It teaches the importance of team work. It teaches that we are ALL special, even those who have limitations. And, it is a poignant reminder that we ALL have something to offer, regardless of our limitations.

As "Be A Friend" partners, we are teaching social skills through reading to elementary school-aged children, to help them better understand the importance of making a school a connected place where friendship, and acceptance of others is cool and smart. Our mission is built around "The friendship Bench" Campaign, which creates a unique opportunity for the community (Parents, Families, Teachers, and Professionals) to be the village that will not allow our children to sit alone.

OUR VISION

"To have children go to school to learn, grow, and socially connect in a positive manner, without the pressure of being bullied." We believe that through empowering our youth with the proper educational tools and resources, they can celebrate individuality and the acceptance of others with kindness, mindfulness, and compassion.

Acceptance

ACCEPTANCE is a huge word for all kids! We all want to be loved, acknowledged, and appreciated for our contributions as human beings, no matter how large or small. Likewise, kids of all ages and even those with special abilities thrive on acceptance, approval, and a sense of belonging within their peer groups.

As a parent, what do you do when you discover that your child is unable to name a best friend... or, even share the names of any of his or her friends? Unfortunately, we live in a society where an individual's outward appearance, looks, and intellect override the fundamental rule that teaches acceptance and respect for others: the "Golden Rule." As a result, kids have become plagued by a minimized concern for other kids, which has caused thousands of kids desiring not to go to school, or even participate in social settings. The fact of the matter is; mean kids aren't just a middle-school problem. The trouble has trickled to the youngest grades.

Lack of friendships at the elementary level who experience bullying is at an increased risk for adjusting poorly to school, experiencing sleeping issues, having anxiety and suffering from depression. It can also lead to social, emotional and behavioral problems, physical injuries, lack of self-confidence, and even tragedy.

Teaching Your Child Social Skills

Did you know teaching your child social skills could minimize, and even prevent bullying? Let's take a closer look - According to Conway (2009), the following skills can be used:

- 1) Interpersonal behaviors: Behaviors that help children make and keep friendships. This includes the skill of introducing yourself, finding ways to join in with others in games, being helpful and caring.
- 2) peer-related social skills: These are skills children need in order to interact successfully and develop a sense of belonging within a group of peers. They include skills such as sharing, taking turns, and the ability to correctly predict and respond to others' feelings and emotions (theory of mind).
- 3) Teacher-pleasing skills: These are skills children need to participate in expected and non-disruptive ways in the classroom. They include the ability to follow instructions, concentrate and listen.
- 4) Self-related behaviors: These are skills essential to the problem-solving process. This includes the ability to control your impulses, identify and manage your emotions, and use a range of strategies to cope with difficult situations.
- 5) Assertiveness skills: For preschoolers, this would be described as "using your words!" It is about expressing and standing up for your beliefs and needs without using violence.
- 6) Communication skills: These include expressive (having your say) and receptive (listening to others) skills. Communication is not just about being able to speak and hear or understand words. Social skills such as waiting your turn to speak and staying on topic in a conversation, showing you are listening to what is being said to you.

Teaching Social Skills

Williams and Reisberg (2003) discussed several key steps we should use when teaching social skills.

1. Direct Instruction: Explaining the skill step by step, and the purpose of the skill.
2. Modelling: Using strategies such as role play or drama so that students can see the skill in action.
3. Guided Practice: Setting up games, group work or cooperative learning experiences and "coaching" students in using the skill. This can be through the use of task cards, verbal or visual prompts (such as a "talking stick" when teaching the skill of turn-taking in conversation).
4. Independent Practice: This step basically involves the adult watching students closely, and providing praise, rewards, and consequences where necessary.

5. Generalization: This includes watching and encouraging students, where appropriate, to use the skill at home, on the playground, in the community as well as in the classroom.

Demonstrating the Social Skill:

To have friends; you must be a friend. Here are some of the ways good friends treat each other:

- Good friends listen to each other.
- Good friends don't put each other down or hurt each other's feelings.
- Good friends try to understand each other's feelings and moods.
- Good friends help each other solve problems.
- Good friends give each other compliments.
- Good friends can disagree without hurting each other.
- Good friends are dependable.
- Good friends respect each other.
- Good friends are trustworthy.
- Good friends give each other room to change.
- Good friends care about each other.

Key to Encourage Friendship

1: Be Opened – Invite your peer into your world. Show yourself friendly and just simply say, “Hey, do you want to be my friend?” What if he or she doesn’t want to be my friend? It’s okay. Look around you, there are so many more who may want to be your friend. Be friends to those who will be a good friend to someone like you.

2: Go For It – “Hi. My name is _____.” “What’s your name?” But, what if the kid is shy or nervous about telling me his/her name or speaking to me, or maybe reluctant and his/her body language may suggest a mean or unpleasant demeanor? Don’t give up! Be nice, smile and be kind, until he/she feel safe to be nice back to you. Please do not be forceful or attempt to make the other person talk to you.

3: Praise: It’s okay to let a peer know that you think that they are; for example, cool, funny, smart, super nice, or is wearing a cute outfit.

4: Kindness: Be kind to others. Today, I share with you; tomorrow you share with me. But what if he or she doesn’t want to play with me all the time? It’s okay if he or she doesn’t want to play, hug, or join hands all the time. Give him or her time to play with others. Friends always returns.

5: Mindful: Treat others the way you want to be treated. After all, you want to be treated with fairness and respect for who you are, and your feelings.

Keys to Help Parents With The What-Ifs

- 1: Be prepared to provide a response along with examples. Be prepared for “but, why?”
- 2: Reassure your child that friendship is a two-way street.
- 3: Model and role-play with your child positive ways for them to be friends with others, which prepares them for life. For example: give eye contact, smile, be gentle, shake hands, speak calmly and with confidence. Model behavior that is acceptable and behavior that is not appropriate.
- 4: Provide examples of “praise” and “complimenting” others through your praises for your child. For example: “good job!” “I'm happy for you!”
- 5: Be an example of kindness- Allow your child to witness your kindness toward your friends, others and as well as toward them. As a parent(s) act immediately when you observe your child acting aggressively toward other children. Explain consequences for actions towards others that leads to them feeling sad or mistreated. Encourage your child to tell when they are being mistreated as well as when others are being mistreated. Young children should be encouraged to say "I'm sorry" by acknowledging when they have hurt the other person's feelings, be it, intentionally or not. Remember to provide an apology as well as an action to reinforce the apology. Does that make sense?
- 6: Always be mindful- Your child is watching you to see how you behave as the ADULT and as a friend.
- 7: Beware - Your children are looking to you to teach and demonstrate appropriate behavior in the home setting as well as out in the community.
- 8: Stop, Look, Listen to your child. (Verbal and Body Language). What is your child trying to tell you?

Lack of social skills lead to bullying

If you don't know how to make friends = you might try to become popular based on gaining power over others.

If you don't have the skills to keep friends = you may be bossy, controlling and aggressive to get your own way.

If you don't have problem-solving skills = you may use physical, verbal or relational aggression to express your feelings.

If you don't have assertiveness skills = you may use aggression to get what you need.

If you don't have communication skills = you may use physical, verbal or relational aggression to express your feelings, needs and wants.

Is Your Kid the Problem?

When your child is the one teasing and threatening, you need to take action right away -- not just for the sake of the victims but to stop this behavior immediately. If you're unsure, watch for these warning signs:

- He/She's impulsive and gets very angry quickly.
- He/She takes out his/her frustration by hitting or pushing other kids.
- He/She hangs out with other kids who behave aggressively.
- He/She fights or physically with his/her siblings.
- He/She has difficulty understanding how his/her actions affect others.
- He/She gets into trouble at school frequently.

If one or more of the above describes your child, have him/her practice techniques, such as stop and think, taking deep breaths or counting to ten, to help control his negative emotions. When you see your child acting in a hurtful way, tell him to stop, remove him from the situation, and then talk about what he can do differently next time. However, if your efforts don't appear to have an impact on his behavior, ask your doctor to recommend an appropriate mental-health professional.

Ways to beat bullying at your school

1. Stand up for people who are bullied. Bullies often want an audience and approval. ...
2. Take an anti-bullying pledge. ...
3. Take action. ...
4. Talk to other kids. ...
5. Talk to your teachers or principal. ...
6. Talk to your parents or guardians. ...
7. Speak (and write) up! ...
8. Get creative.
9. You be the game changer. Stand up and let other students know that you are not interested in mistreating others for any reason —because they're different from you. You are interested in being friendly towards everyone. You are all about creating positive energy.
10. Show a little empathy-

11. You show respect and caring by our words and actions. You defend those who can't defend themselves. Whatever hurts my neighbor, hurts me.

12. If one or more of the above describes your child, have him/her practice techniques, such as stop and think, taking deep breaths or counting to ten, to help control his negative emotions. When you see your child acting in a hurtful way, tell him to stop, remove him from the situation, and then talk about what he can do differently next time. However, if your efforts don't appear to have an impact on his behavior, ask your doctor to recommend an appropriate mental-health professional.

KEY WORDS FOR BULLYING: "Let's talk"

NAME CALLING: _____

TEASING: _____

THREATENING: _____

PHYSICAL: _____

VERBAL: _____

JEALOUS: _____

RUMORS: _____

CONFIDENCE: _____

PARENTS: _____

NEIGHBOR: _____

TEACHERS: _____

FRIENDS: _____

STUDENTS: _____

OVERLOOKED: _____

OVERWHELMED: _____

AFRAID: _____

CYBER: _____

FACEBOOK: _____

PUBLIC: _____

GROUP: _____

PLAYGROUD: _____

BUS: _____

LUNCHROOM: _____

SCHOOL HALLWAY: _____

SCHOOL RESTROOM: _____

Who Does Bullying Hurt?

EVERYONE is hurt by bullying.” In a world where children are taunted and made to feel less than human by other children, “bullying” has become a societal epidemic. Children and adolescents who are bullied are at a greater risk for mental health problems than those who are not. This includes depression, anxiety, and headaches, as well as problems in adjusting at school and in other social settings. Bullying can also cause a long-term lack of self-confidence. Every day, all across this beautiful nation, thousands of teens wake up afraid to go to school, or even participate in social settings. Bullying is a problem that affects millions of students and it has many worried, stressed, and fearful. And, it’s not just the kids on the receiving end. Parents and other family members suffer too.

Stop Bullying, NOW!

When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time. There are simple steps adults can take to stop bullying on the spot and keep kids safe. When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable. Research shows this can stop bullying behavior over time. There are simple steps adults can take to stop bullying on the spot and keep kids safe.

Please Do!

- Be supportive
- Ask specific questions
- Intervene immediately. It is okay to get another adult to involved, i.e. teacher.
- Put your concerns in writing if necessary.
- Be persistent
- Separate the kids involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.

- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure the individuals involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

Avoid these common mistakes

Don't ignore it. Don't think kids can work it out without adult help.

- Don't immediately try to sort out the facts.
- Don't force other kids to say publicly what they saw.
- Don't question the children involved in front of other kids.
- Don't talk to the kids involved together, only separately.
- Don't make the kids involved apologize or patch up relations on the spot.

Creating A Safe Environment For Youth With Disabilities

Special considerations are needed when addressing bullying in youth with disabilities. There are resources to help kids with disabilities who are bullied or who bully others. Youth with disabilities often have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans that can be useful in crafting specialized approaches for preventing and responding to bullying. These plans can provide additional services that may be necessary. Additionally, civil rights laws protect students with disabilities against harassment. Ref: Stopbullying.gov

- Children who have diabetes and are dependent on insulin may be especially vulnerable to peer bullying (Storch et al., 2004).
- Children who stutter may be more likely to be bullied. In one study, 83 percent of adults who stammered as children said that they were teased or bullied; 71 percent of those who had been bullied said it happened at least once a week (Hugh-Jones & Smith, 1999).

CONTACT

(form)

VOLUNTEER

Mockup text

GET INVOLVED

Mockup text

SHOP

Text and PayPal buttons