Reading and Responding to Children’s Books About Bullying

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Abstract
Which of the following scenarios is an example of bullying?

A. Older boys repeatedly steal a second-grader’s lunch money.
B. A group of girls start and perpetuate vicious rumours about a shy classmate.
C. On a daily basis, a boy makes fun of a peer’s old-fashioned clothes.
D. During recess, bigger kids push, shove, and taunt smaller children.
E. All of the above.

If you guessed E, you not only know a lot about test construction, you also understand the classic definition of bullying: “Bullying is a deliberate attempt to hurt another that is repeated over time,” (Craig, 1997, p. 123). Each scenario above contains a truth about bullying: bullies tend to be older and/or bigger than their victims; bullying involves both physical and verbal abuse; victims are usually different in some way from their peers, whether it involves dress, size, language, or social skills; and bullying occurs most frequently on the playground or in isolated locations where there is no adult supervision (Craig, 1997; Olweus, 1993).

Recommended Citation

Whether a child is being bullied or is bullying another child, these books and the guidance of a caring adult will help. We invite you to visit our page about anti-bullying chapter books.
Eddie Longpants is an anti-bullying picture book that is best suited to children four and up. It delivers a lovely message about acceptance and is sure to prompt a discussion about teasing and ways to deal with it. Ms. Levert's illustrations are warm and engaging.

Books about bullying geared towards this age group teach the fundamentals: empathy, standing up for others and overall kindness. Llama Llama and the Bully Goat: I have always been a huge fan of the Llama Llama stories. When my son was little, I had Llama Llama Red Pajama memorized! There are probably thousands of books about bullying out there for all age groups. These are just some of the highest-rated and most engaging books on the subject in my opinion. If you know of others that should be included on the list, please let us know. These featured children's books can be used in a classroom lesson on bullying prevention or to introduce the topic and have a discussion about what to do when you are bullied.

Awareness of bullying is being discussed wherever children meet in a group setting. Even at my daughter's community children's theatre group, her instructors have advised that they have been to special bullying prevention training, and bullying absolutely will not be tolerated. Bullying at any age is increasingly an issue that schools, churches, and community groups are trying to address. However, bullying can be a slightly bewildering topic to teach. What is the line between normal childhood socialization and actual bullying?