



Reaching Out

Norristown Area Communities That Care for Youth

Keeping Youth Safe & Drug Free

Spring/Summer 2008

Where to Turn When Your Child is Being Bullied

By Alissa McBride, MSW, Community Prevention Coordinator

Bullying takes on many different forms and includes hitting, teasing and social exclusion. It should never be taken lightly as children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, lonely, anxious and insecure. They also have a much higher rate of illness and school absenteeism.

Children often do not tell their parents that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed and fear that their parents' reaction will make things worse. Therefore, if your child tells you they are being bullied,

it is important to be supportive and take steps to help stop the bullying.



Do not encourage them to "just hit back." It is not likely to end the problem and it could get your child suspended from school.

When you contact your child's teacher or principal:

- Keep your emotions in check. Give factual information about your child's experience.
- Emphasize that you want to work with the staff to find a solution to stop the bullying for the sake of your child, as well as other students.
- Do not contact the parents of the student who bullied your child. This can make matters worse. School officials should contact the parents of the child who did the bullying.
- Follow up to make sure that the bullying has stopped. Talk regularly to your child and with school staff to see that the problem has been solved.

Youth Violence in the Norristown Area

As incidents of youth violence rise in our country, it is important to note the increase in our local area. According to a recent survey given to students in several grade levels in the Norristown Area School District, students report the following behaviors:

	<u>6th</u>	<u>8th</u>	<u>10th</u>
Being Suspended from School	10.5%	11.3%	12.1%
Carrying a Handgun	10.6%	12.3%	12.9%
Attacking Someone with Intent to Harm	10.6%	11.5%	12%

Steps that you can take to help your child become more resilient to bullying:

- Help develop your child's talents or positive qualities. This allows him or her to feel
(Being Bullied continued on page 2)

- (**Being Bullied** continued from page 1)
- Help them find opportunities to make new friends outside of the school environment. If your child has been bullied repeatedly, this can give him or her the “fresh start” that they need.
 - Teach your child safety strategies when they are in a risky situation.
 - Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his or her class.
 - Make sure your child has a loving home environment where he or she feels safe. Always keep the lines of communication open.

Eddie Eagle Program

By Kelly Brown, MSS, MLSP, Director of Community Prevention Services

Norristown Police Department (NPD) officers are using the national model Eddie Eagle program to teach children four important steps to follow if they find a gun:

- STOP!
- Don't Touch
- Leave the Area
- Tell an Adult

In addition to the goal of preventing tragic firearm accidents among children, the Eddie Eagle program increases positive

affiliation between youth and NPD officers.



The Eddie Eagle program was held in the second grade classes in the fall and spring. NPD officers returned to third and fourth grade classrooms to review this valuable safety message, as well as to talk about bullying and the idea of “telling is helping” to encourage our youth to help keep their friends and family safe by informing adults of a potentially dangerous situations.

NASD — No Place for Hate

By Rob Dallas, Youth Services Specialist

It is more than likely that at some point within the past school year you have heard the phrase “No Place for Hate.” This could be for a variety of reasons, most of which stems from the national program that the Norristown Area School District has implemented.

The No Place for Hate campaign is often referred to as an anti-

bullying campaign in the schools. However No Place for Hate is “a campaign that enables people to challenge anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, and all forms of bigotry in their communities and schools.”

The goal is to not only create a more peaceful learning environment, but also a more harmonious community in general. This is a

concept that could do wonders for a community, but it relies on the people of that community to practice certain lifestyles and behaviors, not only on the streets but in the home as well.

The issues addressed in schools will be twice as effective if those same issues are addressed at home. For information visit: www.adl.org/npfh_philadelphia/

Children and Violence: What Parents Can Do

By Maris H. Menin, LSW, MSW, SPARKS Family Counseling

Empathy is seeing the humanity in others.

When you have compassion for another's point-of-view, you are less likely to be aggressive towards that person. It is extremely important to help your child develop an understanding of another's perspective.

Parenting begins before you give birth. Besides making plans for the material items your baby will need, parents-to-be need to consider what their child will need emotionally.

Nurturing your baby begins the process of bonds of love and trust between baby and you. The way you cuddle, hold, and play with your baby will set the basis for how baby will interact with you and others.

Throughout the early stages of your child's development your child will learn

about the world in which he/she lives, test the new learned independence ("terrible twos"), and become more aware of people outside your family.

Helping your toddler by setting appropriate boundaries in a loving way and being consistent with behavior control will help your toddler learn that poor behavior is unacceptable. Your toddler will begin to identify with your compassionate response and learn that aggression is not necessary to control behavior. You are reinforcing the positive bonds you have established from birth. In addition, allowing your toddler to make simple choices begins the process of how to make decisions.

As your child explores other possibilities your child will begin to question your family values and beliefs, develop a greater sense of right and wrong, want to be liked by friends and begin to feel

the effects of peer pressure.

Healthy friendships are very important to your child's development. Children who feel good about themselves



are more able to resist negative peer pressure and make better choices. This is an important time for children to gain a sense of responsibility along with their growing independence. Speaking to your child about their developing friendships and your child's ability to say "no" to their friends in a difficult situation is essential.

In adolescence your teen will spend less time with you. Your teen's peers will likely have greater influence than you. As a result, peer pressure may lead to at-risk behavior. This can create greater conflict between you and your teen. Your teen is developing a unique personality and opinions, as well as a clearer sense of identity.

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KEEPING YOUTH
SAFE
&
DRUG FREE

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Communities That Care (CTC) is a risk-focused approach to reducing adolescent problem behaviors through community mobilization and planning. Local citizens and community leaders work together to identify the risk factors that increase the likelihood of problem behaviors developing, and enhance the protective factors that can shield youngsters from problems. The risk and protective factors are used to implement a comprehensive plan to step ahead of the problems with far-reaching and long-lasting solutions.

For more information, visit our website at www.norristownctc.org.

(**Violence** continued from page 3)

You have sustained a positive, empathetic relationship with your child from birth. Your teen has learned that you are a great and willing support in difficult times. Continuing to establish limits and holding your child accountable for maintaining the boundaries must continue through discipline. The steps to helping your child be accountable when he/she has made poor choices are assuming responsibility for the action; options for making better choices; and respect towards the



wronged person(s). This process can begin at the toddler stage.

Teach your child to develop empathy through:

- Assertiveness (not aggression)
- Respect
- Consideration

- Support
- Being responsible to others
- Honesty
- Keeping promises
- Encouraging others' positive behavior
- Apologizing
- Accepting apologies
- Accepting others the way they are

Coloroso, B. (2003). *The Bully, the Bullies, and the Bystander*. New York, NY: Harper Collins

Internet: Date: September 20, 2005

Content source: National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities