



Bullying - How Do We Protect Our Children?

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Why do Kids Bully other Kids?

It's been happening since the beginning of time. We endured it. Our parents tolerated it. And probably their parents before them experienced it, too. Nellie and Willie Olsen did it on Little House on the Prairie. Bullying is a timeless problem. Kids pick on kids. They do it for lots of reasons. It makes them feel more important and more popular. It makes them forget their own shortcomings and inadequacies. They do it out of fear of the unknown. They do it to get a laugh. They pick on the kid who is a little different, the kid who doesn't learn as fast, who doesn't wear the right clothes. They bully the boy who stutters or wears thick glasses, the girl who is too tall or too fat.

What Kind of Bullying Happens?

The worse part is that most teachers will tell you that they don't allow it in their class and that it simply does not happen. I taught for 33 years in a public middle school and I didn't see much of it under my nose either, but that doesn't mean that it didn't happen. Most kids are smart enough to know not to pick on kids when the teacher or any adult is in close proximity, but signs of it are everywhere. It can be a look, a gesture, a quick glance across a classroom. This is the slow torturous type of bullying. It eats away at children's self-esteem and makes them feel like outcasts. It thrusts them into a state of depression. It generates school phobia and avoidance.

Bullying can be subtle, but it doesn't end there. Kids get pushed and shoved, they get tripped and poked and yes, even beaten up. They live in fear of being physically hurt. Verbal bullying can be just as devastating. They are called stupid, weird, retarded, psycho. Their days in school are agonizing. They are tormented by physical and verbal abuse. And finally they reach their limit and they retaliate which then gets them punished themselves.

