



CHILD CARE OPTIONS
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ARTICLES & ACTIVITIES

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How Can We Keep Children From Becoming Bullies or Being Bullied?

In the past I have attended several informative workshops on behaviour and bullying. At one of these sessions the presenters shared their experiences working with children in elementary school who are bullied and those who do the bullying. They shared the support techniques and tools they used to teach these children how to express themselves appropriately.

I was struck by the fact that most of what they were doing was exactly what we are told to do with toddlers and preschoolers:

- be respectful;
- be clear that it is the behaviour not the child that you don't like;
- use a friendly tone of voice;
- identify what the problem is;
- recognize angry feelings;
- give them the language to express themselves appropriately;
- discuss what impact our actions have on those around us;
- discuss or offer possible solutions for the situation;
- model appropriate behaviour;
- be consistent;
- be patient.

Over the past twenty five years I have attended many courses and workshops on guiding children's behaviour. I have learned many different techniques. Some worked temporarily,

some not at all. The most effective are the ones listed above. The challenge is to remember them and be consistent.

As I consider what I've experienced over the years and what I've learned from these most recent classes I attended, it really boils down to 'Treat others the way you would want to be treated.' Whether its children together or an adult with a child or an adult with another adult, this says it all. But we must remember these are not abilities that we are born with, someone has to teach us. We must keep in mind that all of us (adults) have come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, where children were raised with very different philosophies, based on the child care knowledge of the families (which was limited compared to the information available today).

The next time we encounter a child or an adult who is a 'bully' we should try to keep these techniques in mind. **After all it is never too late to learn, right?**

If we all model and teach appropriate behaviour to the children in our lives we will have such a positive effect on the children in our care that a ripple effect will occur, through them, like the waves from a pebble dropped in the water.