

## **Child Abuse Prevention Essay Contest**

Childhood trauma and abuse is witnessed on many different levels and occurs in many different forms. The type of childhood trauma I want to focus on preventing is bullying. Bullying can start at a young age and it only intensifies throughout life. Bullying is a conscious and purposeful action that targets emotional strength, confidence, and self-esteem. Childhood bullying affects victims throughout their life and influences life altering decisions as the child grows, which is why our community must prevent bullying, know the signs of a child getting bullied, and take action against bullies.

### **HOW our community can PREVENT BULLYING**

"Having a place where they are physically, socially, and emotionally secure is imperative for healthy development and a successful future." says the children's Bureau. In our day to day lives, we can change our mindset and priorities to help prevent as much bullying as we can. By lifting people up and creating a safe environment for our children and students, we can make sure we are not allowing a chance for harassment. We must also open lines of communication so that children can feel protected in sharing the truth. Changing the environment to a more secure zone can be difficult but we can practice consistency, positivity, and honesty ("Creating a Safe & Open Home Environment").

### **THE SIGNS**

The signs that a child is being bullied is the next step after we attempt to prevent harassment. Signs include lost or destroyed personal items, difficulty sleeping, changes in eating habits, declining grades, ect. ("Warning Signs for Bullying"). Children, especially teens, have trouble communicating what is actually happening at school, at social events, or even at home, so we need to acknowledge the signs. As parents, teachers, and mentors, we also need to know the signs that a child is a bully themselves. These signs include aggressive behavior, physical or verbal fights, do not accept responsibility for their actions, ect ("Warning Signs for Bullying").

### **DO SOMETHING**

When children are bullying or being bullied, we need to be able to treat the situation with compassion rather than only punishment. Instead of being angry and upset, we should practice keeping an open mind and showing that you care because there is something the problem is stemming from. If the problem is continuous, we should begin punishments. Keep in mind, we have to keep our children safe! From past experiences, I know that children being mentally abused with bullying often seek help but are ignored due to lack of belief or knowledge of the situation.

Teachers, parents, and adults have a job to do but they must also be aware of the problems occurring around them. Warning signs of someone getting bullied or bullying someone else can come in different ways but we must be able to pinpoint and be aware of certain signs, stay open minded, and be able to prevent the situation from happening repeatedly.

### **Works Cited**

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