

## BULLYING & YOUTH ON THE SPECTRUM

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Optimizing Potential Behavioral Consulting



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### A LITTLE INFO ABOUT CARD...

- o 7 CARD centers in the state funded by DOE grants
- o Provide support & assistance FREE of charge
- o Serve individuals of any age...
  - o Autism Spectrum Disorders: Autism, Asperger's, PDD-NOS, Rhett's Disorder, & Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
  - o Related Disabilities: Dual-sensory impairments (deaf-blind), sensory loss plus another disabling condition

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### WHAT DOES CARD DO?



- o Service to Schools...
  - o Consult with educational professionals
  - o School observations
  - o Training events for CEU's
  - o DOE Teacher Partnerships
- o Service to Families...
  - o Home consultations
  - o Referrals
  - o Family support
- o Service to the Community...
  - o Awareness events
  - o Pediatrician trainings
  - o Dissemination of info

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ADVANCED ORGANIZER

- o The Perfect Targets
- o The Facts about Bullying for Kids on the Spectrum
- o What is Bullying?
- o Characteristics of Bullies
- o Characteristics of Youth with ASD who are Bullied
- o Bullying Prevention
- o Bullying Assessment & Intervention
- o Bullying Interventions at the Home Level

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BULLYING PRESENTATION

Based on:

**The Perfect Targets: Asperger Syndrome and Bullying. Practical Solutions for Surviving the Social World.**

By Rebecca Heinrichs



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### THE NUMBERS

#### Little (2002)

- 400 Parents of AS kids ages 4-17 yo surveyed
  - 94% bullied at least 1 time in the previous year
  - 4 times more likely to be bullied
  - 2 times more likely to be physically aggressed against



**Keep in mind kids with ASD can often have difficulty identifying bullying!**

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### THE NUMBERS

#### Interactive Autism Network (2012)

- Kennedy Krieger Institute
  - National survey of parents of 1,167 children with ASD
  - Children ages 6-15 yo
  - Preliminary results
    - Frequency of bullying experiences
    - Potential risk factors

Taken from IAN Research Report (2012):  
[http://www.iancommunity.org/cs/ian\\_research\\_reports/ian\\_research\\_report\\_bullying](http://www.iancommunity.org/cs/ian_research_reports/ian_research_report_bullying)

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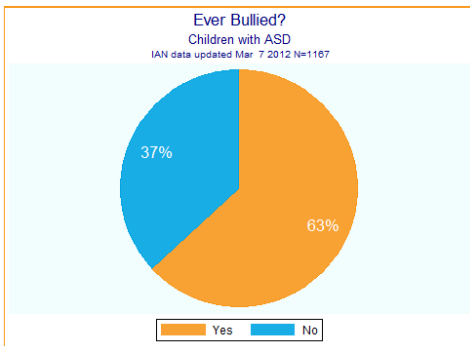
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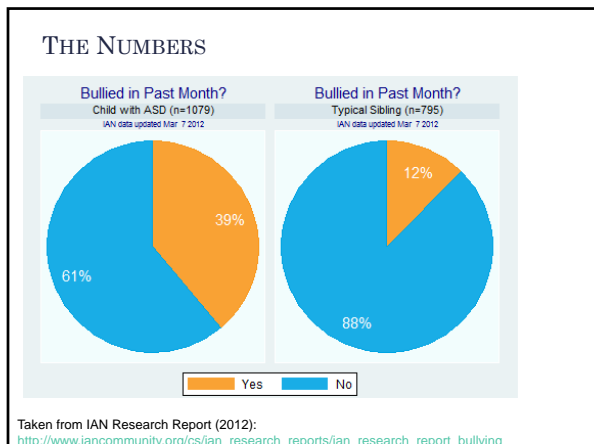
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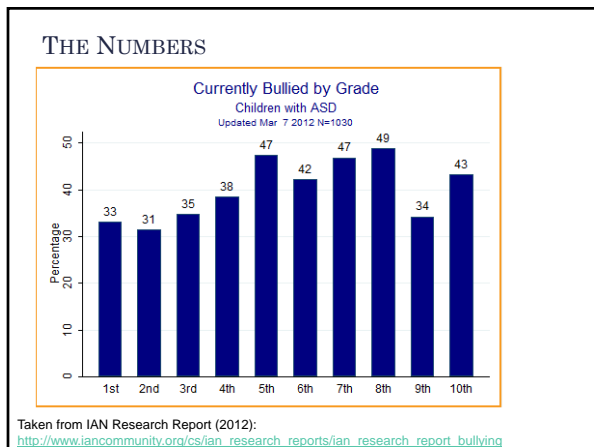
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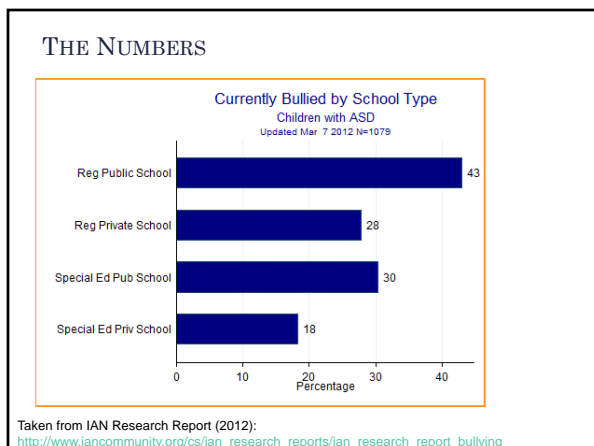
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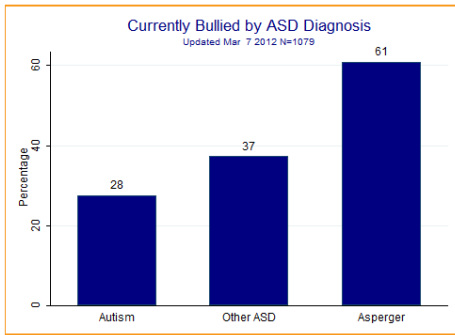
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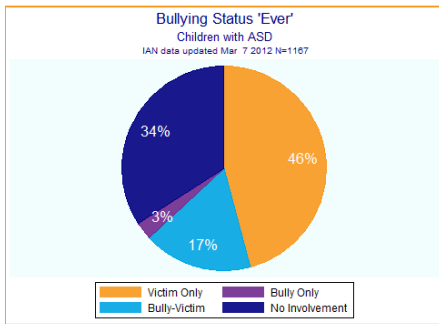
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### THE PERFECT TARGETS



- Can't see the disability
- Talk, think, and act "weird"
- Can come across as rude or inappropriate
- Lack of physical ability

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WHAT IS BULLYING?

**Bullying** involves some type of...

power imbalance,  
intent to harm,  
distressed target, &  
repeated negative actions.

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TYPES OF BULLYING

o **Direct Bullying:** upfront and open, “in your face”; may include...

- o Use of physical contact
- o Words
- o Gestures
- o Facial expressions



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TYPES OF BULLYING

o **Indirect Bullying:** student is excluded or isolated; may include...

- o Gossiping
- o Intentionally trying to damage relationshi
- o “Peer shunning”



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TYPES OF BULLYING

o **Physical Bullying:** may include...

- o Hitting
- o Pushing
- o Tripping
- o Kicking
- o Spitting on someone
- o Pulling hair
- o Shouldering
- o Grabbing clothes, belongings, or parts




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TYPES OF BULLYING

o **Verbal Bullying:** may include...

- o Teasing
- o Making fun of someone
- o Verbal threats
- o Name-calling
- o **Nonverbal:** eye-rolling, obscene gestures, threatening stares




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TYPES OF BULLYING

o **Social Bullying:** intent to isolate or exclude someone; may include...

- o Spreading rumors
- o Peer shunning
- o or other methods of damaging or manipulating relationships




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### TYPES OF BULLYING

o **Educational Bullying:** adults who are school staff in some form use their power to either *intentionally* or *unintentionally* harm students causing them distress; may include...

- o Sarcasm (models teasing)
- o Being overly controlling and critical
- o Humiliating in front of peers
- o Favoring students
- o Overly punitive




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### AKIAN



Taken from Journeys with Autism Blog:  
<http://www.journeyswithautism.com/2012/04/23/autistic-child-bullied-by-his-teacher-and-aide/>

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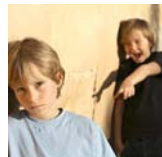
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### CHILDREN WHO BULLY

- o Average to above average social status, although may have started going down
- o **“Passive Bullies”:** peer onlookers; less secure and dependent, bully wannabes




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19 CHARACTERISTICS OF A BULLY



- 1. Inappropriately perceive hostile intent in the actions of others
- 2. Have often been exposed to models of aggressive behavior
- 3. Chronically repeat aggressive behaviors
- 4. Tend to have little empathy for their targets
- 5. Control others through verbal and physical threats

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19 CHARACTERISTICS OF A BULLY

- 6. Quick to anger and more apt to use force
- 7. Angry and vengeful
- 8. Parents are poor social role models
- 9. Parents also poor models for problem solving
- 10. More likely to have contact with aggressive groups
- 11. View aggression as the way to preserve their self- image



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19 CHARACTERISTICS OF A BULLY



- 12. Inconsistent discipline at home
- 13. Focus on angry thoughts
- 14. Perceive physical image as important to their sense of power and control
- 15. Have more family problems

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19 CHARACTERISTICS OF A BULLY

16. Lack of parental supervision

17. More likely to suffer emotional and physical abuse at home



16. Exhibit obsessive or rigid actions

17. Frustrate peers and create resentment

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BACK TO OUR "PERFECT TARGETS"

Kids with A.S. often are...

- Be rejected by peers
- Clumsy; may be ineffective in play, sports, and fights
- Immature or awkward social interactions
- Formal "little professor" speech
- Emotionally vulnerable; easily stressed
- Anxious
- Inflexible
- Socially naïve
- Frustrate peers



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ASD "SUBTYPES"  
IN RESPONSE TO BULLYING

**Avoidant/Passive Social Presentation**

- Passive/withdrawn socially
- Tend to be loners
- Prefer objects and special interests
- Lack reciprocity in play
- May be identified earlier
- Relate better to adults than peers
- Viewed as "easy targets"

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**A.S.D. "SUBTYPES"  
IN RESPONSE TO BULLYING**

**Engaging Social Presentation**

- o Are most rejected by peers
- o Disliked by some adults in authority, including teachers
- o Irritating habits; impulsive or immature
- o Fight or talk back
- o Bossy or "in your face"
- o Diagnosed later
- o Seen as demanding and lacking empathy

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**ASD STUDENTS & COPING**



- o Higher levels of anxiety overall
- o Can't predict others behaviors like most
- o May begin to hate school and try to avoid
- o Often try to say things back leads to more bullying

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**"TARGET" WARNING SIGNS**

- o Anxiety
- o Depression
- o Withdrawl
- o School-refusal
- o Increase in meltdowns at home (especially right after school)
- o Health problems (e.g., stomachs, headaches, etc.)




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BULLYING PREVENTION

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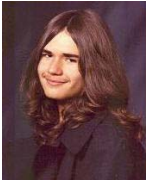
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JEFFREY JOHNSTON STAND UP FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT (FL HB 669)

Each school district must have a policy that must be published in student handbook



- o Both parties parents must be notified immediately
- o The time of cyber-harassment doesn't matter
- o School staff immune from any cause of action for reporting

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CORE COMPONENTS OF BULLYING PREVENTION



1. Adult awareness and involvement
2. A questionnaire survey
3. Effective supervision during breaks and transitions
4. Educational teacher discussion groups
5. Formation of coordinating group

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CORE COMPONENTS OF BULLYING PREVENTION

- 6. Class rules against bullying
- 7. Class meetings with students
- 8. Serious talks with bullies and targets
- 9. Serious talks with parents of involved students
- 10. An overall school environment of community where everyone is valued for their unique talents and differences




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BULLY PREVENTION AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

Things to keep in mind...



- 1. Bullying behavior in ALL forms is unacceptable, and the fear it causes impacts students
- 2. Bullying can have serious consequences for many students, especially those who experience chronic, frequent, and severe bullying.
- 3. Adults, especially teachers, are the most important determinants of success.
- 4. There is reason to be optimistic!

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BULLY PREVENTION AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

- o Gather info
  - o Survey school staff
  - o Survey students
  - o Survey parents
- o Train staff (1/2 day in-service)
- o Establish a coordinating group
- o Make goals!




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BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

Sample Goals...

- Create a strong bullying policy that will be enforced by adults
- Empower bystanders who witness and don't intervene
- Promote acceptance and tolerance
- Recognize dynamics and complexities involved in bully-target relationships

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BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

Sample Goals...

- Develop intervention programs that will create a safer school environment
- Develop strategies to promote social competence for the bully, the targets, and the bystanders

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BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

Sample Goals...

- Develop ways to help students who bully find more socially acceptable ways of gaining attention
- Build an effective support system for targets




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**BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL**

- o Develop a School Code of Conduct

**Sample:**

1. Students agree not to bully or tease each other and to treat all student and adults with respect
2. All school staff will immediately confront bullying and teasing if it occurs and agree to treat all students and adults with respect.
3. Students agree to help those being bullied or teased by speaking out or getting adults' help.
4. All students agree to include everyone in their activities when appropriate. No one is to be intentionally left out or shunned.

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**BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL**

- o Identify staff roles
  - Make a resource map!
- o Enforce the school code of conduct
- o Develop a step procedure of consequences




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**BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL**

- o **Involve Students!**
  - Assembly
  - Social skill groups
    - o A.S. kids
    - o Bully
  - Peer mentoring program




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BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

o **Involve Parents!**

- Parent Survey
- Parent Meeting
- Involve PTA (by helping to bring expert)
- Let parents come to trainings
- Provide opportunities for parent feedback
- Send info home in newsletters




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BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE CLASS LEVEL

o **Involve students in class rules**

- Define bullying as a class
- Talk about bystanders



o **Establish regular class meetings**

- Use role playing, videos

o **Pay attention to positive behaviors**

- Especially your ASD students!

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BULLY PREVENTION  
AT THE CLASS LEVEL



- o Be the "Safe Place"
- o Learn the strategies for dealing with targets & bullies
- o Model appropriate behaviors
- o **Promote cooperative vs. competitive learning**
- o COMMUNICATE with parents and other staff members!

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BULLYING INTERVENTION

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**PEER NOMINATIONS: MEASURING "REJECTION"**

- o Peer nominations assess the peer-perspective of social interaction
  - May be used primarily for screening within the social domain
  - A tool that can be used to assess the social health of the school as a whole to inform:
    - o Bullying/victimization
    - o Peer interactions
  - Typically, peer nominations are adequate at informing:
    - o Social status (where the child ranks in the social circle)
    - o A child's level of peer-acceptance or rejection
    - o How other children perceive him/her socially

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**PEER NOMINATIONS: MEASURING "REJECTION"**

**Steps to conducting peer nominations:**

1. Define target behaviors: Create broad definitions for all target behaviors. The target behaviors will ensure peers are assessing relationships using the same universal definition.
2. Provide students with either a class-wide or grade-wide roster
3. Ask students to identify either
  - a. Peers that exemplify the definition of target behaviors that was provided
  - b. Students with whom they consider friends
  - c. Students with whom they are not friends
  - d. Students who fit into the criteria of withdrawn, lonely, rejected, popular, neutral, and/or aggressive (provide a definition for each of these criteria)
4. Once nominations are obtained, utilize resources available, such as office referrals for peer conflict, to inform more child-specific factors.

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**PEER NOMINATIONS: MEASURING "REJECTION"**

**Guidelines for Assessing Peer nominations:**

- Peers who identify each other as "friends" are recognized as friendships
- Peers who are identified for perceived popularity are often considered to exhibit relational aggression
- Peers who are identified as withdrawn and/or rejected may indicate a need for child-specific assessment for internalizing behaviors
- Students with normative patterns of social behavior typically fall within the neutral category

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**PEER NOMINATIONS: MEASURING "REJECTION"**

**Possible definitions for peer nominations:**

- Aggressive: Peers who are physically aggressive, frequently get into fights
- Withdrawn: Peers who are often "loners" or shy, quiet,
- Rejected: Peers who are frequently rejected by other peers, picked on, or teased
- Neutral: Peers who have friends, are well-liked but not really "popular"
- Popular: Peers who are well-liked by other students
- Perceived popularity: Peers who are considered "popular" but are not well-liked

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**ESTABLISHING A SAFE COMMUNITY**

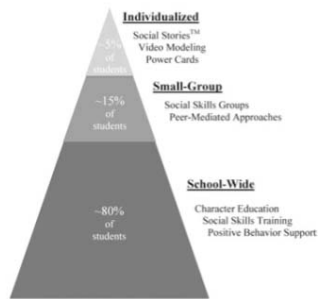


FIGURE 2. Three-tiered model of social skill support.

(Sansosti, 2010)

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### BULLYING INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

#### Effective Programs

- o Bully Busters (teacher training)
  - <http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/6517/>
- o Sprick's Safe & Civil Schools
  - [http://www.safeandcivilschools.com/aboutus/trainer\\_bios/sprick.php](http://www.safeandcivilschools.com/aboutus/trainer_bios/sprick.php)
- o WITS Program
  - <http://web.uvic.ca/wits/>
- o Olweus Program
  - <http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/index.page>
- o The Expect Respect Project
  - [http://www.projectcornerstone.org/html/schools\\_students.html](http://www.projectcornerstone.org/html/schools_students.html)

(Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008)

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### BULLYING INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

There is some evidence supporting:

- o the effectiveness of school bullying interventions in enhancing students social competence, self-esteem, and peer acceptance
- o in enhancing teachers knowledge of effective practices, feelings of efficacy regarding intervention skills, and actual behavior in responding to incidences of bullying at school
- o To a lesser extent, in reducing participation by students in bully and victim roles.

(Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008)

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### INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUTH WITH ASD

Joe is being bullied more than 5 times a week. 80% of students have listed Joe as someone they don't like to spend time with and 90% listed him as someone they think most needs a friend. Joe is seldom reporting bullying (which is occurring primarily at lunch and recess) to school staff.




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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

- o **GOAL:** Joe will develop and maintain effective relationships with his peers and teachers and learn to recognize and report bullying when it occurs.
- **Annual Goal #1:** Joe will develop and maintain effective relationships with his peers and establish and maintain a friendship with at least one peer in his class.

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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

**Short-term Objective #1:**

- o Joe will identify at least one student as a friend, and when a social survey is given in DATE, 50% or fewer of his classmates will identify his as someone they don't like to spend time with and 60% or fewer will identify him as someone most in need of a friend.

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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

**Short-term Objective #2:**

- o Joe will identify at least one student as a friend, and when a social survey is given in May, 30% or fewer of his classmates will identify his as someone they don't like to spend time with and 40% or fewer will identify him as someone most in need of a friend. At least one student will identify him as someone they would most like to do things with.

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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

**Annual Goal #2:**

- o Joe will recognize and report bullying and teasing when it occurs, supervising school staff interventions will match his reports, and he will experience a decrease in bullying experiences.

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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

**Short-term Objective #1:**

- o Teachers will report an increase in Joe's self-reporting of bullying incidents, an increase in adult interventions related to his reports, and an overall decrease of bullying to three times a week or less by DATE.

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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

**Short-term Objective #2:**

- o Teachers will report that Joe is self-reporting when bullying occurs, school staff interventions match his reports, and the overall incidence of bullying is decreased to once a week or less by DATE.

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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

o **Special Services Provided:**

- o Provide individual instruction by \_\_\_ during \_\_\_ every other day to help promote skills for social competence and bullying prevention.
- o Provide a social lunch group twice a month facilitated by \_\_\_.
- o Provide a "home base" and identify a "safe person" who will be available to Joe when he is stressed or anxious.
- o At least 1 monitor trained in AS will be available at lunch and recess to intervene immediately when bullying and teasing are most likely to occur.

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SETTING GOALS RELATED TO BULLYING

o **More tips:**

- o Allow student to leave for locker early
- o Lunch Bunch
- o Safe Place
- o Bully Brigade




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BULLYING INTERVENTION  
AT THE HOME LEVEL

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BULLY INTERVENTION  
AT THE HOME LEVEL

- Teach what bullying is
  - They're not alone!
- Teach your child the importance of **TELLING YOU!**
- Teach to *STAY COOL* and ignore
  - Use teachable moments at home with siblings



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BULLY INTERVENTION  
AT THE HOME LEVEL



- Teach hygiene
- Talk about sexuality
- Encourage leadership
- Consider martial arts
- Help them find a role model
- Be a squeaky wheel!

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QUESTIONS?

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**Thank you!!**

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