



Character Development: Anti-Bullying & Teasing

for Pre-K and Kindergarten

Starfall Character Development is a supplementary program to implement throughout the school year in order to foster positive social interactions and create a warm and welcoming learning environment.



This module is an excerpt from the Starfall Character Development Program.

If you have questions or comments, please contact us.

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Anti-Bullying and Teasing

Statistics show that the majority of children suffer harassment in the forms of teasing and/or bullying by their classmates, either actively or as witnesses. Teaching young children respect, what it means to be a good friend, and how to stand up for themselves can have a positive effect against harassment.

There is a difference between normal social experimentation and emergent bullying behavior. While some degree of punching, pinching, or being “mean” is part of social experimentation, when this behavior becomes deliberate, repeated, and power imbalanced, it becomes bullying behavior. This can take the form of physical bullying (pinching, hitting), verbal bullying (name-calling, mean words), and relational bullying (getting others to hurt someone, refusing to play with someone). Most often, serious bullying does not take place in preschool or kindergarten. However, teachers should be alert and intervene if they notice signs of children showing disrespect to others.

Model how to treat other people in your classroom, and be sure the children understand what may be considered hurtful to others. Discuss with the children that they should treat others the way they would like to be treated, and explain your expectations. Enforce your classroom rules consistently so the children know their limits, and address situations such as *everyone should be included* and *keep your hands to yourself* before they arise.

Teach the children to ask politely when they would like to join groups of children who are already playing, rather than forcing themselves on the group. Also, teach the children how to politely accept children into their groups unless there are limits on materials such as game pieces and so on. In those situations they may decline politely with a simple, “No, thank you.”

Often we tell children not to “tattle.” Be sure the children in your class understand the difference between tattling and reporting or they may not know when to seek help from an adult. Teaching children to stand up for others encourages them to also stand up for themselves. They are less likely to become targets of teasing and bullying if they do so, and they will grow to form caring friendships during their years in school and beyond.

Often children who have had even minor confrontations with others need time to deal with their feelings, calm or center themselves, and time to regain their composure. Included in this module are techniques the children can use to do this, such as providing them with a “Safe Calming Station,” an activity called “Smell the Flowers, Blow out the Candles,” and several coping strategies in an activity titled “I Have a Problem, Now What?” Be sure to give children the time and space they need, and allow them to re-enter the group when they are ready.

Book Suggestions

- *A Children’s Book About Tattling* by Joy Wilt Berry
- *Adventures at Walnut Grove: A Lesson About Teasing* by Dana Lehman
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes
- *Leo the Late Bloomer* by Jack Krauss
- *Making Friends* by Fred Rogers
- *Miles McHale, Tattletale* by Christianne C. Jones
- *My Mouth is a Volcano* by Julia Cook
- *Short or Tall Doesn’t Matter At All* by Asaf Rozanes
- *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni
- *The Brand New Kid* by Katie Couric
- *The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle
- *We are All Alike...We are All Different* by Laura Dwight
- *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen
- *YoKo* by Rosemary Wells

Starfall Books & Media

- Dragon
- *The Ugly Duckling* retold by Brandi Chase

Lessons

Alert Forms

Materials

Items

Frequently, situations occur and parents or caregivers do not realize the possible effects they can have on their children. It would be most helpful for a child's teacher to be made aware if any of the situations or events listed below occur, in order to best help a child handle his or her feelings or to be more sensitive to potential behavior changes.

Often children act out in behaviors that are hurtful to others if they are experiencing changes in their home situations. Behaviors are much easier to handle in a classroom if the cause of the behavior is known.

Situations or events that might cause a change in behavior include:

- Parent change of job/change in work schedule
- Moving
- New baby
- Illness of a family member
- Vacations
- Death of a relative/friend/pet
- Getting a new pet
- Parents not speaking/arguing
- Staying up too late
- Visitors from out of town
- Change in family routine
- Parents out of town
- Sudden fear
- Taking a new medication

Prepare Parent/Guardian Alert forms similar to the example below. Send them to the children's parents or guardians at the beginning of the school year so they can notify you of any potential changes in their children's behavior.

Parent/Guardian Alert Form

This is to let you know that _____ may be experiencing changes in behavior.

_____ I prefer not to discuss the situation but want you to be aware of some changes at home.

_____ Below is a brief explanation of the situation which may have an effect on our child.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Tattle or Report? Part 1

Discuss the difference between “tattling” and “reporting.” Explain that reporting involves “B Emergencies” and it is acceptable. “B Emergencies” include:

- Bathroom
- “Barf”
- Blood
- Bullying

Everything else is probably tattling. If children begin to tattle, ask whether they are tattling or reporting. Explain that you listen to reporting.

If children continue, ask them what they think about it. Generally the child is caught off guard and will just look at you! Tell the child to go and solve his or her problem and let you know how it goes.

It is important for children to learn that they need to work toward solving their own problems and that you are there to support them.

Indicate the chart paper. Divide it in half down the middle to create two columns. In the first column write the heading Reporting and in the second column write the heading Tattling. Discuss how tattling is often used to get another child in trouble and that is unkind behavior.

Choose volunteers to offer situations and explain whether they should be listed under Reporting or Tattling. The class confirms or corrects the potential placement. Dragon may whisper suggestions as well. Be sure to add your suggestions so you have a good list to use throughout the year. Post the list and refer to it when needed.

| Materials | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chart paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Marker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dragon |

“B” Emergencies

- Bathroom
- Barf
- Blood
- Bullying



| Materials | |
|--------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | None |

Tattle or Report? Part 2

Gather the children in a circle on the floor or a rug. Recall that you have discussed (or discuss) the difference between tattling and reporting. Explain to the children that tattling means you are trying to get someone into trouble, while reporting is letting the teacher or other adult know that something is happening.

Practice several times having the children stand when you say report and sit when you say tattle.

Explain to the children that you will describe a situation. They should remain seated if the situation is a “tattling situation” and stand if the situation is a “reporting situation.”

Read the following situations and pause to allow the children to respond. Discuss the proper response to each situation and the reasons for it. Create additional situations to best match the dynamics of your class.

- Ryan cut himself and he is bleeding.
- Michael pushed Melissa down on the playground, and Melissa is crying.

Social/Emotional Development

Begins to understand that actions have consequences

Engages independently in simple social problem solving including offering potential solutions and reflecting on the appropriateness of the solution

Responds appropriately to bullying, teasing, or unkind behavior

Takes the perspective of others and responds appropriately

- Susi took your paper and ripped it up into little pieces.
- Alex won't eat his snack.
- Juan won't let you play with a toy you want.
- You have to use the bathroom.
- Tina wants the same toy as Shellie. Tina gets angry and runs to tell the teacher that Shellie won't share.
- Julie punches her friend Claire on the playground and she runs to tell the teacher.

By Accident or On Purpose?

Discuss with the children the difference between something happening "by accident" or something done "on purpose." They should understand that an accident happens without someone meaning for it to happen, while someone has control over something done on purpose. Provide examples as needed.

Read the following situations and the children stand if it happened "on purpose" and remain seated if it happened "by accident." Add additional situations that relate to your classroom situation.

- Priscilla steps on Tommy's toe because she wasn't looking and she says, "I'm sorry."
- Alex is mad at Tony so he steps really hard on his foot.
- Sarah and Amelia are drawing together and Sarah doesn't like Amelia so she scribbles all over her picture.
- Juan drops his backpack on the floor and Annie trips over the backpack.

Volunteers explain how they know when something was done by accident or by mistake and how they can tell if something hurtful or mean was done on purpose. Review with the children that we should never do something hurtful or mean to anyone on purpose, and discuss the reasons why.

Materials

None

**Social/Emotional
Development**

Engages independently in simple social problem solving including offering potential solutions and reflecting on the appropriateness of the solution]

Responds appropriately to bullying, teasing, or unkind behavior

Using Your Words

Discuss with the children how at times we might feel angry, frustrated, or afraid. Explain that it's okay to have those feelings, but it's never okay to do things that hurt others because we have those feelings.

Volunteers respond to the following questions:

- How would you feel if you saw someone being bullied or treated unkindly?
- What would you do if you felt someone was bullying you or not treating you kindly?
- How would you feel if you bullied someone?

Materials

Dragon

**Social/Emotional
Development**

Engages independently in simple social problem solving including offering potential solutions and reflecting on the appropriateness of the solution

Responds appropriately to bullying, teasing, or unkind behavior

Explain that sometimes we want our own way but our friends may not want to do things our way. That can make you feel angry or mad. You might want to hit that person or say mean things. Dragon whispers in your ear, "Maybe it would be better to use your words." Share what Dragon whispered to you with the children.

Practice how the children might use their words. Read or have children role play each bullying or teasing situation, and volunteers explain how they might use kind words instead of hitting or saying something mean. Assist the children with ways they can use their words to stop the bullying or teasing situation.

- Someone tells you that you are stupid.
- A girl pulled your hair.
- Someone says they aren't going to invite you to his or her birthday party.
- No one will play with you outside.
- Someone hit you.
- Someone called you a name.
- You see someone being mean to someone else.

Smell the Flowers, Blow Out the Candles

Explain to the children that there are often times we may want to feel calm and safe. There are techniques we can use to help ourselves feel that way.

Teach the children a breathing technique called "Smell the Flowers; Blow Out the Candles." This technique requires children to take a deep breath in from the diaphragm, then slowly exhale. Practice with the children pretending to hold flowers in your hand and taking in a deep breath as you say: "Smell the flowers," then say: "Blow out the candles" and exhale.

Possible situations:

- You are upset because you have to say goodbye to your mom or grandma.
- You don't want to or are afraid to try a new activity.
- Someone is being mean to you.
- Someone hurts your feelings.
- You are having a hard time calming down after a fun activity.
- You were expecting to be able to play outside, but it's raining and you can't go outside.

| Materials | |
|--------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | None |



Approaches to Learning

Demonstrates increasing independence and willingness to try new challenges

Social/Emotional Development

Demonstrates willingness to be flexible if routines must change

Manages and exhibits behavioral control with or without adult support

Shows enjoyment in interactions with trusted adults while also demonstrating skill in separating from these adults

Bullied? What Should I Do?

Materials

- Three scenarios (see below) on index cards attached to craft sticks (1 set per child)

Social/Emotional Development

Engages independently in simple social problem solving including offering potential solutions and reflecting on the appropriateness of the solution

Recognizes and identifies feeling and emotions of characters in stories or real life situations

Responds appropriately to bullying behavior

Scenarios:

- Stick figure with the words “Walk Away”
- Two stick figures together with the words “Get Help”
- One stick figure facing forward with the words “Stand Up For Yourself”

Review the discussion about bullying, and the children’s responses on the chart paper you created during the “Tattle or Report” activity.

Ask children if they know what a “problem” is and discuss. Remind the children that when there is a problem, it means you need to do something about it, or solve the problem.

Provide the following scenarios or create your own specific to your classroom situations. Distribute a set of 3 index cards with stick figures to each child and discuss each of them.

Explain that you will tell a story and then they are to pick the stick figure they think shows what they should do and hold it up.

Lead a discussion about the choices they make.

Suggested scenarios:

- Tommy and Mary like to pretend to be monsters. They always sneak up behind Juan and make loud noises to scare him. It happens almost every day. What should Juan do?
- Billy likes to play dress up in the dramatic play area and wear dresses. The other children tell him, “That’s not for boys, that’s for girls.” They laugh at him. What should Billy do?
- Andy and Jessica are in the same class. Jessica calls Andy a baby and says he’s too little to be in this school. Andy gets very hurt and upset. Jessica says, “You’re a baby” and some of the other children laugh. What should Andy do?
- David and Philip are playing with the blocks. David always wants his own way and hits Philip when he doesn’t get his own way. What should Philip do?



The Ugly Duckling: Our Words

Ask the children if they are the same as their brothers, sisters, and friends, and discuss what makes them all different.

Indicate the white and brown eggs, and volunteers list ways the eggs are different. (**Note:** If you have completed the "Different Eggs" activity you may choose to reference it here rather than repeating it for this lesson.)

Crack the eggs open into a bowl. Explain that even though the eggs looked different on the outside they are the same on the inside. Ask how we know that the eggs are the same on the inside. Help the children understand that these eggs are like people! Even though people are different on the outside, they are alike in many ways on the inside. We can't crack people open like eggs, but we get to know what's on the inside of people by listening to them and playing with them.

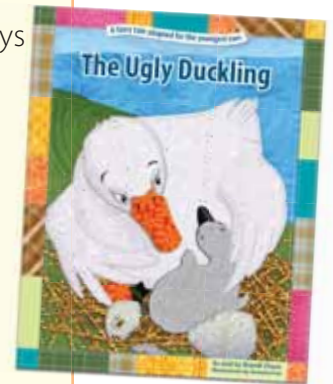
Indicate *The Ugly Duckling* and explain that the Ugly Duckling did his best to fit in and be a good little duck. Still, the other animals called him names and said very unkind things to him which hurt him, so he finally ran away.

The children should understand that being mean to someone and saying nasty things just because that person looks or acts differently isn't right, and it is very hurtful to the person. The poor little duckling spent his early days being bullied and insulted because he was different. Finally he grew into the beautiful swan he was always meant to be.

Read the story. Answer the children's questions and ask questions such as:

- What did you feel when you heard the animals make fun of the Ugly Duckling?
- Why did the other animals call the Ugly Duckling ugly?
- Does looking different make someone ugly?
- Why do you think the other animals made fun of the Ugly Duckling?
- Has anyone made fun of you?
- How did you feel?
- What would you do if you had been one of the animals in the story?

| Materials | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>The Ugly Duckling</i> retold by Brandi Chase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | White egg and brown egg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bowl |



Social/Emotional Development

Demonstrates understanding and acceptance of similarities and differences in others

Recognizes and identifies feeling and emotions of characters in stories or real life situations

I'm Being Bullied or Teased. What Should I Do?

Review the following coping strategies the children might use to deal with bullying or teasing situations.

| Materials | |
|--------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | None |

- Get a teacher to help you.
- Ignore someone who is being mean to you.
- Say, "Please stop."
- Walk away.
- Avoid the bully during free times.
- Don't get angry.
- Take deep breaths.
- Choose a buddy to play with and stay away from the bully.
- Ask your teacher to suggest a good friend to play with.

Approaches to Learning

Uses positive self talk

Social/Emotional Development

Responds appropriately to bullying, teasing, or unkind behavior

**Social/Emotional
Development**

Engages independently in simple social problem solving including offering potential solutions and reflecting on the appropriateness of the solution

Plays with peers in a coordinated manner including assigning roles, materials and actions

Recognizes and identifies feelings and emotions of characters in stories or real life situations

Responds appropriately to bullying, teasing, or unkind behavior

Takes the perspective of others and responds appropriately

Part 1

The children use puppets or dolls to role play a scene in which one child pushes another and a third child watches. The child who was pushed does not respond. The first child then pushes the second child again and the third child watches.

Then discuss the following questions:

- How do you think the puppet or doll feels?
- What do you think the problem was that caused the feeling(s)?
- How do you think they might solve their problem peacefully?
- What do you think will happen if they tried this? Is it safe? Is it fair?
- Did this work or do you think they need to try a new solution?

Part 2

The children use puppets or dolls to role play a scene in which four children are using blocks to build a tower. Another child comes along and kicks the blocks down.

Then discuss the following questions:

- How do you think the puppet or doll feels?
- What do you think the problem was that caused the feeling(s)?
- How do you think they might solve their problem peacefully?
- What do you think will happen if they tried this? Is it safe? Is it fair?
- Did this work or do you think they need to try a new solution?



**Social/Emotional
Development**

Manages and exhibits behavioral control with or without adult support

Recognizes and names own emotions

Responds appropriately to bullying, teasing, or unkind behavior

Shows enjoyment in interactions with trusted adults while also demonstrating skill in separating from these adults

**Social/Emotional
Development**

Manages and exhibits behavioral control with or without adult support

Recognizes and names own emotions

Recognizes self as unique having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests

Create a "Safe Calming Station"

Provide a space in the classroom where children can go to reduce feelings of tension or anger, and remove themselves from a teasing or other stressful situation. Explain that this "Safe Calming Station" is a place children can go if they are feeling angry or need some time away from others.

Explain that if the children feel someone is teasing or bullying them, or using unkind words, they should tell an adult and ask to spend some time in the "Safe Calming Station." Encourage children to independently go to the "Safe Calming Station" when needed without the assistance of an adult.

Suggestions for the Safe Calming Station:

- Soft pillows
- Blanket
- Stuffed animals
- Posters of calming scenes (nature)
- Rocking chair
- Books

Ask the children for their suggestions for additional items to include in this space.

Consider creating a list of Safe Calming Station Rules using photos or illustrations and including a timer to provide a timeframe for children so they know how long they may stay before re-entering the class activity.

Have children work together to create situations that could lead to needing some time in the Safe Calming Station. Write these situations on chart paper and post it in the space.

| Materials | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chart paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Marker |



| Materials | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bottle of bubbles (or bubble mixture created with liquid detergent) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fly swatters |

Bubbles

Demonstrate breathing techniques (and the value of breathing techniques) by discussing the following:

- When you are worried or angry you breathe differently.
- If you want to calm yourself, you need to take in nice long breaths and blow air out slowly.

Slowly blow some bubbles and tell the children to watch all of your worries floating away!

Demonstrate blowing really quickly versus really slowly, and discuss the difference in the bubbles. Allow the children to take turns blowing bubbles. Volunteers identify feelings or emotions that make them feel upset. Explain to the children that if they feel worried, angry, or other emotions they identified they can blow pretend bubbles to help themselves feel better!

That's Not Funny

Approaches to Learning

Attends to tasks for brief periods of time

Social/Emotional Development

Engages in associative play and begins to play cooperatively with friends

Engages independently in simple social problem solving including offering potential solutions and reflecting on the appropriateness of the solution

Plays with peers in a coordinated manner including assigning roles, materials and actions

Recognizes and identifies feelings and emotions of characters in stories or real life situations

Responds appropriately to bullying, teasing, or unkind behavior

Takes the perspective of others and responds appropriately

Part 1

Work together with the children in small groups to each create a puppet by doing the following:

- Draw a face on the paper bag.
- Stuff the bag with newspaper.
- Insert a craft stick or paint stick in the opening.
- Use the rubber band to close the paper bag around the bag and stick. Add hair if desired.
- Print each child's name with a permanent marker on the stick.

Part 2

Tell the children the following story:

- Jenny and Rick are both four years old. They are in the same class. Every day Jenny calls Rick a baby. Rick feels sad and upset when Jenny calls him a baby. Some of the other children in the class hear Jenny call Rick a baby and they laugh.

Discuss the fact that when you watch or hear someone being teased or being called a name, it is called being a bystander.

Explain that the puppets the children created will pretend they are bystanders while your two puppets act out the story of Jenny and Rick.

Choose 4 volunteers to be the bystanders using their puppets. Help them decide how they will act as bystanders. Will they do nothing, will they laugh, or repeat "baby?" Role play using your puppets as Jenny and Rick, and the bystanders react.

After the role play the children discuss how it feels to be a bystander or someone watching someone else being mean. Discuss how they would feel if someone was watching while they were being teased. Ask them if it would be hurtful and have them explain why.

Choose 4 new volunteers to use their puppets to act as bystanders. Together they decide on a different response to the story. Read the story again and the children use the puppets to role play again demonstrating the response they chose.

Create additional situations and repeat this activity as time allows.

Materials

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Small brown lunch bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Crumbled newspaper for stuffing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Craft sticks or paint sticks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rubber bands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Crayons, markers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yarn for hair (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Glue or glue stick |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Two teacher-created or purchased puppets |

