

**Helping Your
Child Develop
Healthy
Friendships**

Presented by WCS Elementary School Counselors

Meet Our Counselors!

Mrs. Tallie Paz - Valley View

Mrs. Brittany Laino - Overlook

Ms. Thora Reagan - Isham

Mrs. Meagan Neumann - Franklin

Ms. Carly Willis - Lincoln

Mrs. Laurie Ryder- Grizzly Academy

Activity

What do children carry in their backpacks?



Take a moment to write down the answer to this question

How do I know if
my child is tattling
on another child
or reporting
something serious?

TATTLING	REPORTING
Getting someone IN trouble	Getting someone OUT of trouble
Unimportant	Important
Harmless	Harmful or dangerous
Accident	Being mean on purpose

Types of bullying

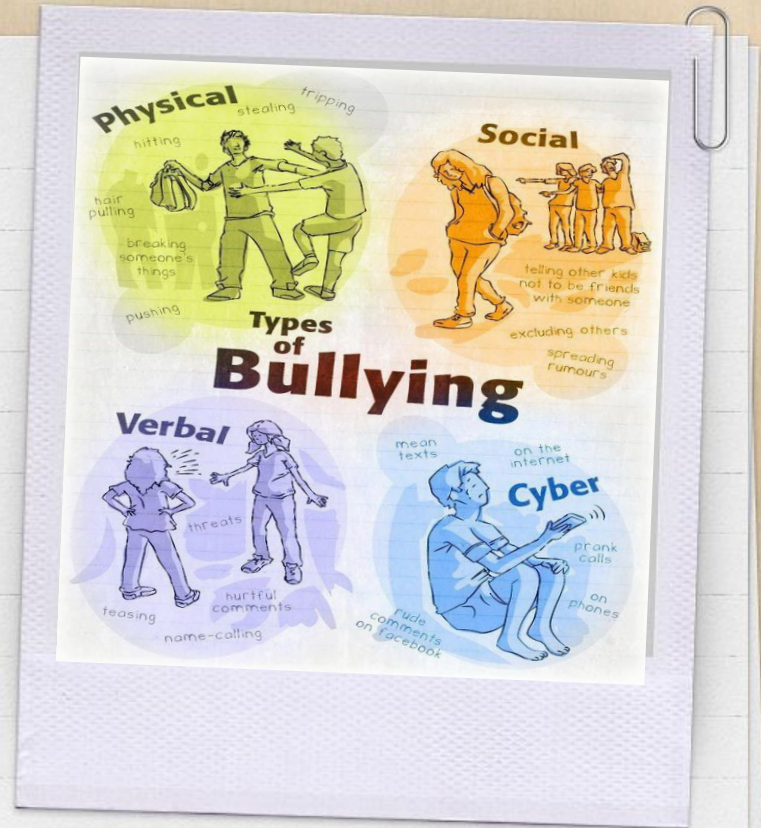
Physical: Hitting, shoving, tripping, stealing, breaking things, etc.

Verbal: Name calling, threats, inappropriate comments, etc.

Emotional (Relational Aggression):

Exclusion, manipulation, spreading rumors, humiliation, etc.

Cyber: Bullying done via technology, creating a fake account, posting inappropriate photos, etc.



Not Everything Is Bullying!

Bullying:

- Repeated
- Intentional
- Hurtful
- One-Sided

Conflict:

- One time or occasional
- Not planned
- Hurtful
- Both parties are involved

Mean:

- One time or occasional
- Intentional
- Hurtful
- One-Sided

Rude:

- One time or occasional
- Unintentional
- Hurtful
- One-Sided

- Repeated
- Intentional
- Hurtful
- One-Sided
- Imbalance of power

In order for it to be bullying, it must meet ALL of these criteria.



Unhealthy Friendship Situations

Situations to watch for...

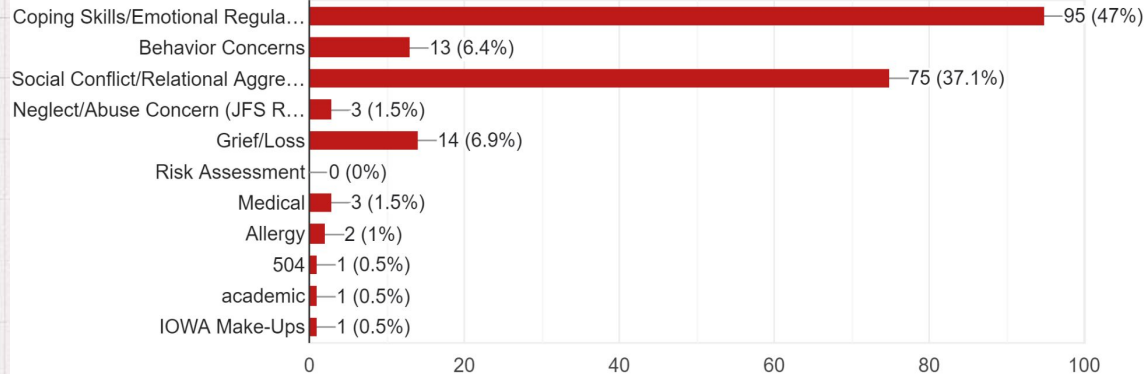
- When a friend appears to keep your child from playing with anyone else
- When a friend is kind to your child in one setting and unkind in another setting
- When a friend says to your child, "I don't want to be your friend anymore."
- When friends are telling others not to be your child's friend
- When a friend says something unkind, then says, "just kidding!"
- Ultimatums ("I won't be your friend if you are friends with him")

Are we
friends, or
what?

Currently at Franklin...

Reason for Session

202 responses



**-47% Coping
Skills/Emotional
Regulation**

**-37% Social
Conflict/Relational
Aggression**



How to Help your Child with Friendship Conflicts

What can you do to help your child?

Validate your child's feelings:

- Even if you feel they are overreacting, your child's feelings are real to them
- Simply say, "I can see that you are upset. All feelings are okay. Now how are we going to work through this?"

Be an Active Listener:

- Without distractions like phones, TV, make eye contact with your child, listen to their words, nod to let them know you are listening, don't offer comments until they are done talking
- Ask questions about what they shared



More Tips to Help Your Child

Avoid judgment and negative comments:

- Try to use comments like, "It sounds like you are feeling frustrated with your friend." Instead of "That girl is mean! Her mom is mean too."
- Children will repeat what parents say, "My dad thinks you are a bully!" or "My mom won't let me be your friend anymore."

Brainstorm solutions together of how your child can work through the problem:

- Say, "Let's think of possible solutions you can do to handle this situation using respect and kindness." (ex. Setting healthy boundaries, using "I feel" messages, apologizing if it's warranted)



More Tips to Help Your Child

As parents, we know that it hurts us when our children are hurting. When friendship issues happen, our instinct is to jump in and protect our child and fix things so that our child has no more hurt.

The truth is, our children have to have opportunities to feel those big emotions and find ways to get through them with healthy coping strategies. Just as important, is for kids to recognize that they had big emotions, and **made it through**. This builds resilience.



Help Your Child Set Boundaries

- Using a sports field of some sort with boundary lines, explain to your child what the boundary lines are for, even draw it out on a piece of paper
- Let them know that if the ball is “in bounds” it’s okay, but if the ball is “out of bounds” it’s not okay
- Then you can use the reference to have your child tell you things that their peer is doing that is NOT okay, and write them in the margins outside the boundaries. Then you can write things that your child feels comfortable with from that peer in the “in bounds” part of the field



Setting Boundaries (continued)

- Then help your child find words to use with his/her peer.
- Examples:
"I like playing with you on the swings when you push me forward, but I don't like when you twirl me around because I get scared."

"I am okay with you and I giving fist bumps, but I am not comfortable with you jumping up on my back and hanging on me."



Modeling & Role Playing

- Children model their parent behavior. If you use name calling when you are upset with others, your child will mimic that behavior
- Self-reflection helps us to see how we are acting and how it may relate to our child's behavior
- If your child has some situations that come up, pretending that you are the other child, and having your child practice using their "I feel" messages, boundary setting or using some of the ideas you brainstormed together



Making fun of shortcomings of another Leaving others out on purpose

Lying/Dishonesty Name Calling Trash Talking Teasing

Exaggerating Blaming others Bossiness Rudeness Tattling

Insults One-upping others Putting others down

Refusing to play with a specific child Manipulating peers

Gossip/Spreading Rumors Physical aggression-emotional dysregulation

Not sharing Poor Sportsmanship Being Sassy Mean comments

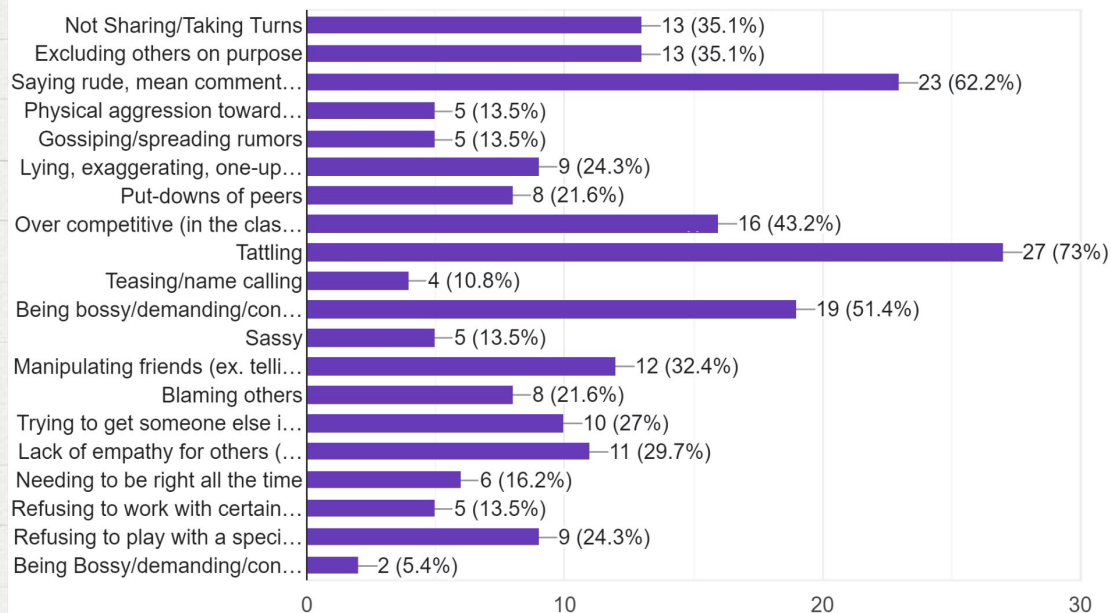
Not taking turns Trying to get others in trouble

Telling others NOT to play with someone Lack of Empathy Need to always be right

**Things our Teachers Reported
Most about Friendships**

What are the most common peer conflicts you see in your classroom, recess, etc?

37 responses



Top 3 Conflicts

-Tattling **73%**

-Saying Rude/ Mean
Comments **62%**

-Being Bossy/
Demanding/Controlling
Peers **56%**

What are the most hurtful things kids say or do to other kids?

- "I don't want to be your friend anymore."
- "Don't be her friend anymore because she's mean."
- "My mom (or dad) doesn't like you."
- "Go kill yourself."
- "Nobody likes you."
- "You are annoying"
- Excluding on purpose, but giving another reason.
 - "We'll play with you tomorrow."
 - (And then never follow through.)





**Strategies to
help your child
with effective
communication**

"I feel" Statements

"I feel..." statements help children focus on identifying and expressing THEIR feelings about a situation.

These are different from "You" messages, which put someone on the defensive.

I feel _____
when you _____.
I would like you to _____.

Example:

I feel **worried**...

When you **are playing with someone else**...

Because you are my
good friend...

**Can we play together
tomorrow?**

Helping Your Child Identify Feelings

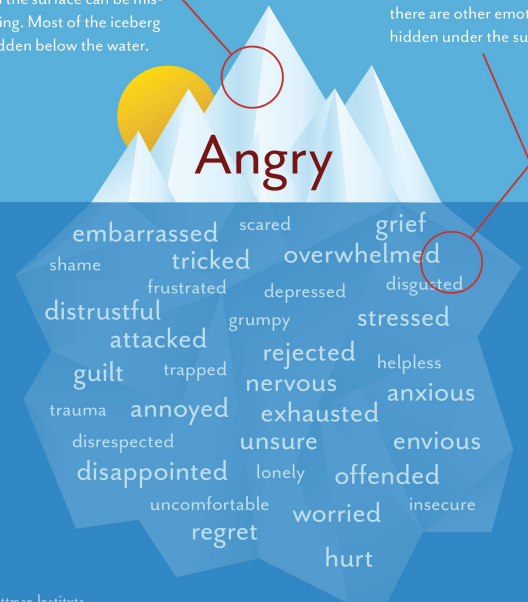
How can you help yourself?

The BLUE zone	The GREEN zone	The YELLOW zone	The RED zone
  	  	  	  
How might you feel?	How might you feel?	How might you feel?	How might you feel?
sad tired bored moving slowly	happy okay focussed ready to learn	nervous confused silly not ready to learn	angry frustrated scared out of control
What might help you?	What might help you?	What might help you?	What might help you?
Talk to someone Stretch Take a brain break Stand Take a walk Close my eyes	The goal of this exercise is to get to the GREEN zone. What can you do to be happy, calm and ready to learn?	Talk to someone Count to 20 Take deep breaths Squeeze something Draw a picture Take a brain break	Stop what I'm doing Make sensible choices Take deep breaths Ask for a break Find a safe space Ask for help

Anger Iceberg

Icebergs are large pieces of ice found floating in the open ocean. What you can see from the surface can be misleading. Most of the iceberg is hidden below the water.

This is how anger works. Often when we are angry, there are other emotions hidden under the surface.



The Gottman Institute

Developmental Considerations

The Frontal & Prefrontal Lobes of the Brain:

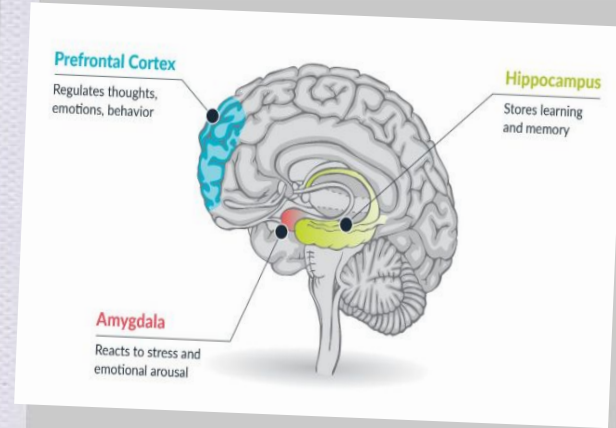
- Is not fully developed until age 23 (Where we make good choices! Think Rationally.)
- Is not fully developed making it hard for children to show impulse-control, problem solving, organization/planning, and initiating tasks independently

The Amygdala part of the brain:

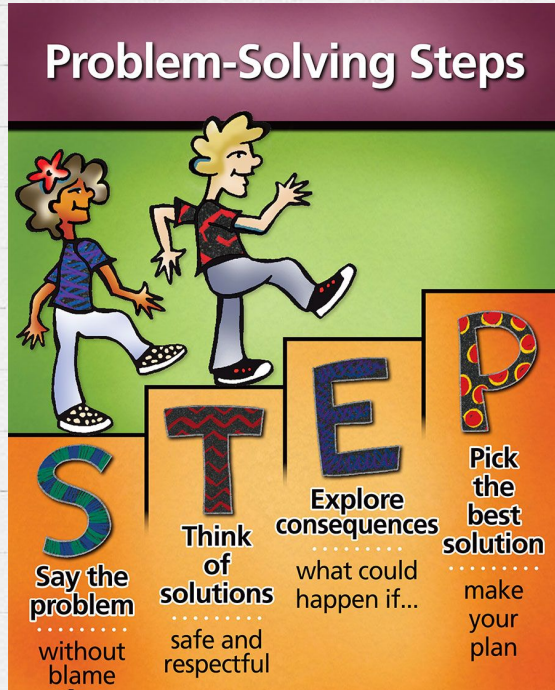
- Our emotional brain, used to keep cavemen safe, by triggering **fight, flight or freeze** response to stress (learning to manage our emotions is ongoing throughout life, but can be controlled with healthy coping strategies)

The Hippocampus part of the brain:

- Is not fully developed until well into the teen years
- Stores learning and memories



Steps to Problem-Solving



Help your child work through these steps to solve problems at home with siblings and peers.



**Advice for
Parents from
our WCS KG-4th
Grade Teachers**

Advice from our KG-4 Teachers

- Allow your child to talk through their problems with other kids. (Part of social learning is feeling uncomfortable and learning to overcome uncomfortableness).
- Help children to set boundaries by modeling that behavior.
- Not all kids will like each other, however every child deserves respect and kindness.
- Teach children a realistic view of what is "fair", and that it is okay if we all have different things. We don't always get what we want.



MORE Advice from our KG-4 Teachers

- Giving a child everything they want is creating a child who will have trouble socially in life.
- Talking to your child about how every child has different strengths and weaknesses, but everyone contributes to class and friendships in different ways.
- Treat others the way you want to be treated "The Golden Rule."
- Practice being a good friend...little eyes are watching!
- Play games with your child...taking turns, problem solving, handling disappointment (all are skills they need in friendships).



MORE Advice from our KG-4 Teachers

- Help your child by talking about what behavior does a friend show to another friend.
- Read books with characters who show empathy and good friendship skills, AND read books with characters who do NOT show empathy and talk about the characters and what your child's thoughts are about the characters.
- Talk to your child about how your child's behavior affects whether someone seeks them out as a friend or not.



➤ Healthy Friendship Traits Consist of...

- Being **BALANCED**: Friends feel equal to each other.
- Being **ACCEPTING**: You can be YOU around your friends and not feel judged.
- Being **PREDICTABLE**: You can guess how your friend will treat you.
- Having **BOUNDARIES**: Each friend stays in charge of him/herself (and no one else!).



Warning Signs

- When threatening and/or bodily harm is taking place
- Changes in mood, sleep habits, eating habits, activity level
- Refusing to go to school and/or social events

**Non -
Negotiables**



A student's backpack
can be very heavy; not
just from school
supplies, but from the
unthinkable....



Caregiver of Siblings

Parent Incarceration

Racism

Worry

Domestic Violence

Single Parent Family

Tiredness

Disabilities

Anger

Hunger

Divorce

Fear

Foster Child

Sadness

Trauma

Homelessness

Drug addiction

Love

Neglect

Sensory Concerns

Family Mental Illness

Executive Functioning Concerns

ADHD- Impulsivity

Death of caregiver

Family Member Suicide

Academic Struggles

Child Mental Illness

Anxiety

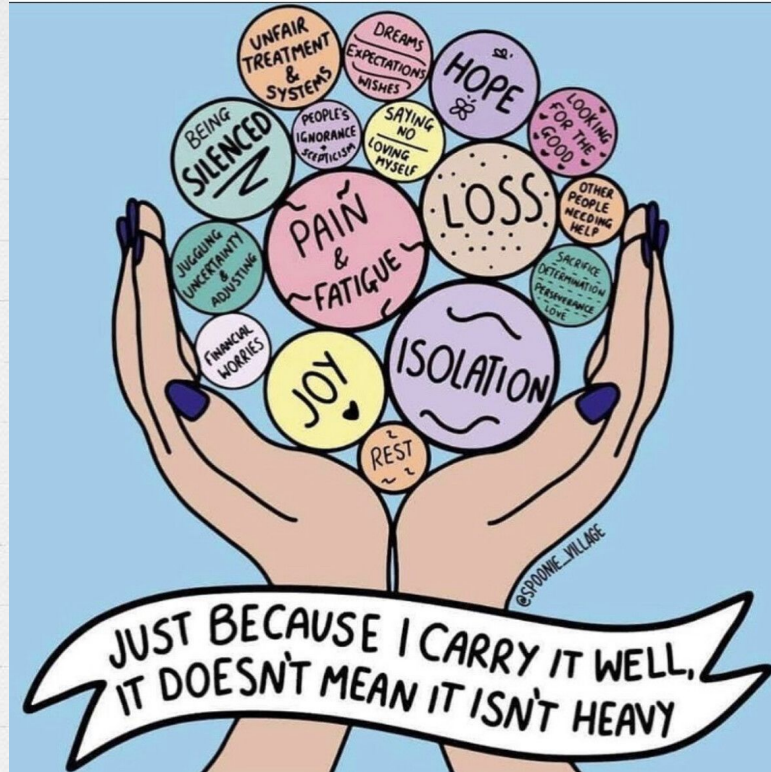
Raised by Grandparents

English Language Learner

Experienced a Pandemic

Never been to School before

**ARE WE PREPARED TO TEACH COMPASSION FOR
CHILDREN AND THE LOAD THAT THEY CARRY?**



We Appreciate You Joining Us!

Mrs. Tallie Paz - Valley View

Mrs. Brittany Laino - Overlook

Ms. Thora Reagan - Isham

Mrs. Meagan Neumann - Franklin

Ms. Carly Willis - Lincoln

Mrs. Laurie Ryder- Grizzly Academy

**Thank
you!**