

THE COUNSELORS' CONNECTION



The Newsletter of the
Elementary Counseling Department

What's in this month's issue:

- TEASING, BULLYING, CONFLICTS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
- HELPING CHILDREN LEARN HOW TO ASSESS AND SOLVE PROBLEMS
- TRY IT AT HOME!
- SOCIAL STORY ABOUT TEASING

TEASING, BULLYING, CONFLICTS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Teasing, bullying and conflict are words often used interchangeably, but involve three distinctly different types of interactions. Understanding the specific behaviors involved can help parents and guardians coach kids on the best way to respond. So, what's the difference?

Teasing can consist of neutral, friendly, playful words and actions but also can be negative, annoying, or hurtful. Teasing is often intended to get attention or provoke a reaction. Strategies such as under-reacting or ignoring often put an end to teasing, but children should be encouraged to seek help from an adult if those strategies aren't effective. When teasing becomes hostile behavior intended to exert power over another person, it can escalate to bullying.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that is *intentional, persistent, severe, pervasive, and involves a social or physical power imbalance between the person doing the bullying and the target.*

The **four types of bullying** are **verbal** (using mean words to hurt or intimidate); **physical** (harming a person's body or possessions); **social** (intended to hurt someone's social relationships or reputation); and **cyber** (harming others over a device). Children who experience or witness bullying at school are encouraged to stand up to bullying and report it, but parents and guardians should contact the school immediately if bullying occurs. Bullying is serious behavior that cannot be ignored and rarely stops without adult intervention.

Conflicts are arguments, disagreements, or fights between people and a normal part of human relationships. While conflicts may involve verbal namecalling or physical aggression, a one-time event of two children fighting with no perceived power imbalance is not an example of bullying.

Want to Learn More?
Read [How to Talk About Bullying from stopbullying.gov](https://stopbullying.gov)

DID YOU KNOW?

The SEL program includes lessons that teach children the difference between teasing, bullying, and conflict; how to prevent and respond to teasing, bullying, and cyberbullying; how to be upstander; and effective conflict resolution strategies.

HELPING CHILDREN LEARN HOW TO ASSESS AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

Problem solving is an important skill that continues to develop as our children grow and mature. We help to facilitate the development of their self-esteem by allowing them the opportunity to assess situations and develop resolutions that are pleasing to themselves and the groups in which they interact.

One way to help students develop strategies for problem solving is to teach them to look at the size of the problem. Ask them to determine if the problem is a “big deal” or a “little deal”. A “little deal” is a small problem that takes little time to resolve and can be handled by the child themselves. A “big deal” is a big problem that requires help from one or more adults to resolve. When solving a big problem the child and adult can work in tandem to resolve the issue. Together they may decide to reach out to other adults with more expertise to handle the specific issue.



[Click here for more information on how to practice and implement problem solving strategies at home.](#)

TRY IT AT HOME!

Big problems are hard for children to solve on their own and usually require help from an adult and small problems can be solved without an adult and don't need a big reaction.

Help guide your child into understanding if their “problem” is a big problem that requires assistance, or a small problem that they can handle on their own by asking these questions:

- Is anyone hurt? (big problem)
- Is anyone being teased? (big problem)
- Are people being unsafe? (big problem)
- Are you able to solve the problem on your own? (small problem)

Remind yourselves and your children that these questions may need to wait until after a small “cooling off” period. If needed, help your child take a few breaths, or other calming strategies before using the questions.

Helping children learn to problem solve is a life skill that will help them in all areas of their lives.

SOCIAL STORY ABOUT TEASING

A social story is a simple story that describes a social situation. Social stories depict the appropriate ways in which a child should act in that situation. The story can teach children about an event, skill, or topic.

The simple language and graphics help children to know what to expect and how to respond in a situation that may be new or difficult for them. Social stories can be used by all learners.



[Click Here to view a Social Story about Teasing](#)

Social Stories