

RAISE

REDUCE AGGRESSION, INCREASE SELF EMPOWERMENT

Every year, every OPUSD fourth grade student participates in a six-week training on reducing aggression/bullying and increasing self-empowerment. In our lessons, the students learn about the five main types of interactions between students. We stress that it is important to know what type of interaction you are having in order that you can plan an appropriate response.

For example, teasing between friends may not warrant a report to an adult, but bullying will. An accident may happen, but without an apology it becomes a mean moment. Arguments are never fun, but both sides have a role to play and need to work together to make amends.

The five types of interactions are defined as:

Teasing: Fun for everyone and everyone is equal. This includes “keep away” games in which everyone is having fun and the object is returned appropriately, “trash-talk” between good friends, and some name-calling. Boys often bond through friendly teasing that is based in equality and fun.

Arguments: Not fun for anyone but everyone is equal. Examples of arguments are disagreements over who was first in line, who is the owner of an object, or whether one person was mean or not. Arguments happen even between good friends and everyone is equal in the situation.

Accidents: Someone got hurt either physically or verbally but it was not on purpose. The key is that a sincere apology was made. Without an apology, an accident becomes a mean moment.

Mean Moments: When someone is hurt on purpose. It is possible that there is an inequality, but the act isn't to the degree of sustained repetition as bullying. This could include name-calling, leaving someone out, taking the belongings of someone, or physical acts like kicking, pushing, or hitting. These acts are not nice and should be addressed, but it does not rise to the level of bullying.

Bullying: Hurtful, Unequal, Repeated over, Time. The key to bullying is the unequal balance of power that is present. The aggressor may have more friends, be more socially savvy, be better at a skill, be larger in size, etc. Bullying must also have the element of being repeated. Bullying is never a one-time event.