

# Teaching Kids to Beat Bullying

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Bullying is all about power. One child or a group of kids intentionally hurt a targeted child because they get satisfaction and power in harming kids whom they see as weaker, to build up their own sense of power.

Bullying is not about a conflict between two children who may be somewhat evenly matched. It crosses the line into unequal power dynamics where one person wants to control another. The bully believes that the target is weaker in some way, whether that is through some physical weakness, emotional vulnerability or social deficit. No matter what, the bully has fun and gets satisfaction harming their targets.

Bullying is something that all children experience, witness or try out themselves. The important thing about bullying is that it we must use this as an opportunity to teach kids skills to help them through their life. Kids who have opportunities to learn skills to beat bullying can increase their self worth, value and esteem. Like all of us, the real lessons in building self-esteem come from finding a way to overcome adversity when we feel really down and overcome the problem to a more successful resolution.

**RAP with kids:** Recognize, Act and Preserve is a 3 step program to help kids deal with bullying and find ways to feel less like a victim. I developed this program based on experience with thousands of kids and adults who faced bullying problems and learned ways to overcome it. In this workshop, I'll present the key aspects of my RAP with kids program. These tools can be used by your staff to help kids become bullyproofed.

**Recognize:** I teach you how to recognize the signs of bullying and ask the right questions to help kids open up. **Act on a Plan:** You need to construct a plan to help kids feel more in control of themselves and give them the tools to help them feel like they can handle bullying on their own, or in ways that will increase their power. **Preserve:** Helping kids feel like they can maintain their bullyproofing gains will help them feel more prepared if another bullying problem comes along.

Bullyproofing is all about teaching kids how to build their own power so they don't put out the cues that make bullies see them as victims. When kids learn how to feel less vulnerable as victims, the power shift can be remarkable.