



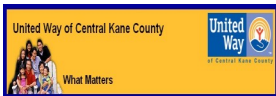
## Caring Hearts/Helping Hands

News You Can Use to Change Your Community  
A Community Care Team Newsletter



CONLEY OUTREACH COMMUNITY SERVICES / COMMUNITY CARE TEAM

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### Local Efforts to Reduce Bullying

Kaneland area parents and concerned community members have recently come together to form a grass roots group to address bullying. **Knights Against Bullying** has a 3-fold mission: 1) to raise awareness about bullying in the district 2) to ensure that a comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention plan is in place and 3) to reduce bullying by giving a voice to its victims. The group meets at the Kaneville United Methodist Church, 46w764 Main Street Road in Kaneville. For more information or to get involved, contact them at [knightsagainstbullying@yahoo.com](mailto:knightsagainstbullying@yahoo.com).

#### AREA RESOURCES

TriCity Family Services 630/232-1070  
Family Counseling Services 630/844-2662  
Safe Harbor Counseling 630/466-8657  
Heartland Counseling 630/443-9100  
Centennial Counseling Services 630/377-6613

Find back issues of our CCT Newsletters at:  
[www.conleyoutreach.org](http://www.conleyoutreach.org)

### Why Me?

Intentional, hurtful teasing or bullying is NEVER excusable. Intentional cruelty is NOT acceptable. Having said that, Freeman notes that sometimes children's behavior does bring on teasing, and behavior can be changed. The most common examples she encounters include:

#### **Socially Unacceptable Behaviors**

Children who look sloppy, have body odor or poor table manners or who are prone to temper tantrums and emotional meltdowns are regular targets of teasing. So are kids who behave in ways typical of much younger students. While individuality is to be encouraged, it is important to assess whether your child's behavior is appropriate or out of the norm for kids that age. Helping a child stop behavior for which he is being teased involves two steps: telling the child that the behavior is the cause of the teasing and finding a way to help the child remember not to repeat the behavior. Even when

the behavior stops, the teasing may not because the child has been labeled. Our next CCT newsletter will offer strategies for this situation.

#### **Disabilities and Differences**

If your child has a disability or difference for which she may be teased, be proactive. Some parents speak to the class about the child's difference. Information can also be shared with parents of classmates. This reduces uneasiness and satisfies curiosity.

#### **Parents' Behavior**

It is sometimes difficult to recognize that our behavior as parents may be causing a problem for our children. Being overprotective and helping your child do things she should be doing on her own can lead to teasing, especially when it is done in the presence of peers. A child who is not allowed to do for himself is given the message that he is unable to do for himself. This is often internalized as incompetence and can result in low self-esteem. Children with low self esteem are often targeted by bullies.

#### **Conversation Prompts**

- Who is the teaser/bully?
- Is the bully a classmate, a friend, neighbor or a child on the bus?
- Is the teaser older, younger or the same age as your child?
- Is the child teased about a physical trait or difference or about what he does or does not do in class, on the bus or on the playground?
- Where is the bullying occurring?
- How long has it been happening?

Freeman warns not to give premature advice. Wait until your child has finished talking. If you interject comments and advice, she may clam up or cut the conversation short. **Don't overreact.** Validate your child's feelings. Work with your child to figure out why she is being teased or bullied and some strategies to reduce or address the issue.