What If Your Child/Student Is the Bully?

ANABETH L. VITANZOS, Teacher III
Sta. Rosa, Pilar, Bataan

First and foremost, remember that bullies are made and not born. Today, bullying has become rampant not only in educational institutions but even in other places as well. The bully might be in your advisory class or is living under your roof.

There is this internationally recognized program utilizing a fully-integrated approach to preventing bullying. It is called Olweus (pronounced Ohl-VAY-us). The program defines "bullying as repeated exposure involving an imbalance of power-- from negative actions that are physical (hitting, kicking) or verbal (name-calling, threatening), to other behaviors such as obscene gestures or intentional exclusion."

There are many reasons why a child bullies. Some for the control or to feel powerful. Some to increase their peer status. Some because they are bullied themselves. If this bully is in your advisory class or is your child, what should you do?

It is crucial to understand that parental involvement is key to stop bullying. As a teacher, you are most likely regarded as a second parent of a child in school so you can help, too. To begin with, here are some simple steps you can do:

1. Acknowledge the problem. Do not deny that your child is the bully. Instead, talk to the child and let them know what is going on and that you are taking it seriously/ directly tell the child that the act will not be tolerated.

2. Be a hands-on parent/teacher. Be ready to listen. Keep communication lines open. Know whom the child hangs out with. Be involved in his activities.


4. Reinforce positive behaviors. Remember that you can sample and teach kindness, empathy,
and compassion by providing opportunities for cooperation. For example, have a pet for the child to take care of, enroll the child in meaningful classes that enhance talents and skills.

5. Provide classroom and school activities where responsibility and cooperation are emphasized.

6. Seek professional help, if needed.

If bullying is not checked and managed, this can lead to serious consequences and even life threatening events. Help the child get back on the right track with strong compassion. Keep communication lines open, be firm, and consistent. Soon, the bully will be no more but the kind child you first held in your hands or you first saw saying "Good morning, Teacher!" to you at the school gate.

References: