



Dear Parents,

We are happy to inform you that your child's school will be utilizing *the K-5 Bullying and Cyberbullying Curriculum*, provided to all Massachusetts schools by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State University. Schools in the Commonwealth do not pay anything for the Curriculum.

Please note that many schools utilize more than one resource in their quest to educate children about bullying and cyberbullying, and your child's school may be using other programs in addition to this Curriculum. The Curriculum is specifically designed to dovetail with, and not to contradict, current best practices in the field. It is a new Curriculum and is currently being field-tested.

The Curriculum is based on best practices identified through decades of research on bullying prevention, age-appropriate teaching methodologies, and recent research about the roots of cyberbullying that can be addressed during elementary school. Although most cyberbullying occurs during middle and high school, elementary-aged students are increasingly involved and the Curriculum is designed to help prevent these problems.

On the next page, we have provided basic information about the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center and the curriculum that your child's class will be utilizing. You will also find a Parent's Guide with a sample Lesson Plan and suggestions for family discussions about the relevant topics. We strongly encourage all parents to consider discussing some of these issues with their child. For more free resources for parents, visit our webpage at <http://www.MARCCenter.org> and click on PARENTS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth K. Englander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth K. Englander, Ph.D.

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The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center and The K-5 Bullying & Cyberbullying Curriculum

What is MARC?

The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center is an academic Center located on the campus of Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Our goal is to bring low- or no-cost services to K-12 education, law enforcement, and other professional caregivers for children in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our services include school programs, conferences, workshops, consultation, and research, in the area of bullying prevention, cyberbullying education and prevention, and violence prevention. Most of our programs are available at no cost to schools in the Commonwealth.

MARC was founded and is directed by Dr. Elizabeth Englander, a professor of Psychology at the University, and an expert in the field of bullying and cyberbullying. MARC also benefits from the services of other academics and faculty members, graduate students, undergraduate students, and other support staff.

About This Curriculum

The goal of this curriculum is to educate children in grades K-5 about bullying and cyberbullying, raise their awareness about how these behaviors impact children, help children identify the adults in the school they can feel safe to go to for help and support, and help children develop additional strategies to deal with all aspects of bullying. It utilizes both Teacher-As-Educator and Peer Learning Models. Interactions between grades, intended to dispel stereotypes and promote social pressures to model appropriate behaviors, occur in the curriculum in kindergarten, first grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade. The curriculum also teaches about bystander behaviors and how these can unwittingly contribute to bullying in school and how online bullying feels and can lead to more problems in school as well. Bullying and cyberbullying are not treated separately or even as though they are significantly different. In fact, one of the goals of the curriculum is to underscore the idea that positive social behavior is important in *all* realms – online and offline.

For more information about the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, please visit our website at www.MARCCenter.org.



Curriculum Objectives for Fourth Grade

Curriculum Objectives

- Developing more detailed descriptions of bullying and cyberbullying, and of their impact upon children.
- Further development of discussion skills with peers on the topics of bullying and cyberbullying.
- Develop awareness of how older elementary students impact and influence the development of bullying and cyberbullying among younger students.
- Modeling positive social behavior for the benefit of first graders.
- Learning how going online can help spread rumors and can escalate conflicts.

Fourth Grade Lessons include the following:

- Considering how bullying and cyberbullying happen in your own life
- Learning that going online escalates bullying and conflicts
- Learning about the impact that rumors can have, especially if they are talked about and spread electronically
- Thinking about younger peers and how older children have an impact on their perceptions of bullying and cyberbullying.
- Helping younger peers learn about bullying, how to reduce and prevent it, and how to respond to it.



Sample Lesson Plan and Parent Discussion Guide Fourth Grade Bullying & Cyberbullying Curriculum

This lesson utilizes the creation of simple, animated movies to encourage children to present their own views of bullying and cyberbullying. If you do not have access to computers, this can be a drawing exercise using the blank template on the next page to create a Book. However, learning this process is simple (a Primer for teachers follows below) and it is *strongly* encouraged.

Activity #1: Introduction

- Today we're going to explore what kinds of experiences you've had or seen with bullying or cyberbullying. Before we start, can anyone define *bullying* for us?
 - Intentional meanness or cruelty
 - Happens more than once
 - The bully has more power than the target.
- Great. Now, who can define *cyberbullying* for us?
 - Bullying that happens on the computer
 - Or on cell phones

Activity #2: Creating an online cartoon movie about bullying or cyberbullying.

- This activity involves students planning a brief story about bullying or cyberbullying, and then using a simple online website to create a cartoon movie about their story.
- Steps:
 - Students should create a brief outline of their story. Usually this will be one to two paragraphs.
 - Using this brief outline, students should create a set of scenes in their story. Each scene should be labeled as a FEELING, SPEAKING/YELLING/SINGING, or ACTION scene. (See The Example on the next page.)
- Finally, create your scenes on Zimmertwins.com. (See *Teacher's Guide for Learning and Using Zimmertwins* – included here.)

** Note: if time permits, have the students complete **two** stories: one for bullying in school, and one for cyberbullying.

Discussions to have at home:

- What kinds of bullying have you seen at school?
- What did you do, when you saw this happen? I know you know that it's important NOT to help a bully. Did you remember that? Did you apply it?
 - (Note: this discussion should not be used to denigrate young children who, for example, forget and stop and stare when they see a peer being bullied. If your child realizes that he or she did something like laugh along, or stop and stare, be understanding about how difficult these situations are, but also encourage him or her to think about what to do if it happens again.)
- How do you think that bystanders can help? Adults often talk about standing up to bullies. How do you feel about that? What are other options?
- At your school, who the adults you would go to for help and support?
- Why do you think that it's important for bystanders to help out? Would you want bystanders to help YOU if someone were bullying you?
- Why do you think that grownups are so worried about bullying and cyberbullying? How do you think that these make the targets feel? How important is it to you to be a good person who treats people nicely? It is very important to me.
- Have you ever seen someone in a computer game say something mean to someone else? Show me the games you play! Let's talk about how to handle it if you do see someone be mean.
 - Most games have REPORT buttons. Show your child how to click on that button if they see someone being mean.
 - Discuss how you really want your child to talk to you if this ever happens to them.
- I know it's sometimes very hard for kids to talk to grownups about bullying and cyberbullying. Do you think it's sometimes hard to do that? Why?