



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 at the end.

Elizabeth K. Englander, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology & Director, Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center
Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, MA 02325
phone: (508) 531-1784 fax: (508) 531-4379 Email: eenglander@bridgew.edu



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 Kindergarten

Curriculum Objectives

- Learn bullying and cyberbullying vocabulary.
 - This skill addresses several needs. First, having vocabulary about bullying and cyberbullying enables children to discuss it with each other and with adults, and to identify these problems when they occur. In addition, learning the meaning of words such as “bullying” helps children know when an incident is bullying – and when it is not.
- Begin to learn basic group discussion skills.
 - Discussion skills are central to raising awareness about bullying and cyberbullying. It is only through discussion that children are able to express thoughts, feelings, and opinions about these behaviors.
- Observe older peers as they model pro-social and anti-bullying behaviors.
 - Relationships between younger children and older peers serve several purposes. First, children greatly enjoy learning from older peers and what they learn may be especially meaningful. Second, relationships between older and younger children can be very protective against bullying and cyberbullying incidents, as older children often develop protective feelings about their younger friends.

Kindergarten Lessons include the following:

- Alphabet letter recognition skills and vocabulary about bullying and cyberbullying
 - Through alphabet recognition exercises, children are taught relevant vocabulary. For example, they identify the letter “B” in the word “Bullying” and then discuss the meaning of the word.
- Group discussion as an emerging skill
 - Although it must be recognized that kindergarteners will not have well-developed group discussion skills, during the discussions following letter recognition, they begin to learn how group discussions operate and the best methods for expressing thoughts and opinions.



Sample Lesson Plan and Parent Discussion Guide Kindergarten Bullying & Cyberbullying Curriculum

SAMPLE LESSON

Goal: Learn the vocabulary of bullying, cyberbullying, peer conflict, and cyber-concepts.

The lessons for kindergartners do not depend upon solid literacy skills, although familiarity with the alphabet is useful. The lessons may actually be used to help promote that familiarity.

These first seven lessons involve:

- Alphabet letter recognition skills
- Learning basic concepts and vocabulary about bullying and cyberbullying
- Group discussion as an emerging skill

Activity #1: Developing vocabulary

- Paired with PowerPoint (“MARC Kindergarten Curriculum”)
- As each PowerPoint slide is shown on the screen, ask one child to point to the two instances of the letter being displayed.
 - For example:
 - **Today we’re going to look at four letters: A, B, C and D. We’re also going to learn some new words, and some words that you already know.**
 - (When the first slide is shown) **Can anyone point to the letter A? It is in two places.**
 - Next, speak the vocabulary word.
 - Ask the children if they know the definition.
 - Using the talking points in the following pages to promote brief discussions about each word. Some words may provoke no comments; others may generate comments and discussion of up to 10 minutes.

Discussions to have at home:

- Ask your child to tell you the new words they have learned, and their meanings.
- Reinforce positive concepts for your child. For example, if your child tells you that they learned the letter “N” and the word “Nice,” you can respond by telling him or her how important you believe it is to be nice to others.
- Ask your child to share with you his or her class discussions about being kind and friendly to others.
- Ask your child to tell you about any books their class has read about being kind to other people.