

Kindergartners' Perceptions of Bullying

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education, Brock University

St. Catharines, Ontario

© August, 2002

Abstract

Currently, few studies address what kindergarten children think about bullying behaviour and explore whether or not they perceive bullying as a prevalent concern in their day-to-day school activities. This study described 15 Canadian kindergarten students' graphic and narrative representations (drawings and stories) of their bullying experiences. The content of students' drawings and stories were analyzed to explore how kindergarten children perceived bullying within the context of their lives. Coding categories were developed to analyze the kindergartners' perceptions, and emerging themes were also explored. In general, findings showed that kindergartners perceive bullying situations as occurring during one-to-one peer interaction and not within social group situations. Results are discussed in relation to educational implications.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help, guidance, and support provided by my advisor, Dr. Sandra Leanne Bosacki, throughout this endeavor. I would also like to thank Dr. Anne Elliott and Dr. Zopito Marini for their encouragement and guidance.

Special thanks to my husband, Dan Rezo, for his support and patience throughout this journey. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my friend, Celia Arruda, for all of her help, time, and patience.

Thank-you to my parents, Pamela and Robert Gillies, for teaching me the importance of following one's dreams.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

To learn effectively, children require a safe and protected environment. However, given the recent rise in both media and research reported rates of violence in young Canadians, school boards have been forced to reconsider their policies addressing violence in schools (Chodzinski & Burke, 1998, p. 1). Recent research suggests the critical issues surrounding school violence involve intense peer aggression, victimization, and harassment, referred to as school bullying behaviours, and unfortunately, these behaviour are on the rise (Tremblay, 2000). Thus, educators need to address the practice of bullying as a social behaviour in Canadian schools. After all, preventative, proactive measures reinforce the notion that bullying is unacceptable behaviour (Rigby, 1998, p. 8).

Furthermore, the teaching and learning process needs to encompass “teaching for understanding, teaching students how to learn; and creating a context for learning” (Hounsell, 1984, p. 207). In kindergarten, the context for learning focuses on the social and emotional development of the child and is the ideal setting to promote kindness and empathy in an effort to discourage the development of bullying behaviours by encouraging young children to take the perspective of another and thus not want to cause them hurt or upset. Such a focus on inter- and intrapersonal skills may help to discourage bullying behaviour in that it promotes emotional awareness during early childhood. This is particularly important, as research has linked school bullying with more aggressive acts of violence in later life (Chodzinski & Burke, 1998).

Background of the Problem

Vail (1999) reports, “bullying remains for the most part unacknowledged, underreported, and minimized by schools” (p. 38). For example, sometimes bullying behaviour is viewed as a harmless rite of passage, merely as a normative developmental stage in childhood (Chodzinski & Burke, 1998). This notion is supported by the fact that it is not uncommon to hear adults scold children for tattling and encourage them to solve their own social problems. Unfortunately, telling victims that they must protect themselves from bullies only serves to further isolate and alienate the victims of bullying. Given this current rise in school bullying, it is recognized as a serious problem that can have a significant impact on one’s ability to progress both academically and socially (Banks, 1997; Chodzinski & Burke, 1998). In Canada, approximately one in seven boys between the ages of 4 and 11 (14%) bully others, while one in 20 (5%) are victimized by others. Meanwhile, one in 11 girls between the ages of 4 and 11 (9%) bully others, while one in fourteen (7%) are victimized (Craig, Peters, & Konarski, 1998, p. 17). Craig and Pepler (2000) report that “approximately 10% of students are frightened at school through most of the school day” and that the consequences of being a victim or a bully are significant and long lasting (p. 115). Bullying is the “cruel and repeated oppression by the powerful over the powerless,” and it is disturbing to acknowledge that bullying often is tolerated as part of the normal childhood school experience, when such behaviour would not be allowed to occur in the adult workplace (Rigby, 1998, p. 8).

Sullivan (2000) states that bullying has five levels of impact: (a) the person being bullied, (b) their parents and family members, (c) observers to the bullying who feel unsafe and afraid, (d) the school where the bullying occurs, and (e) the wider school

community. Thus bullying is a multidimensional, complex issue that needs to be addressed in the early years, as research supports the notion that preventive programs are more effective than later intervention programs (Marini, Bombay, Hobin, Winn, & Dumyn, 2000). Furthermore, effective intervention promotes individual responsibility and empathetic awareness for the victim, both of which are valuable lessons to be learned in the early years (O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999).

Therefore, schools need to develop and implement antibullying policies during the early years of schooling. School principals, staffs, and parents need to implement a policy of zero tolerance for bullying, appropriate discipline programs, and opportunities for professional teacher development (Craig et al., 1998, p. 21). Such programs may help to change attitudes and school climates with regard to bullying. Currently, there are many antibullying programs available; unfortunately when it comes to addressing and implementing antibullying measures, educators and students are not adequately trained to do so (Chodzinski & Burke 1998). Furthermore, theoretical confusion exists with regard to the definition and framework within which to view bullying (Marini, Fairbairn, & Zuber, 2001). There are wide ranges of behaviours that fall into the definition of bullying, and it is a contentious issue when attempting to define what meets bullying criteria (Marini et al.). Thus, this study aims to explore bullying in one Canadian kindergarten classroom in order to promote bullying awareness in the early years.

Developmentalists claim that during the ages of 5-7 children are developing the cognitive capacities necessary to demonstrate emotional awareness and the beginnings of empathetic awareness (e.g., Piaget, 1960). To support this development, Maslow (1968) stresses the fundamental human need to feel safe and protected in the early years. As a

key component identified in bullying is a lack of empathy on the bully's part for his/her victim, it would seem imperative that young children be taught the importance of empathy from the very beginning of school (Banks, 1997). Eisenberg and Strayer (1987) report that empathy is positively related to prosocial behaviour. Eisenberg (1992) reports that empathy is linked with prosocial behaviour, such as an increased desire to share one's possessions with an upset friend, among very young children. After all, the presence of empathy has been shown to mitigate aggressive behaviour (Bjorkqvist & Osterman, 2000).

Kindergarten is most often the point in the education process where teachers, parents, and caregivers are in contact on a daily basis, working towards the common goal of socializing the child to become a responsible and moral member of society. During kindergarten critical social skills are taught, and it is important that children learn "to express emotions clearly, to recognize others' expressions of emotions, and to react appropriately to them" (Kestenbaum, Farber, & Stroufe, 1989, p. 51). Hence, kindergarten is a critical time for promoting kindness, empathy, and an abhorrence of bullying. It is essential to embed these social skills during this time, as researchers have found considerable continuity exists between early aggressive childhood behaviour and aggressive adolescent behaviour (O'Connell et al., 1999, p. 1). Therefore, as Paley (1999) stresses, it is imperative that young children are able to be kind to one another, and kindergarten is the ideal place to promote and teach kindness. Kestenbaum et al. propose that "what an individual comes to understand about emotions in the self and others in early relationships, may have an impact on later responding to emotional reactions of others" (p. 51). Many psychologists and educators believe that schools need

to address the notion of self-construction and self-acceptance in order to address the holistic development of the child (Bosacki, 1997). Such a holistic approach to education promotes personal, emotional, and social awareness in the classroom (Bosacki; J.P. Miller, 1992).

As Craig and Pepler (2000) report, in Western societies school children spend one third of their waking hours in school where they “develop fundamental aspects of their personality such as socializing with peers and developing identity, autonomy, and their own sense of morality” (p. 114). It is imperative that from the beginning of one’s schooling, antibullying behaviours are taught and stressed in order to encourage a sense of social morality that recognizes the intrusive infringement bullying has on one’s right to a safe and peaceful school environment. Therefore, a holistic approach may be able to promote personal integration and social awareness in the classroom and thus may have the ability to decrease bullying behaviours and attitudes (Bosacki, 1997). Educators need to expose students to a holistic framework that can lead them “towards their own connection to the world...and may allow them...to view themselves and others from a more inclusive and accepting lens” (Bosacki, p. 59). By teaching children about the interconnectedness of life and of human beings, one is modelling and stressing the importance of valuing and caring for each other. After all, holism is a “curriculum of hope that teaches children to learn to listen [and] love” (Bosacki, p. 59); therefore, it denounces human cruelty and injustice, which form the basis for school bullying.

It is imperative that researchers continue to explore bullying behaviour and develop holistic education programs that include antibullying strategies. To promote the integrated, holistic, social, and emotional development of today’s children, it is vital that

bullying behaviour is studied in young children as they begin school, to combat school bullying before it begins to develop. Research shows that bullying and victimization occurring in Canadian schools is a significant problem (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1998). In fact, O'Connell, Pepler and Craig (1999) report that 83% of Canadian children aged 5 to 14 report that bullying makes them feel unpleasant; unfortunately the researchers also report that there is a relative lack of peer intervention during bullying episodes (p. 2). Thus, this certainly speaks to the need for researchers to: (a) study bullying behaviour in the early years, and (b) design holistic education programs aimed to empower young children, not only to intervene in bullying episodes, but also to be able to denounce such episodes.

Definition of Terms

Bullying

Although many different definitions of bullying exist, for the purpose of this study it can be defined as an imbalance of power which allows the bully to physically or psychologically abuse the victim while creating a negative atmosphere marked by anxiety, humiliation, intimidation, and fear (Marini et al., 2001). Bullying is also referred to as peer harassment, peer aggression, and peer victimization (Marini, Spear & Bombay, 1999).

According to Saunders (1994), "bullying is an euphemism for criminal acts; crimes committed by young people that adults would be arrested for" (p. 84). Thus, bullying is a multifaceted, complex issue characterized by repeated peer abuse and harassment; furthermore, bullies have little, if any, empathy for their victims (Marini et al., 1999). Marini et al. (2001) identify four types of bullying (a) physical bullying,

(b) cognitive bullying, (c) social bullying, and (d) emotional bullying, which clearly represents the notion that bullying is a multifaceted field of study.

Physical bullying involves direct physical aggression such as shoving, punching, and kicking. Cognitive bullying involves verbal aggression rather than physical aggression, such as teasing, insulting, and threatening. Social bullying involves groups or gangs and is characterized by a leading bully making dares, instigating, or ordering attacks. Emotional bullying involves secretive forms of attack such as the spreading of rumours, exclusion, or ostracism of the victim (pp. 37-38).

Social/Emotional Awareness

Possessing a social/emotional awareness has to do with one's ability to recognize and experience "the emotion of the other" (Kestenbaum et al., 1989, p. 52). Kestenbaum et al. propose that "what an individual comes to understand about emotions in the self and others in early relationships may have an impact on later responding to emotional reactions of others" (p. 51). Dunn (1995) reports that early childhood emotional understanding is related to kindergarten children's positive perceptions of their peer experiences, understanding of mixed emotions, and moral sensibility (p. 187). Bjorkqvist and Osterman (2000) refer to emotional awareness in terms of social intelligence, that is, the extent to which an individual is capable of performing a particular behaviour in order to elicit desired social goals.

Empathy

Empathy is in essence the ability to accurately feel and understand the emotions of another human being. Eisenberg and Strayer (1987) define empathy as an "emotional response that stems from another's emotional state or condition and that is congruent

with the other's emotional state or situation" (p. 5). Furthermore, they report that empathy is positively related to prosocial behaviour (p. 10). An empathetic response can be defined in terms of being able to recognize and truly experience "the emotion of the other" (Kestenbaum et al., 1989, p. 52). Bjorkqvist and Osterman (2000) report that empathy is a characteristic of social intelligence that can be taught through such things as role play and the viewing of films in which the viewer would identify with the victim, exemplifying empathy (p. 197). Bosacki and Astington (1999) assert, "that children who have a sophisticated or advanced ability to understand the emotions of others may also be perceived by their peers as competent in dealing with social situations" (p. 250).

Holistic Education

Holistic education encompasses the social, emotional, and spiritual development of the child, in addition to their cognitive development, and promotes self-construction and self-acceptance (Bosacki, 1997; Bruner, 1996). Holistic education nurtures personal integration and social awareness in the classroom and should be an important component of school, particularly in the early school years. Holistic education is based on the idea that there are intuitive, emotional ways of knowing; and to neglect this form of teaching one is neglecting the individuality of the person (H. Gardner, 1984).

Furthermore, holistic education strives to provide the "social and emotional security that is necessary for human development" (R. Miller, 1992, p. 63), since, "the affective, social, and cognitive aspects of behavior are in fact inseparable" (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969, p. 114).

Statement of the Problem

Currently, very little research addresses kindergartners' perceptions about bullying behaviour. That is, few studies explore if young children perceive bullying as a prevalent concern in their day-to-day school activities. Thus, I hope to gain a deeper insight into bullying perceptions and behaviours within the Canadian kindergarten classroom, in an effort to provide students with the opportunity to voice their ideas and share their experiences regarding bullying through drawings and story telling. Thus, kindergarten students will provide an authentic description of bullying behaviour in the Canadian classroom. In line with Paley (1999) this study aims to promote a holistic approach to developing effective antibullying measures and social skill development in kindergarten, by providing children with the opportunity to share their bullying stories.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores kindergarten children's perceptions and views of bullying. That is, this study describes how children make sense of bullying and victimization experiences in the school. Furthermore, this study's findings may provide some insightful information that other researchers can use as a backdrop when exploring kindergarten bullying, as findings from this study will provide a view of bullying from the perspective of kindergartners.

The context of this study is extremely important, as I am both teacher and researcher. As the classroom teacher, I have an extremely privileged view of my study's participants. I am intimately aware of my participants' voice intonations, body mannerisms, and behaviours; thus, I am able to immediately recognize when the participants experience humiliation, upset, and intimidation. This may allow me a very

unique opportunity to truly hear what the children are saying during their stories and interviews. Furthermore, as a member of the school community, I have a strong rapport with parents and children, which may further encourage the children to honestly and openly discuss their thoughts and perceptions about bullying.

Objectives

This study examines how kindergarten students view bullying with drawings and stories. The objectives of this study are to describe the experiences of bullying from the perspectives of kindergartners and to describe how kindergartners perceive bullying with regard to: the context and setting in which bullying occurs, the types of bullying portrayed, and the individuals involved in the bullying.

Rationale

Sutton, Smith, and Swettenham (1999) report that over the last decade bullying among young children has increased and that it is now recognized as a worldwide problem. Hence, given this reported increase in bullying in Canadian schools, researchers need to explore the roots of bullying behaviour in the kindergarten years. Such a focus on the early school years may eventually help to stop school bullying before it starts.

As a kindergarten teacher, it is my responsibility to nurture positive peer relations and self-concept in young learners. Kindergarten provides an ideal environment to teach and model kindness and antibullying behaviours. Although the current Ontario curriculum promotes social development in the kindergarten child, it does not provide concrete holistic teaching examples. In addition, it also fails to directly address the need to eradicate bullying behaviour in the kindergarten classroom. Hence, I wish to gain a

deeper insight into bullying from the child's perspective in an effort to eventually improve my classroom practice. Furthermore, despite the multitude of existing antibullying resources, such as *Second Step* and *A Bad Case of the Meanies*, few programs are grounded in educational research. Thus, the present study is significant to education in that it provides research-based educational guidelines at no cost to both parents and educators.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theoretical framework of holistic education that addresses all aspects of child development; moreover, a holistic educational environment encourages students to tell their stories within an accepting, inviting space that honours all children's self-worth. Such a holistic classroom environment stresses that "we are all members of a large human family...and...disregard for one member only results in disintegration of the family itself" (J.P. Miller, 1993, p. 23). The present study addresses the need for the classroom to present today's children with a holistic program that addresses personal integration and social awareness while listening to their voices (Bosacki, 1997, 1998). Furthermore, the importance of holistic education, play, and social relationships in the early developmental years are stressed as they relate to the development of kindness and empathy in children (Paley, 1999; Towers, 1997).

This study uses pictorial and narrative representations (drawings and stories) as tools to allow kindergarten students to express their impressions and ideas about bullying behaviour. The assumption made is that the stories expressed in these drawings will make "some manner of reference (explicit or implicit) to one's earlier experience" (Pramling, Norlander, & Archer, 2001, p. 362). Therefore, this study aims to provide

insight into kindergarten students' perceptions of bullying, so that future research can explore and develop intervention strategies. Given the relative flexibility of Ontario's current kindergarten curriculum when compared to the curriculum of higher grades, kindergarten teachers have greater freedom to incorporate the teachings of kindness, empathy, and antibullying behaviour into their daily classroom teaching practices.

Chapter Two reviews past and current literature that highlights both the complexity of school bullying and the importance of heightening public awareness of bullying and its complexity, while also promoting kindness and emotional awareness in children.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative, narrative, ethnographic research study, studying the issue of bullying in the educational setting of a kindergarten classroom (Creswell, 2002). This study is ethnographic in its design as it looks at one group of individuals, specifically kindergarten students, and develops a portrait of how these children interact in their educational setting (Creswell).

Participants were initially asked to tell me a story about bullying, and then they drew their first bullying picture. I conferenced with each participant regarding his or her bullying picture. All participant stories and conferences were audio-taped to ensure for accuracy. In order to debrief the students, I read Naylor's (1991) picture book, *King of the Playground*, to the class. Students were allowed to share their thoughts and feelings about bullying within the context of the book, as well as within a more personal context, such as experiences of bullying they had witnessed, been involved in, or seen in movies or on television. To ensure that an understanding of terms existed, we discussed and

brainstormed as a group regarding our thoughts and ideas about bullying. This group debriefing session was also audio-taped and later reviewed by me to investigate emergent themes. At the end of the debriefing session, participants drew one more picture about bullying based on their own ideas and not on something they had viewed in a book, a movie, or a television show.

Data Analysis

The kindergartners' drawings and stories were assessed in order to determine the types of bullying occurring, the places where bullying takes place, and the levels of social, emotional, and empathetic awareness demonstrated by participants.

Ethical Procedures

The ethical considerations involved in this study are centered on the fact that the researcher is also the teacher and is well known to the students. Therefore, it was imperative that I did not abuse this previous relationship when conferencing with the students and did not in any way use my power as a teacher to influence student participation, drawings, or stories. The students who did not participate due to lack of parental consent drew pictures dealing with our current classroom theme and read with their grade 5 reading buddies when this study was taking place.

Importance of the Study

This study explores kindergartners' perceptions of bullying. Hence, it allows one an inside look at how children begin to make sense of bullying behaviour in the early years. Thus, this study provides insight into how children may view bullying as a social difficulty. Such insight may help to develop early preventative, proactive measures to reduce antisocial behaviour in the classroom. Given the long-term negative social implications for both victims and bullies, early proactive intervention may be one of the best ways to reduce, discourage, and eliminate the practice of bullying in Canadian schools (Marini et al., 1999).

The research presented in this study will be of use for educators interested in hearing kindergarten children's voices regarding bullying behaviours. It is hoped that this study will encourage kindergarten teachers to use the curriculum to address bullying and to encourage students, educators, and parents to recognize that there are socioemotional implications of bullying in the early school years.

Finally, this study allows kindergarten students the opportunity to share their thoughts about bullying with adults. The kindergartners' drawings and stories will serve as tools of empowerment for children, educators, and parents by acknowledging and defining peer harassment in the early school grades.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by the fact that bullying will be assessed through the eyes of the children only. That is, no outside observations, such as teacher and parent reports, are being assessed. However, in line with past research that claims there is great value in

obtaining a child's perspective with regard to bullying (e.g., Paley, 1999), this study focuses on the richness of children's bullying narratives and drawings.

The participants' language ability will limit the bullying narrative, as language competence (verbal IQ) is a confounding factor. Those children who are sophisticated language users may produce stories that are more elaborate.

Furthermore, in this study the researcher is also the teacher. Thus, I must ensure that my power as the teacher does not psychologically damage the participants by judging, commenting on, placing blame, or evaluating the content of their drawings and stories. Hence, I must not allow my power as the teacher to in any way influence this study's subjects, procedures, or findings. As well, there is a lack of diversity amongst my sample, as they were all drawn from my classroom and served as a sample of convenience.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the fact that very little research exists that specifically addresses bullying in the early school years from the perspective of the participants. Yet ironically, in kindergarten the context for learning is very much focused on the social and emotional development of the child and is the ideal setting to promote kindness and empathy in an effort to discourage the development of bullying behaviours. As outlined in this chapter, bullying is an important facet of school life for Canadian children, and it needs to be studied in the early years in order to promote safe, peaceful school learning environments where children's voices are heard, for all students from the very beginning of their schooling.

Outline of Remainder of the Document

Chapter Two provides an extensive literature review, which begins with a brief conceptual/definitional overview of bullying and then provides an outline of research on school bullying, child development, as well as educational and curricular implications.

Chapter Three outlines the research design, methodology, ethical considerations, and limitations of this study.

Chapter Four provides the study's data analysis and interpretation in an effort to highlight antibullying strategies that need to be put into place in the kindergarten classroom in order to promote kindness and empathy.

Chapter Five serves as the study summary, highlighting the main findings and the implications such findings have for education and future research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter first outlines some background to theory/research in bullying within the educational context. Then definitional/conceptual bullying issues are explored. Following this conceptual overview, the different dimensions of bullying and self-development during early childhood are explored. The final sections highlight educational implications and outline the present study.

Background of Theory/Research

Many theorists support the notion that bullying is an infringement on a child's right to a safe and peaceful school environment (Olweus, 2001). Olweus (1997) states that "it is a fundamental democratic right for a child to be spared the oppression and repeated humiliation implied in bullying" (p. 495), and suggests that there should be laws against bullying. Similarly, Rigby (1998) asserts that bullying is the "cruel and repeated oppression by the powerful over the powerless," and that it is disturbing to acknowledge that childhood bullying is often tolerated when such behaviour would not be allowed to occur in the adult workplace (p. 8). According to Shidler (2001), "educators' main goal should be to prevent the victimization of children at the hands of their schoolmates" (p. 167). In fact, Shidler goes on to say that when students behave violently, and teachers fail to challenge this violence, students see this as teacher-sanctioned violence that "may result in significant damage to students' self esteem and sense of dignity" (p. 167). Craig and Pepler (2000) report that bullying frequently occurs on school playgrounds and propose that it is a "complex phenomenon, which must be considered from an integration of individual difference; social interactional, and ecological perspectives" (p. 134).

Crick, Casas, and Ku (1999) claim that there is insufficient knowledge of both relational and physical forms of victimization taking place among young children (p. 377). Furthermore, Chodzinski and Burke (1998) point out that when it comes to addressing and implementing antibullying measures, educators and students are not adequately trained to do so (p. 8). Therefore, this literature review highlights the growing body of knowledge regarding bullying and its prevention and also draws attention to the fact that more bullying research needs to be done, specifically with young children.

Bullying: Definitional/Conceptual Issues

Olweus (2001) defines bullying as peer aggression characterized by an imbalance of power whereby one intentionally and repeatedly inflicts physical and psychological/emotional injury or discomfort upon another. Furthermore, this injury or discomfort is repeated, despite the fact that the victim shows clear signs of distress (Olweus, 1997, p. 496). Banks (1997) states that a key component of bullying is that the physical and/or psychological intimidation is repeated over time to create ongoing harassment and abuse. Other researchers suggest that bullying is characterized by ongoing harassment that creates anxiety, intimidation, and fear in the victim (Marini et al., 1999, p. 36).

According to Saunders, "bullying is an euphemism for criminal acts; crimes committed by young people that adults would be arrested for" (1994, p. 84).

Thus, bullying is a multifaceted, complex issue characterized by repeated peer abuse and harassment. Furthermore, bullies have little, if any, empathy for their victims (Marini et al., 1999). Farrington (1993) defines bullying as negative actions, whether they are physical or verbal, of a hostile intent that are repeated over time. Smith and Thompson (1991)

define bullying as a form of social interaction where a more dominant individual displays aggressive behaviour (both verbal and physical) intended to cause distress to a less dominant individual. A social approach to bullying describes bullying as a sociodynamic process that involves the bully, the victim, and bystanders; thus, children can play multiple roles in the bullying drama (Sullivan, 2000). Therefore, regardless of how one chooses to define bullying, there is a clear imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. This chapter explores all of these components of bullying.

Banks (1997) identifies bullying in terms of direct behaviours that can be performed either alone or in a group, such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, or stealing from a victim. Research has shown that direct, physical peer victimization appears to rise throughout the elementary school years, peak in the middle school years, and decline during high school (Crick et al., 1999, p. 376). Bullying can also be described in terms of indirect behaviours that result in the victim becoming socially isolated through intentional exclusion by either the spreading of rumours or the shunning of the victim (Banks, p. 2). This type of bullying is also known as relational peer victimization (Crick et al., p. 376).

Marini et al. (2001) classify the types of bullying into four major categories: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional bullying. Physical bullying involves direct and open physical attacks intending to inflict harm on the victim. Cognitive bullying consists of teasing, insulting, ridiculing, taunting, or threatening the victim. Social bullying usually occurs in a group situation where the main bully uses others to carry out his/her commands and is often found in competitive group sports. Emotional bullying involves

manipulating, isolating, and ostracizing the victim from the larger social group, such as the practice of spreading derogatory rumours (p. 38). This model takes a multidimensional approach to bullying and highlights the different types of aggression and modes of attack present in bullying.

Bullying Cause or Consequence?

Osofsky (1995) states that children learn and imitate what they see and experience (p. 2). Chodzinski and Burke (1998) report that research supports the notion that there is a strong link between home supervision, social freedom, “lack of accountability, lack of explicit love and affection, poor discipline and lax parental control” and bullying behaviour (p. 5). They report that most child violence is a result of some form of learning based on a perceived imbalance of justice and unfairness, and that bullying can be defined as “purposeful, albeit misdirected, goal-centered action” (p. 11).

Barone (1997) reports that studies have shown the parents of bullies were/are often bullies themselves (p. 81). For example, Myron-Wilson (1999) states that “it has been consistently found that overbearing and over controlling parents have children who are more aggressive and less socially skilled than their peers” (p. 2). Oliver, Oaks and Hoover (1994) describe the family environments of bullying children as being characterized by emotional coolness and social isolation (cited in Barone).

Marini et al. (1999) report that it is not unusual for victims of bullying to develop somatic complaints, while also experiencing deterioration in school performance that can lead the victim to drop out of school. They also report dire consequences for those bullies without correction; they tend to continue to be aggressive and violent which may

lead to criminal activity in later life (p. 43).

Olweus (1997) states that bullying can be viewed “as a component of a more generally antisocial and rule-breaking (‘conduct-disordered’) behaviour pattern” (p. 501). This leads to a prediction that the later incidence of criminality and other socially disadvantageous behaviours is likely (Olweus, p. 501). Chodzinski and Burke (1998) report that children who exhibit bullying behaviour have a higher incidence of becoming bullies as adults (p. 3).

Lambert (1999) reports that research exists which supports the idea “that daily ‘hassles’ such as bullying” can have a greater impact than major life events on one’s mental wellness (p. 25). Similarly, Crick et al. (1999) report that “children who are the frequent targets of relational aggression are significantly more likely than nonvictimized peers to be socially and psychologically maladjusted” (p. 376). Clearly, bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically impede the ability of both victims and perpetrators to progress both academically and socially (Banks, 1997, p. 1).

Myths about Bullying

Olweus (1997) points out that teasing has often been thought of as something children do, but if it is repeated, degrading, and offensive it qualifies as bullying. Furthermore, adults may view bullying as a harmless right of passage that is best ignored (Banks, 1997, p. 1). However, Vail (1999) points out that this attitude is dangerous, as children may perceive that adults will not protect them against maltreatment (p. 38). Vail further states that while some may feel that confronting bullies in front of their peers is a productive way to resolve conflict, this appears only to enhance the bully’s prestige and

power, and often abuse increases following such intervention (p. 38). This may be because the bully blames the victim for the adult interference. Vail also notes that a great deal of research evidence dismisses the myth that the bully is a social outcast. In fact, Vail cites Chuck Saufler, a counsellor at Wiscasset Primary School in Maine, as dismissing this myth by saying that “bullies are almost always more popular than their victims” (p. 39).

Marini et al. (1999) report that bullying has long-term implications and that it is a myth that it is merely something children do that is of little consequence. Furthermore, Marini et al. point out that myths about bullying can be dangerous, as they influence how it is perceived and managed. For example, they state that it is a myth that “bullies do not mean anything by their behaviour and that the victims somehow bring the aggression upon themselves” (p.35). Marini et al. report that a “controversial aspect of bullying is related to the increased likelihood of its occurrence in an atmosphere where competition is tolerated” (pp. 38-39). In sporting events, for example, “exclusionary practices or even maltreatment” are often justified as part of the game (Marini et al., p. 39).

Olweus (1997) reports that class and school size do not affect the frequency or level of bullying problems. Another notion that Olweus failed to find any support for was the idea that bullying was the result of school failure and frustration (p. 498). He asserts that his research findings do not support the hypothesis that aggression in boys is the result of poor grades and school failure (p. 499). Olweus also dismisses the notion that victims have characteristics that are considered “external deviations” from the norm, for example they are overweight or wear glasses, as pure bullying myth (p. 499). However, it is imperative that researchers continue to explore the myths about bullying while also

researching and establishing its antecedents, consequences, and future prevention.

Child Development

Self-Esteem

Early childhood is an important developmental time period in terms of self-esteem; children need to be encouraged to engage in self-discovery in order to nurture and enhance their sense of self-worth (Paley, 1984). This discovery can take place in the form of a picture; as for the 5-year-old this is an ideal way to express the concept of self (Tamm, 2001). Thus, it is vital that kindergartners are able to explore and experience their new school surroundings in an effort to become comfortable with the school setting and this newly found place in the world. Children require a safe environment to develop a positive sense of self-esteem that will pave the way for future school and life successes.

Therefore, since abusive peer relations have been linked to a number of adjustment difficulties during childhood, such as anxiety, loneliness, depression, and school maladaptation, it is important that kindergarten programs promote antibullying beliefs and behaviours (Ladd, 1999, p. 348). Furthermore, as reported by Marini et al. (1999), bullying can result in social maladjustment for victims and bullies well into adulthood. Hence, in order to promote a positive, integrated sense of self, self-esteem, and self-worth in young children, peace and safety must be maintained in the early school years.

Bullying and Self-Development

Sutton et al. (1999) explored theory of mind paradigm in the study of social cognition and how this relates to bullying behaviour; their research supports the view that “bullies are at an advantage if they possess theory of mind skills superior to those of their

followers and victims” (p. 444). They report that acts of indirect aggression (or covert psychological aggression) often involve a manipulation of the mental states and beliefs held by others by gossiping, rumour spreading, and ostracizing the victim (p. 437).

Chodzinski and Burke (1998) report that research supports the notion that bullies are “individuals whose behaviour is difficult to change... [and that they] have unwarranted high levels of esteem, often attributed to their success in maintaining power over perceived weak individuals” (p. 4). They classify bullies as social manipulators who employ antisocial means in an effort to maintain a position of power (p. 5).

In their commentary, Arsenio and Lemerise (2001) report that when bullies are the targets of provocative behaviours they seem to have the same moral concerns as their nonbullying peers; however, “when their needs conflict with those of others, bullies are willing to initiate intentional aggression that they would otherwise consider unacceptable” (p. 70). Boulton (1999) reports that children who are less accepted by their peers engage in more aggressive and disruptive behaviour; whereas highly accepted children tend to participate in more prosocial and group activities (p. 944). Ma (2001) found that there were more bullies coming from large families than victims coming from large families. He surmised that bullies may experience sibling bullying and this leads them to develop into bullies themselves. Therefore, Ma proposes the notion that this victim/bully cycle can be considered a socially learned behaviour.

Chodzinski and Burke (1998) report that victims of bullying often demonstrate submissiveness, insecurity, and anxiety (p. 6). Furthermore, they report four classifications of a victim:

1. The passive victim is “lonely and abandoned, less than average in physical strength” for males, often reacts by crying or withdrawing, does not provoke the bully, has a negative attitude towards violence, is not assertive, and generally relates better to adults than peers (p. 6).

2. The provocative victim is “anxious and aggressive” and often irritating, which results in tension; this victim often provokes others (p. 6).

3. The surrogate victim is witness to another’s victimization “and fears the spread of the attack on her/himself” (p. 6).

4. The vicarious victim is a bystander or witness “who perceives her/his vulnerability, [and] fears the same fear as the victim, dreads the victim’s dread, but frequently silences the impulse to speak out in support” (p. 6).

Hubbard (2001) studied children who were rejected by their peers and reported that “peer-rejected children expressed more facial and verbal anger than average-status children” when losing games (p.1435).

Thus, bullying can greatly influence the developmental process when it comes to the development of one’s self-concept and esteem. In order to develop a positive self-concept and high levels of self-esteem, children need to learn the importance of kindness and empathy at an early age in a nurturing and safe environment. The early years are a time when human bonds must be nurtured and positive social interactions encouraged in order to lay the foundation for a person’s sense of belonging and importance in later life (Paley, 1999).

Social/Emotional Understanding and Bullying

Vygotsky (1962) reports that by the age of 4, children are able to analyze their own actions. Thus, this is in line with other research that identifies the young child's theory of mind and his/her ability to understand mental states in the self and others at an early age (Bosacki & Astington, 1999). Hence, it would appear that developing antibullying strategies is a key component in encouraging early social/emotional awareness at the school level, and it is imperative that these strategies allow students to feel safe and valued at school. Froschl and Sprung (1999) further report that the teacher's attitude plays a major role in determining the extent of bullying in a classroom, and that when teachers do not speak out against bullying children perceive this as condoning the behaviour (p. 70). Froschl and Sprung (1999) examine the notion that the early-years teachers are next in importance to the family in helping a child become a cooperative member of society.

Therefore, to discourage bullying, kindergarten teachers need to model and nurture kindness, social/emotional awareness, and empathy. After all, "children learn a great deal from observation," and it is indeed part of a teacher's job to be observed (Maccoby, 1980, p. 242). Bjorkqvist and Osterman (2000) refer to teaching emotional awareness in terms of social intelligence and define it as the extent to which an individual is capable of performing a particular behaviour in order to elicit desired social goals (p.192). Furthermore, they report that social intelligence is most positively correlated with peaceful means of conflict resolution and that indirect aggression, withdrawal, verbal aggression, and physical aggression are less positively correlated with social intelligence (p. 197).

They also state that social intelligence plays an important role in determining which type of behaviour is practiced in response to conflict (pp. 196-197). Kestenbaum et al. (1989) propose “what an individual comes to understand about emotions in the self and others in early relationships may have an impact on later responding to emotional reactions of others” (p. 51). Dunn (1995) reports that early childhood emotional understanding is related to kindergarten children’s positive perceptions of their peer experiences, understanding of mixed emotions, and moral sensibility (p. 187). Therefore, many psychologists and educators believe that schools need to address the notion of self-construction and self-acceptance (Bosacki, 1997; Bruner, 1996). Such a holistic approach to education would promote personal, emotional, and social awareness in the classroom and thus may have the ability to alter the course of one’s life (Bosacki, 1997; J.P. Miller, 1992).

The Need for Empathy

Eisenberg and Strayer (1987) define empathy as an “emotional response that stems from another’s emotional state or condition and that is congruent with the other’s emotional state or situation” (p. 5). Furthermore, they report that empathy is positively related to prosocial behaviour (p. 10). Eisenberg (1992) reports that empathy is linked with prosocial behaviour, such as an increased desire to share one’s possessions with an upset friend, among very young children. Banks (1997) reports that a key component in bullying is that bullies seldom display empathy for their victims (p. 2). Sutton et al. (1999) report that a child who displays an awareness of the feelings of others but also demonstrates an inability to empathize may be a particularly manipulative bully (p. 444).

An empathetic response can be defined in terms of being able to recognize and truly experience “the emotion of the other” (Kestenbaum et al., 1989, p. 52). The presence of empathy has been shown to mitigate aggressive behaviour (Bjorkqvist & Osterman, 2000, p. 193). Furthermore, Bjorkqvist and Osterman report that empathy is a characteristic of social intelligence that can be taught through such things as role play and the viewing of films in which the viewer would identify with the victim, exemplifying empathy (p. 197). Bosacki and Astington (1999) assert “that children who have a sophisticated or advanced ability to understand the emotions of others may also be perceived by their peers as competent in dealing with social situations” (p. 250).

Bullying in Early and Middle Childhood

In their study of preschoolers ranging from 3-5 years of age, Crick et al. (1999) demonstrated that bullying behaviour occurs much earlier than middle childhood, despite the fact that very little victimization research focuses on early childhood (p. 382). Furthermore, they claim that preschoolers do indeed engage in relationally aggressive acts, much like older children; however, preschoolers do so in a more direct, reactive manner (p. 377). Thus, more research needs to be done with young children to determine what characterizes bullying in the early years and what needs to be done to promote antibullying behaviours in these formative years. This is particularly true because research shows that troublesome behaviour in primary school is a powerful predictor of future juvenile convictions (West & Farrington, 1977, p. 157).

Gender Differences and Bullying

In support of early indications of gender differences, Paley (1984) reports that children self-stereotype in kindergarten and define behaviours as male and female. Maccoby (1998) reports that young children self-socialize, and by the age of 3 they have developed a preference for same-sex playmates. They seem to enjoy recognizing and defining their own ideas about differences between girls and boys and choose to limit their interaction with opposite-sex playmates. Ma (2001) reports that boys and girls bully for different reasons; for boys it is usually part of a power-based social relationship, whereas for girls it is more about affiliation and ostracism. For example, boys bully to achieve a dominant, leadership social position over their peers, whereas girls achieve a dominant leadership position over their peers by ostracizing other girls who threaten their social position.

In his concurrent and longitudinal study, Boulton (1999) found that girls who interacted within a smaller social circle tended to have higher scores on his bullying scale, whereas for boys, group size was positively correlated with their bully score. This score was based on the child's classmates assessing his/her physical and verbal bullying behaviour. A plausible interpretation cited by Boulton is that bullies perhaps intimidate other children into interacting with them. He also reports that the more time boys spend in conversation with their male peers, the higher the chance of subsequent victimization; however, this was not true of girls. In fact, Boulton reports that there is some evidence that the more time girls spend in conversation with their female peers, the more popular they are likely to become. Therefore, Boulton surmises that this may be based on gender

stereotypes, and that boys who converse a great deal (which is often seen as a socially appropriate female behaviour) are less accepted by their peers and therefore more susceptible to becoming victims of both physical and verbal bullying.

Dunn, Cutting, and Demetriou (2000) found that by the age of 4 “girls were more likely than boys to reason about moral transgressions between friends in terms of the inner states,” and that this gender difference was independent of the girls’ increased verbal abilities (pp. 173-174). Banks (1997) states that research shows that boys often perform acts of bullying and are also the victims of bullying more frequently than girls; furthermore, boys tend to engage in direct bullying methods, whereas girls tend to use indirect strategies. Loeber and Hay (1997) propose that girls do indeed engage in physical aggression against their peers; however, they are better than boys at hiding such behaviour from adults. For example, girls ensure that any adults present are not watching when they perform acts of physical aggression by monitoring the adults supervising and also by relying on their peers to act as lookouts when they wish to engage in physical bullying that will not be observed by the adults present.

In Canada, it is reported that 14% of boys between the ages of 4 and 11 bully others, versus 9% of girls in the same age range (Craig et al., 1998, p. 17). Furthermore, 5% of boys between the ages of 4 and 11 are victimized by others sometimes or very often, compared with 7% of girls within this age range (Craig et al., p. 17). Sullivan (2000) reports that boys tend to bully and be bullied more than girls. Furthermore, this is particularly the case with direct physical bullying (Crick et al., 1999; Olweus, 1997).

Therefore, statistics and theorists support the notion that there are gender differences with regard to bullying.

Educational Issues

Speaking to the need to teach social intelligence, Crick et al. (1999) found that both relationally and physically victimized preschoolers demonstrated low peer status and had difficult social relationships within their peer groups (p. 383). Boulton (1999) reports that having good relations with one's peers and being popular may provide protection from victimization (p. 945). Similar to this idea, Morris, Taylor, and Wilson (2000) speak to the importance of adapting a social learning approach in order to increase our understanding of the origins of violent behaviour in order to promote peace in the classroom (p. 41).

Arsenio and Lemerise (2001) report that bullies do not seem to define social competence as acceptance by their peers the way their nonaggressive peers would see it. Instead, they believe that if their act produces a desired outcome, then it is socially competent and acceptable (pp.70-71). However, they stress that an accurate understanding of others' emotions likely does serve as a protective factor against bullying (Arsenio & Lemerise, p. 71).

Piaget and Inhelder (1969) found that play for children between the ages of 2 and 7 years is a symbolic process where social exchanges occur and contribute to the socialization of the self. According to Vygotsky (1976) play is a principal source of development in the early years. Similarly, Moyer (2001) asserts that, as developed in the 19th century, kindergarten truly is a "garden for children" and that "the 'roots' of

sensitivity to children” should still be the primary focus of kindergarten education (p. 161).

Kindergarten is still considered a place where children can be nurtured and allowed to grow at their own pace, and it is imperative that the whole child is nurtured physically, socially/emotionally, and intellectually (p. 161). Hence, in order to combat bullying in the Canadian school system, there is a need to teach emotional awareness and empathy, and what better place to start than in the kindergarten classroom? As previously mentioned, kindergarten is a beginning; therefore, the majority of students enter school with few preconceived notions, and they are ready to learn both socially and academically.

Kindergarten is a point where the stage is being set for future school beliefs and behaviours; thus, is it not essential that kindness and empathy be taught and modelled as children begin their school journey?

Curricular Issues

Olweus (1997) developed an intervention program against bullying which was carried out in 42 Scandinavian schools over a period of 2 years and reportedly decreased bullying by 50-70%. He asserts that effective use of this program can also have additional positive effects, such as lowering levels of vandalism, stealing, and other antisocial behaviours (p. 504). The four goals of this intervention programme were: (a) to increase awareness of the bully/victim problem, (b) to obtain active involvement from both teachers and parents, (c) to develop antibullying behaviours, and (d) to provide support and protection for those victimized (Olweus).

Olweus (1997) centered this intervention program on four main principles derived from research on the development and modification of aggressive behaviour (p. 504).

According to Olweus, an environment with warm positive adult involvement and firm limits for unacceptable bullying behaviour needs to be established at home and at school. In cases of limit violations, nonhostile and nonphysical sanctions and interventions should be consistently applied both at home and at school (Olweus). Olweus asserts that an intervention program can dramatically reduce bully/victim problems in schools and can be implemented relatively simply. He concludes that intervention is primarily a means of changing attitudes, behaviours, and unproductive routines in school life.

Pellegrini and Bartini (2000) discuss the importance of social affiliations in minimizing victimization in early adolescence. They found that “having a large social network inhibits victimization...[as] social disapproval from peers for victimizing youngsters who are embedded in social networks...[is a] deterrent for youngsters who are concerned with their emergent social status” (p. 721). Natvig, Albrektsen, and Qvarnstrom (2001) observed that the risk of bullying increased with school alienation as defined by not feeling one is a valued and necessary member of the school community, and that bullying behaviour was lowered when students perceived their peers and teachers as providing social support (p. 571).

Lambert (1999) proposes a holistic approach to addressing school bullying that does not underestimate the tremendous amount of learning and development that takes place on the school playground, which is often a place where children are undersupervised and left to their own devices (p. 26). Olweus (1993) found that increasing the number of teachers on the playground did not decrease the incidents of bullying. This occurred only if the teachers identified bullying and implemented appropriate antibullying strategies.

Towers (1997) reports that schools only recently have begun to recognize the importance of supporting and training playground supervisors to respond effectively to incidents of bullying (p. 37). Towers reports that the “specific behaviour of younger children and new school entrants in the playground remains a poorly explored aspect of the research” (p. 40). Boulton’s (1999) study longitudinally linked children’s recess behaviour and patterns of peer interaction to their peer relationships (p. 952).

Chodzinski and Burke (1998) describe a three-part workshop developed by Burke which supports the “no blame approach” to the problem of bullying. The aim of these workshops is to create school atmospheres that discourage bullying behaviour and support peer pressure as a means of challenging bullying (p. 9). This approach encourages both bullies and victims to engage in solution finding. This approach is nonpunitive, seeks to empower students, requires supervision, provides a structure for exploring problems faced by students, and allows students to be involved in conflict resolution. Strategies include teaching and involving students in mediation and reflection, teaching empathy, and teaching “positive regard for others and unconditional acceptance and unselfishness” (p. 9). This approach is very much aimed at teaching social/emotional awareness in an effort to dissuade individuals from harming one another.

Marini et al. (2000) argue that bullying can be conceptualized in terms of a public health issue and that the public health model which is used in the design of medical prevention programs can be used in the development of bullying prevention programs (p. 1). They conclude that because antisocial behaviour is stable if left untreated, bullying prevention efforts should be implemented as early in a child’s life as possible. The public

health model indicates that there are three levels of prevention: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Marini et al., p. 22). Primary prevention deals with reducing the risk factors involved in bullying. Marini et al. report that an example of a primary prevention “is a social skill program geared to promoting adaptive interpersonal behavioural and positive peer relations” (p. 7). Teaching young children such a social skills program is relevant to bullying because it promotes positive peer interaction and acceptance, both of which have been found to remain stable over time (Marini et al., p. 7).

Marini et al. (2000) report that secondary prevention focuses on early detection, identification, and an increased awareness of the warning signs of bullying. The aim of secondary prevention is to identify the development of bullying and to stop it from fully developing (Marini et al., p. 8). Marini et al. report that tertiary prevention focuses on the rehabilitation and treatment of those who exhibit bullying behaviours. They report that once it has got to this stage, this prevention is closest to the traditional approach of treatment (p. 9).

Marini et al. (2000) further report that often bullying is regarded as a system problem; therefore, the components of the system need to be identified and their roles understood (p. 9). They refer to the following system components:

1. Organizational components such as school boards and schools, which need to develop and implement antibullying policies, procedures, and practices.
2. Instructional components such as the curriculum and classroom, which need to focus on making teachers, students, and parents aware of the issue of bullying.

3. Individual components such as victims, victimizers, and bystanders, who need to be empowered and educated regarding bullying and more appropriate forms of social interaction (pp.10-11).

Therefore, Marini et al. (2000) identify well-developed peer mediation as an effective antibullying strategy because intervention can occur at a number of levels of prevention as well as at different components of the system (p. 18). Furthermore, Marini et al. conclude that "bullying prevention efforts should be implemented as early in a student's life as possible" given the stability of antisocial behaviour (p. 22).

Barone (1997) reports that when teachers were asked to name three possible solutions to the bullying problem in schools, they cited tougher discipline, followed by better supervision, and had more student counselling listed last as the least popular response. In line with the need for mediation when addressing bullying, when asked the same question, students responded with more counselling as the most prominent solution to bullying, followed by tougher discipline, while better supervision was mentioned last (p. 81).

Eslea and Smith (1998) report on the DFE Sheffield Anti-bullying Project. This project involved 23 schools participating in antibullying awareness training and found that an increased awareness of bullying led to increased reporting of bullying behaviour (p. 216). However, this increased reporting did not take place at school, as bullying victims were more likely to tell someone at home than at school, and unfortunately a sizeable minority of victims did not tell anyone (Eslea & Smith, p. 213). Thus, it is

important that schools continue to promote antibullying awareness programs that encourage children to report school bullying.

The Present Study and Summary

Based on the aforementioned research, the present study provides kindergartners with the opportunity to discuss and reveal their thoughts, feelings, and ideas regarding bullying. This study provides children's perceptions of bullying in the kindergarten classroom. Given the past research and educational literature, bullying may impact human development and growth in the educational, social, and emotional spheres of life. Thus, this study advocates on behalf of children by describing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions about bullying. Thus, this study aims to provide an empirical foundation for the development of antibullying measures and curriculum to be embraced and implemented by educators and parents during children's early years.

Given the aforementioned research, much work needs to be done in the area of bullying and self-esteem in young children. Thus, this study explores kindergarten children's understanding of bullying and what it means to them. Furthermore, it aims to incorporate the findings into the delivery of Ontario's current kindergarten curriculum. Allowing the children's voices to be heard will help to enrich the current curriculum, as it provides a very authentic view of bullying in kindergarten and promotes the holistic, social, and emotional development of the child rather than just the cognitive development of the child.

Chapter Two summarized the current research on school bullying in young children. Emphasis was placed on the negative consequences that bullying could have on

one's social and emotional development. Research supports the notion that antibullying measures are effective if implemented properly and consistently. There is currently very little research on bullying that focuses specifically on young children's perceptions of bullying. However, evidence exists showing that bullying indeed starts in the preschool years and is a societal problem that cannot be ignored in kindergarten. Young children come to school with few preconceived notions and are able to learn through play and social interaction. Thus, children's understandings of bullying experiences need to be investigated at this young age.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Chapter Three is devoted to the methodology and procedures that were followed when conducting this study in both an ethical and research-based manner. The study's research design, participants, procedures, data collection and analysis, methodological assumptions, and ethical considerations are all described.

Research Design

The present study was a qualitative, narrative, ethnographic research study (Creswell, 2002). This study was qualitative, as emerging themes were examined within the data; it was narrative as students' bullying stories were examined in order to determine their perceptions' about bullying. This study was ethnographic in its design as it looked at one group of individuals, specifically kindergarten students, and developed a portrait of how these children interacted in and perceived their educational setting (Creswell).

Research Context: Gaining Access/Permission/Selection of Participants

Following written administrative consent from Brock University's Ethics Review Board (Appendix A) and the Superintendent of Staff Development for my local school board; a letter was sent to the school principal (Appendix B). As well, parental consent letters were sent to the parents/guardians of the 26 kindergarten students in my morning class (Appendix C). The parents/guardians of these students were required to complete a consent form allowing their children to take part in this study. Students as well as parents and guardians were encouraged to ask questions throughout the period of study (Appendix D) and were provided with a debriefing letter and pamphlet summarizing the

study's findings once the research was completed (Appendix J; Appendix K).

Participants included only those students who obtained written parental/guardian consent.

The study's sample consisted of the 15 participants who returned their completed consent forms. Five participants were 5-year-old females, and 2 participants were 6-year-old females. All of the female participants were born in Canada, 7 of them were Anglo-Saxons, and only 1 female participant was a child of colour. Seven participants were 5-year-old males, and 1 participant was a 6-year-old male; all male participants were born in Canada, 5 of the male participants were Anglo-Saxons, and 2 of them were children of colour. All 15 participants came from middle to upper-middle class families. Thus, there was a lack of diversity within my sample as it was a sample of convenience.

It is important to note that as the teacher and researcher I had a very privileged position when conducting this study. I was well known in the school as well as in the school community; thus there did exist a level of trust and rapport between me and the participants and their parents prior to the study. I had known the participants and their families since September 2001; I had served as the classroom teacher and a mentor prior to commencing my research. My students trusted me and were able to discuss their thoughts and perceptions quite freely; furthermore, I was also aware of student mannerisms and behaviours prior to the study.

Procedures

Students were individually asked by me, as the researcher, to tell a story about bullying. Students were told that bullying involves not being kind and can lead to hurt feelings. Students were instructed that bullying could involve their being mean to someone else or someone else being mean to them. Individual student stories were

audio-taped and they were student directed; the only questions I asked for clarification were: (a) What do you mean? and/or (b) Can you tell me more about this story? When students were having difficulty telling their stories, I would rephrase their previous statements in the form of a question in order to prompt them to continue their narrative. Students were then asked to create an illustration of their story; students worked individually on these pictures, and I collected all drawings once they were completed. Once completed, I conferenced with each individual student regarding his/her picture. The student's drawing served as a starting point for his/her narrative description of bullying. These student-directed narratives were recorded on audiotape to ensure for accuracy (Appendix G). I asked students to complete the following incomplete sentence: "When I look at this picture I see..." (Appendix E).

I guided participant interviews by asking the following questions:

1. Can you tell me more about your picture?
2. Who is in this picture?
3. Where does the picture take place: inside, outside, at home, or at school?
4. What is happening in the picture?
5. How do you think the people in this picture are feeling?
6. How do you feel when you look at this picture?

When a student had particular difficulty answering one of the above noted-questions, I would restate what he/she had said in the form of a question in order to prompt him/her to complete the answer. I also used words of inquiry such as who, what, where, when, how, and why in order to help students expand their answers. I limited initial interviews

to not longer than 20 minutes. None of the participants required a second interview. Thus, all participants were interviewed only once.

To debrief the students (Appendix H), I read Naylor's (1991) picture book, *King of the Playground*, to the class. Students were then allowed to share their thoughts and feelings about bullying within the context of the book that was just read, or within a more personal context such as experiences of bullying they had witnessed, been involved in, or seen in movies or on television. To ensure that an understanding of terms existed, I discussed and brainstormed with the class regarding their thoughts and ideas about bullying. This group debriefing session was audio-taped and later reviewed by me, the researcher (Appendix I). At the end of the debriefing session, I told the children that they were going to draw one more picture about bullying. I informed students that this picture had to be their own ideas and not something they were taking from a book, a movie, or a television show. Students then individually completed their drawings.

I transcribed student stories (Appendix F) and coded them along with student drawings in order to explore common themes and perceptions in the kindergartners' reports of bullying. I also provided an independent judge, who was not involved in the category development, with written descriptions of each coding category and had this person independently assign the drawings and stories to the coding categories. When discrepancies occurred, we discussed them and reevaluated the initially assigned category. Overall, very few coding discrepancies occurred, as is highlighted in Chapter Four when the interrater agreement findings are presented. My notes of observations of acts of kindness/empathy performed by the children as recorded in my Research Journal are also included when reporting my study's findings in Chapter Four.

The antibullying strategies prepared as a result of this study will be shared with teachers, parents, students, and my school board in the form of a pamphlet created by me. This pamphlet will be available as a parent and school resource to be used during the initial kindergarten school intake process.

Data Collection and Recording

Student drawings and audio-taped stories did not have a name associated with them; thus participants remained anonymous. All students were assigned an individual number that identified their drawing and its corresponding story. This identification number was written on the top, right-hand corner of each piece of drawing paper prior to their being handed out to the children to complete their drawings. Each student's identification number was recorded on the audiotape immediately preceding his or her individual interview. The drawings and stories were marked with either an "F" for female or "M" for male in order to differentiate between female and male participants. Thus, at no point during data collection and recording was student identity revealed, in order to ensure participant anonymity and safety.

Data Analysis

The content of students' drawings and stories were analyzed to explore how kindergarten children perceive bullying within the context of their lives (Tamm, 2001). Coding categories were developed to analyze the kindergartners' perceptions; however, emerging themes were also explored. I used frequency counts and percentages to assess this study's data. Drawing from past research to examine how children perceived bullying as expressed through their drawings and stories, the following categories were developed (Marini et al., 1999):

Setting/Context: Does the picture take place in the: (a) classroom, (b) school playground, or in (c) another part of the school? If the picture does not take place at school, does it take place in the: (a) home, (b) neighbourhood, or (c) elsewhere? The frequency of external objects was also taken into account (e.g., sun, trees, pets, toys).

Type of Bullying: What is happening in the picture? Is there evidence of bullying and/or aggressive behaviour? If so what type or types of bullying is or are present based on the following descriptions:

1. Physical bullying involving direct and open physical attacks intending to inflict harm on the victim. For student pictures I assessed the presence of physical bullying as the depiction of the bully's limbs striking the victim.

2. Cognitive bullying consisting of teasing, insulting, ridiculing, taunting, or threatening the victim. For student pictures I assessed the presence of cognitive bullying as the depiction of the bully as standing very close or over the victim in a threatening manner.

3. Social bullying occurring in a group situation where the main bully uses others to carry out his/her commands and often found in competitive group sports. For student pictures I assessed the presence of social bullying as the depiction of a group of children ganging up on one victim.

4. Emotional bullying involving manipulating, isolating, and ostracizing the victim from the larger social group, such as the practice of spreading derogatory rumours. For student pictures I assessed the presence of emotional bullying as the depiction of the victim standing alone as he/she is being excluded or ostracized. (The above coding descriptions were adapted from Marini et al, 1999; Marini et al., 2001).

Student drawings and stories were also examined by the independent coder and myself in order to assess if emerging categories existed.

Children Present: (a) Was the student present in the drawing/story? If so, were they a bully, victim, or observer? (b) Were the student's peers present in the drawing/story? If so, were they bullies, victims, or observers? I also assessed the number of characters present in the drawing and assessed bully and victim size (e.g., how did the bully's stature compare to the victim's and vice versa).

Adults Present: (a) Were there adults present in the drawing/story? If so were they teachers, parents, coaches, or other adults? (b) If an adult or adults were present, were they intervening, observing, or ignoring the bullying taking place?

Social/Emotional Awareness: (a) The facial expressions of the bully and the victim were assessed as being positive (e.g., smiling face), negative (e.g., sad face, scowl), or neutral (e.g., a straight line or circle for the mouth).

The independent coder and I used these codes in order to categorize the drawings and stories in an effort to search for common themes, as "themes are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the data base" (Creswell, 2002, p. 267). I will report on the common themes developed to analyze and interpret the data in order to assess the antibullying strategies most needed at the kindergarten level in order to promote social/emotional awareness and empathy (Tamm, 2001). Thus, using the data collected, as well as field notes from the classroom and excerpts from my research journal, I worked up to a general picture of how kindergarten students view and perceive bullying.

Methodological Assumptions

This study was based on the idea that children's drawings and stories accurately reflected their thoughts and perceptions regarding bullying and its occurrence in their lives' (Tamm 2001). Furthermore, the assumption was made that literacy competence was equal across students. As well, ethnography involves paying close attention to the everyday and familiar things which create and sustain one's social world; allowing voices to be heard which otherwise might be overlooked (James, 2001). Knupfer (1996) proposes that ethnography allows children to be viewed as "social constructors" and asserts that their culture is worthy of serious consideration, despite adult intrusions (p. 139).

Limitations

As outlined by Knupfer (1996), there are limitations when conducting ethnographic research with children. First, only the child's perspective is examined; as well, there may exist a social desirability on the part of the child to please the teacher/researcher. Future researchers may wish to also explore the teachers' and parents' views about bullying behaviour in kindergarten. The teacher/researcher and the child participants may have had preconceived expectations of how the other would and should behave and perform (Knupfer). Furthermore, within ethnographic research the teacher/researcher needs to avoid subjectivity and bias, as they often become both a participant and observer (Knupfer). As well, ethnographic research with children is limited by the language competency of the individual participants; those with higher language competency could presumably tell more involved, elaborate bullying stories (Knupfer).

Furthermore, as I was both the researcher and the teacher, it was extremely important that I did not allow this prior relationship to in any way psychologically damage the participants by judging, commenting on, placing blame, or evaluating the content of their drawings and stories. I could not allow my power as the teacher to influence this study's subjects, procedures, or its findings.

As well, my sample size was relatively small and was drawn from one geographical area. As I was both the teacher and researcher, the sample was one of convenience; it was not a randomly selected sample, and thus it lacked ethnic and social class diversity. Thus, it must be recognized that although the results of this study are useful indicators of kindergartners' perceptions of bullying, they may not generalize to all kindergartners' perceptions of bullying.

Establishing Reliability

In an effort to establish credibility, I had an independent coder, provided with a written description of each coding category, assess the drawings and stories in order to determine reliability and validity of the coding system. The coder and I discussed coding discrepancies only after we had independently coded the stories and pictures, in order to establish credibility. There were very few coding discrepancies between the independent coder and me; however, when discrepancies occurred we discussed them in an effort to reach a consensus, and then coded accordingly. Fortunately, coding discrepancies were so minor that it was relatively easy to reach a consensus. Interrater reliability was calculated for each theme, and the agreement between the author (me) and the second rater for coding the various themes was 99%.

As we coded, we independently recorded the common themes that we saw running through the stories and drawings; we then conferenced regarding these themes and were pleased to discover that the notion of a lack of sharing was an overwhelming theme for both of us. We also determined that an invasion of personal space was an emerging theme recorded by both of us throughout the stories and drawings; the independent coder had termed this a lack of respect for another's personal space, and I had termed it an invasion; we mutually decided to term this theme as an invasion of personal space.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations involved in this study include my role as both researcher and teacher. During this study, I was aware of my position as both a researcher/teacher and participant/observer in the research process. During my conferences with the participants, I was mindful and respected the rights of the child as both research participants and students in my class. Furthermore, when I recorded the participants' stories, I guided discussion and did not overly prompt participants to answer questions in any particular manner.

Restatement of the Problem

As an ethnographic researcher, I collected and analyzed data from kindergarten students regarding their ideas and perceptions of bullying. These findings provide a view of bullying from the perspective of kindergartners and are aimed at promoting the development of the whole child rather than just the cognitive development of the child. The antibullying strategies and teaching ideas presented are based on the authentic input of kindergarten students. It is my hope these findings will implore educators to recognize

the importance of promoting antibullying behaviour from young Canadians' perspectives, in an effort to foster a healthy sense of self and social responsibility in the classroom.

Summary

Chapter Three served to define and discuss the methodology and procedures that were followed when conducting this study. The study's research design, participants, procedures, data collection and analysis, methodological assumptions, and ethical considerations were also highlighted and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This study explored kindergarten children's perceptions of bullying behaviour in their day-to-day school activities. These observations deepened my insight into bullying perceptions and behaviours of Canadian kindergartners. The purpose was to shed light on how kindergarten students perceived the context in which bullying occurred, the types of bullying portrayed, and the individuals involved. Therefore, the current chapter summarizes the main findings from this study's data sources including: children's stories, drawings, and interviews, my field notes from classroom observations, and excerpts from my research journal. Thus, the reader is presented with a general picture of how 15 kindergarten students (8 male, 7 female) viewed and perceived bullying within my particular kindergarten classroom.

Setting/Context

Setting

When asked "Where does this drawing take place?" (See Table 1 entitled *Setting/Context of Participants' Interviews*) 9 out of 15 (60%) participants identified that bullying occurred at home rather than at school. Four out of 15 (27%) participants identified that bullying occurred inside the home, usually within a room in which they were playing, and 5 out of 15 (33%) participants identified that bullying occurred in their front or back yards at home. One boy (age 5 years, 4 months) said that he had a ball thrown at him "in the front yard." Six out of 15 (40%) participants identified that bullying occurred outside at school, usually on the "blacktop" (boy, age 6 years, 2 months). There were no reports that bullying occurred inside at school.

Table 1

Setting/Context of Participants' Interviews

Context	Home	School
Girls ($n=7$)		
Inside	2	0
Outside	1	4
Boys ($n=8$)		
Inside	2	0
Outside	4	2

Three out of 7 (43%) female participants identified that the bullying occurred at home, while 6 out of 8 (75%) male participants reported the same. Four out of 7 (57%) female participants identified that bullying occurred at school, while only 2 out of 8 (25%) male participants reported this. Thus, male participants were more likely to report that bullying occurred at home, while female participants were more likely to report that bullying occurred at school.

External objects: First drawing. Table 2, entitled *Number of External Objects in Drawings*, depicts the fact that 7 out of 15 (47%) participants had 0-2 external objects, such as trees, flowers, and the sun, in their first drawings (5 out of 7 [71%] female participants and 2 out of 8 [25%] male participants). Six out of 15 (40%) participants had 3-4 external objects in their first drawings (2 out of 7 female participants [29%] and 4 out of 8 male participants [50%]). Only 2 out of 15 (13%) participants had 5 or more external objects in their first drawings (0 out of 7 female participants and 2 out of 8 [25%] male participants).

Therefore, this finding indicated that the majority of first drawings (53%) had 3 or more external objects in them such as trees, the sun, the sky, buildings, and so on, while 47% of them had 2 or fewer external details. Most participants took the time to provide a visual background to their bullying drawings and did not present just the characters in their drawings. The majority of female participants (71%) drew only 0-2 external objects, while the majority of male participants (75%) drew 3 or more external objects. A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that female participants were more intent than male participants on displaying the human interaction occurring during the bullying situation rather than the pictorial details.

Table 2

Number of External Objects in Drawings

Variables	1 st Drawing	2 nd Drawing
Girls (<i>n</i> =7)		
0-2	5	5
3-4	2	1
5 or more	0	1
Boys (<i>n</i> =8)		
0-2	2	6
3-4	4	1
5 or more	2	1

External objects: Second drawing. Table 2, entitled *Number of External Objects in Drawings*, depicts the fact that 11 out of 15 (73%) participants had 0-2 external objects in their second drawings (5 out of 7 [71%] female participants and 6 out of 8 [75%] male participants). Two out of 15 (13%) participants had 3-4 external objects in their second drawings (1 out of 7 [14%] female participants and 1 out of 8 [13%] male participants). Only 2 out of 15 (13%) participants had 5 or more external objects in their second drawings (1 out of 7 [13%] female participants and 1 out of 8 [14%] male participants).

This finding showed that in this second drawing, which was drawn after the debriefing session, the majority of participants (73%) had only 0-2 external objects depicted in their drawings; this was true for the majority of female participants (71%) and the majority of male participants (75%). A possible explanation for this finding is that participants were more intent on displaying the human interaction occurring during the bullying situation rather than the pictorial details in this drawing (after the debriefing session) versus their first drawing. As well, it suggests that after discussing bullying, males and females were almost equally likely to focus on the human interaction occurring during the bullying situation rather than the pictorial details.

Types of Bullying

When assessing the context within which identified bullying occurred, I examined the children's stories, drawings, and interviews individually. It is important to note that all stories, drawings, and interviews were analyzed in terms of the four types of bullying presented within my coding categories: (a) physical bullying, (b) cognitive bullying, (c) social bullying, and (d) emotional bullying. In some cases, more than one type of bullying was identified in a participant's story, drawing, or interview, and in an effort to

truly listen to what the kindergarten child had to reveal about bullying, this overlap was recorded. Coding interrater agreement between me as the researcher, and my independent coder was calculated for each coding category.

Stories. Table 3, entitled *Types of Bullying Identified in Participants' Responses*, summarizes my findings with regard to the participants' initial audio-taped stories about bullying. Within the context of these stories, 10 out of 15 (67%) participants identified physical bullying. One girl (age 5 years, 8 months) said, "These two girls were pushing and bugging me at school." A boy (age 5 years, 7 months) said that when he gets angry "I start to punch people." Six out of 15 (40%) participants identified the occurrence of cognitive bullying. A girl (age 5 years, 9 months) said that "two people were making fun of me...of my hair in JK...on the bus every day on my way to school." A boy (age 5 years, 10 months) said that sadness is evoked when "people call [others] names." There were no reports of emotional or social bullying.

Therefore, the majority of the stories identified the occurrence of physical bullying, however the identification of cognitive bullying was also important here. Five out of 7 (71%) female participants reported that physical bullying was a problem as compared to 5 out of 8 (63%) male participants. This finding was interesting as it is not in line with bullying research conducted with older children that has found boys engage and report more physical bullying than girls (Banks, 1997; Dunn et al., 2000). Meanwhile, 2 out of 7 (29%) female participants identified the existence of cognitive bullying as compared to 4 out of 8 (50%) male participants. Interrater agreement was 99% for this assessment of participants' stories.

Table 3

Types of Bullying Identified in Participants' Responses

Bullying	Initial story	1 st drawing	Interview-1 st drawing	2 nd drawing
Girls (<i>n</i> =7)				
Physical	5	1	4	2
Cognitive	2	2	1	1
Social	0	0	0	0
Emotional	0	4	0	1
Boys (<i>n</i> =8)				
Physical	5	0	2	5
Cognitive	4	5	6	0
Social	0	0	0	0
Emotional	0	1	0	1

First drawing. Table 3, entitled *Types of Bullying Identified in Participants' Responses*, summarizes my findings with regard to the participants' first drawings about bullying. Within the context of these drawings, only 1 out of 7 (14%) female participants identified the occurrence of physical bullying by depicting one of the bully's limbs as striking the victim, while no male participants did so. Seven out of 15 (47%) participants identified the occurrence of cognitive bullying by depicting the bully as standing very close or over the victim in a threatening manner. Two out of 7 (29%) female participants reported this cognitive bullying as compared to 5 out of 8 (63%) male participants. Meanwhile, 5 out of 15 (33%) participants depicted the occurrence of emotional bullying by depicting the victim standing alone, as he/she is being excluded or ostracized. Four out of 7 (57%) female participants reported this emotional bullying as compared to 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants. There were no reports of social bullying.

Thus, participants pictorially identified cognitive bullying as their most prevalent concern, followed by physical and emotional bullying. Only 1 out of 7 (14%) female participants and no male participants pictorially depicted physical bullying, despite the fact that 71% of female participants and 63% of male participants had identified it as a major concern in their initial stories. As well, the fact that 4 out of 7 (57%) female participants and 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants pictorially reported emotional bullying warrants future research with regard to bullying and young children, as there were no verbal reports of emotional bullying in the participants' initial stories. Interrater agreement was 98.5% for this assessment of the participants' first drawings.

Interviews. Table 3, entitled *Types of Bullying Identified in Participants' Responses*, summarizes my findings with regard to the participants' interviews about

their first drawings. Within the context of these interviews, when asked, “What is happening in the drawing?” 6 out of 15 (40%) participants identified physical bullying occurring. One girl (age 6 years, 2 months) said, “My friend is pushing me.” A boy (age 5 years, 4 months) said the his friend was angry so he “threw the ball at me.” Four out of 7 (57%) female participants reported the occurrence of physical bullying as compared to 2 out of 8 (25%) male participants. Seven out of 15 (47%) participants identified the occurrence of cognitive bullying. One boy (age 5 years, 10 months) reported that while at the park an older boy was bullying his sister, as he was “making fun of her hand.” One out of 7 (14%) female participants as compared to 6 out of 8 (75%) male participants reported this cognitive bullying. There were no reports of social or emotional bullying, despite the fact that participants were asked the question, “How do you think the people in this drawing are feeling?” Therefore, within these interviews, participants identified cognitive bullying as their first concern, followed by physical and then emotional bullying.

As with the participants’ initial stories, more female participants (57%) reported the occurrence of physical bullying than male participants (25%). As well, once again more male participants (75%) verbally reported cognitive bullying than female participants (14%). Interrater agreement was 99% for this assessment of the participants’ interviews.

Second drawing. Table 3, entitled *Types of Bullying Identified in Participants’ Responses*, summarizes my findings with regard to the participants’ second drawings about bullying. Within the context of these drawings, 7 out of 15 (47%) participants identified the occurrence of physical bullying by depicting one of the bully’s limbs

striking the victim. Two of these were female participants (29%) and 5 were male participants (63%). One out of 7 (14%) female participants identified the occurrence of cognitive bullying by depicting the bully as standing very close or over the victim in a threatening manner, while no male participants did so. Two out of 15 (13%) participants identified the occurrence of emotional bullying. One out of 7 (14%) female participants' drawings and 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants' drawings depicted the occurrence of emotional bullying by depicting the victim standing alone as he/she is being excluded or ostracized. There was no social bullying reported.

Thus, these final drawings depicted physical bullying as the most prevalent type of bullying present, followed by emotional and then cognitive bullying. Yet, of interest, 63% of all male participants pictorially identified physical bullying as a major concern versus only 29% of all female participants. This finding is interesting as more females than males pictorially identified physical bullying as a major concern in their first drawings. Thus, it would be interesting to examine if participating in this study by thinking about and talking about bullying impacted on this result, and if so, how did study participation impact on the thoughts and views of male/female participants about bullying. Interrater agreement was 99.5% for this assessment of the participants' second drawings.

Type of Bullying First Mentioned in Participants' Responses

Stories and Interviews. Table 4, entitled *Type of Bullying First Mentioned in Participants' Responses*, reports that within their bullying stories 8 out of 15 (53%) participants mentioned physical bullying as the first type of bullying they were concerned with (4 out of 7 [57%] female participants and 4 out of 8 [50%] male participants). One

Table 4

Type of Bullying First Mentioned in Participants' Responses

Bullying	Initial story	Interview-1 st drawing
Girls (n=7)		
Physical	4	4
Cognitive	2	2
Social	0	0
Emotional	1	1
Boys (n=8)		
Physical	4	4
Cognitive	3	3
Social	0	0
Emotional	1	1

girl (age 6 years, 2 months) said, “We’re pushing each other.” Another girl (age 6 years, 2 months) identified “using words and using hands” when trying to resolve a conflict situation. Five out of 15 (33%) participants identified cognitive bullying (2 out of 7 [29%] female participants and 3 out of 8 [38%] male participants) and 2 out of 15 (13%) participants identified emotional bullying (1 out of 7 [14%] female participants and 1 out of 8 [13%] male participants) first. One boy (age 5 years, 10 months) told of a boy at the park making fun of his sister by saying that “one kid was making fun of her hair.” Another boy (age 5 years, 8 months) discussed the fact that he was excluded from playing even though his friend had two radios to play with but “he doesn’t share.” This finding was very interesting, as the types of bullying mentioned first were identical for both stories and interviews. This in itself is somewhat remarkable considering there was no deviation on the part of such young children when discussing their perceptions of bullying in two different contexts and on two different school days. Once again, this speaks to the need for future research to assess young children and their bullying perceptions and concerns.

Characters Present in Participants’ Responses

Fourteen of the 15 participants (93%) identified themselves as being present in their first bullying drawing and its corresponding interview. Often the participants would point to a character in their drawing and say, “I’m that one” (girl, age 6 years, 1 month). Of interest, only 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants identified themselves as the bully, while none of the female participants (0%) identified themselves as the bully. The boy said that he had started a verbal altercation, but that this was necessary as “I was right.” The remaining 13 participants (87%) identified themselves as victims. One girl (age 6

Table 5

Characters Present in Participants' Responses

Number of People	Initial story	1 st drawing	Interview-1 st drawing	2 nd drawing
1-2	12	11	13	14
3-4	2	4	1	0
5 +	1	0	1	1
Adults	2	2	4	0

years, 1 month) said, “Two people are pushing me.” One boy (age 6 years, 2 months) identified a bully at school who came up to him and “said bad words.”

Stories. Table 5, entitled *Characters Present in Participants’ Responses*, identifies the number of people who were present in the participants’ initial stories. Twelve of the 15 stories (80%) have only two children present; thus only the bully and the victim are identified. Two out of 15 (13%) stories have 3-4 children present, while only 1 out of 15 (7%) stories had 5 or more children present. Thus, the participants identified one-to-one bullying as their major concern; however, bystanders were present in 3 out of 15 (20%) of the stories, while group bullying was occurring in 2 out of 15 (13%) of the stories. Only 2 out of 15 (13%) stories mention an adult being present; in one story the adult is the bully, while in the other story the adult is a bystander.

First drawing. Table 5, entitled *Characters Present in Participants’ Responses*, depicts the fact that once again the majority of participants, 11 out of 15 (73%), depict bullying as occurring between two children, the bully and the victim. Four out of 15 (27%) participants depict 3-4 children as being present, while only 2 out of 15 (13%) drawings depict an adult present (one of the adults is a participant’s father, and the other adult depicted is the school bus driver).

Interviews. Table 5, entitled *Characters Present in Participants’ Responses*, summarizes my findings with regard to the participants’ interviews about their first drawings. When asked, “Who is in this drawing?” 13 of the 15 participants (87%) identified only two children, the bully and the victim as being present. When identifying the characters present, the participants would point to their initial drawings and often say, “I’m this one” (boy, age 5 years, 8 months), and then they would identify the other

character(s) present in the drawing. Only 1 out of 15 (7%) participants identified 3-4 children present in a group-bullying situation, while 1 out of 15 (7%) participants identified 5 or more children as being present, the bully, the victim, and bystanders. One girl (age 5 years, 8 months) said, "Someone I don't know is pushing me" and when asked who the other two people were in her drawing she replied, "I don't know them." Four out of 15 (27%) participants reported that adults were present (one adult is a bully, one is a school bus driver, and the other two interviewees identified teachers, parents, and the school principal as people helping to resolve a bullying situation). One boy (age 5 years, 8 months) said that his brother was bullying him and his "daddy sees he shares it." A girl (age 6 years, 1 month) said that when she was being bullied she would "go tell the teacher or my mom or dad or somebody else's mom or dad" in an effort to stop the bullying.

Second drawing. Table 5, entitled *Characters Present in Participants' Responses*, depicts the fact that once again the majority of participants, 14 out of 15 (93%) were identifying bullying as occurring between two children, the bully and the victim. Only 1 out of 15 (7%) participants depicted 5 or more children present. None of the participants had adults present in their second drawings. I found these findings particularly interesting as participants drew these drawings after our debriefing session; thus it would be interesting for future research to explore if there was actually a decrease in perceived group bullying and bystanders after the debriefing session, as well as the fact that no adults were present.

Table 6

Males/Females Present in Participants' Interviews

	Male	Female
Girls ($n=7$)		
Bully	1	6
Victim	0	7
Boys ($n=8$)		
Bully	8	0
Victim	6	2

Males and Females Present

Interviews. Table 6, entitled *Males/Females Present in Participants' Interviews*, summarizes my findings with regard to the participants' interviews about their first drawings. When asked, "What is happening in the drawing?" 6 out of 15 (40%) participants identified the victim as male (6 out of 8 [75%] males), while 9 out of 15 (60%) participants identified the victim as female (7 out of 7 [100%] participants were female and 2 out of 8 [25%] were male). One boy (age 5 years, 11 months) said that "one guy called the other guy a name." Another boy (age 5 years, 10 months) said that his sister was "being made fun of" at the park.

Nine out of 15 (60%) participants identified the bully as male (8 out of 8 [100%] males and 1 out of 7 [13%] females) and 6 out of 15 (40%) participants identified the bully as female (6 out of 8 [86%] female participants). One boy (age 5 years, 4 months) said that his male friend hit him with a ball "on the leg." One girl (age 5 years, 10 months) said that her female friend pushed her out of a tree house, as she pulled on her shirt and made her fall "down on the ground." This is an interesting finding that warrants future research, as among kindergartners in this study, the bully and victim were generally of the same gender. Furthermore, all female participants identified the victim as female, while all male participants identified the bully as male; this finding is in line with what other researchers have found regarding reported bully and victim gender (Banks, 1997; Ma 2001).

Social/Emotional Understanding

When assessing social/emotional awareness in student stories, drawings, and interviews, I was particularly interested in the presence and valence of emotions as

identified both verbally and pictorially by the participants. Hence, the facial language of the bullies and the victims was assessed as being positive (e.g., smiling face), negative (e.g., sad face, scowl), or neutral (e.g., a straight line or circle for the mouth) in participant drawings, as was the verbal identification of emotions in the participants' stories and interviews.

Stories. Table 6, entitled *Social/Emotional Verbal Awareness*, summarizes the fact that 14 out of the 15 participants (93%) reported the presence of emotions in their stories; 6 out of 15 (40%) participants identified victim sadness, 6 out of 15 (40%) identified the bully as being mean or "not nice," while 2 out of 15 (13%) participants, both male, reported the presence of anger (in both cases the bully was angry), and only 1 out of 15 (7%) participants was unable to identify the existence of emotions within the story being told. One girl (age 5 years, 8 months) reported she was sad when two girls were pushing her at school. One boy (age 5 years, 10 months) when describing the bullies at the park said, "they're not nice people." Another boy (age 5 years, 7 months) identified the bully as "getting angry."

Four out of 7 (57%) female participants identified victim sadness versus only 2 out of 8 (25%) male participants, while 3 out of 7 (43%) female participants identified bully meanness, along with 3 out of 8 (38%) male participants. Thus, on both measures, more female participants were able to identify the existence of emotions in the other than were male participants. Furthermore, the kindergartners were able to report the existence of very basic human emotions; however, many participants were not able to elaborate with regard to the emotions identified.

Table 7

Social/Emotional Verbal Awareness

Emotions identified	Initial story	Interview-1 st drawing
Girls ($n=7$)		
Sadness	4	3
Meanness	3	3
Anger	0	1
Boys ($n=8$)		
Sadness	2	1
Meanness	3	3
Anger	2	4

Interviews. Table 7, entitled *Social/Emotional Verbal Awareness*, shows that 4 out of 15 (27%) participants identified victim sadness, 6 out of 15 (40%) participants identified the bully as mean, and 5 out of 15 (33%) participants identified the bully as angry. One boy (age 5 years, 10 months) said that his sister was sad when a bully was making fun of her hand at the park. One girl (age 5 years, 9 months) said that two students making fun of her on the school bus “were mean to me.” One boy (age 5 years, 7 months) identified the bully as having an “angry face.” One girl (age 5 years, 10 months) said her friend had pushed her because she was mad and “wanted to go first.” Three out of 7 (43%) female participants identified victim sadness versus only 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants, while 3 out of 7 (43%) female participants identified bully meanness along with 3 out of 8 (38%) male participants. One out of 7 (14%) female participants identified the bully as angry and 4 out of 8 (50%) male participants did so. Once again, more female participants than male participants were able to identify the existence of emotions in the other. This finding definitely warrants future research on gender differences in young children’s ability to identify the emotions that are present in bullying situations.

First drawing. Table 8, entitled *Bully’s Facial Expression*, shows that 8 out of 15 (53%) participants identified the bully as having a positive facial expression, 6 out of 15 (40%) participants identified the bully as having a negative expression, and 1 out of 15 (7%) participants identified the bully as having a neutral expression. Four out of 7 (57%) female participants and 4 out of 8 (50%) male participants identified the bully’s facial expression as positive. Meanwhile, 4 out of 8 (50%) male participants identified the bully’s facial expression as negative versus only 2 out of 7 (29%) female participants.

Table 8

Bully's Facial Expression

Variables	1 st drawing	2 nd drawing
Girls (n=7)		
Positive expression	4	1
Negative expression	2	3
Neutral expression	1	3
Boys (n=8)		
Positive expression	4	5
Negative expression	4	2
Neutral expression	0	1

This finding warrants future research with regard to how accurately kindergartners are able to facially portray their perceptions of a bully's emotions. Only 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants with advanced language capabilities drew a voice bubble from the bully's mouth with the word "shut-up" printed inside it.

Second drawing. Table 8, entitled *Bully's Facial Expression*, shows that 6 out of 15 (40%) participants identified the bully as having a positive facial expression, 5 out of 15 (33%) participants identified the bully as having a negative expression, and 4 out of 15 (27%) participants identified the bully as having a neutral expression. One out of 7 (7%) female participants identified the bully's facial expression as positive, while 5 out of 8 (63%) male participants did so. Meanwhile, 3 out of 7 (43%) female participants identified the bully's facial expression as negative and 2 out of 8 (25%) male participants did so. Three out of 7 (43%) female participants depicted the bully's face as neutral, while only 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants did so. In this drawing, more males (63%) identified the bully as having a positive expression than did females (7%). This finding is interesting, because in the first drawing a larger percentage of females than males identified the bully's expression as positive. This finding warrants future research with regard to what changed male and female perceptions during the course of this study. As well, future research could explore how accurately kindergartners are able to facially portray their perceptions of a bully's emotions

First drawing. Table 9, entitled *Victim's Facial Expression*, shows that 3 out of 15 (20%) participants identified the victim as having a positive facial expression, and 12 out of 15 (80%) participants identified the victim as having a negative expression. Three out of 7 (43%) female participants identified the victim's facial expression as positive.

Table 9

Victim's Facial Expression

Variables	1 st drawing	2 nd drawing
Girls (n=7)		
Positive expression	3	0
Negative expression	4	6
Neutral expression	0	1
Boys (n=8)		
Positive expression	0	2
Negative expression	8	5
Neutral expression	0	1

Four out of 7 (57%) female participants identified the victim's facial expression as negative, while all 8 out of 8 (100%) male participants did so. This is definitely an interesting finding as many theorists would identify females rather than males as more likely to report victim sadness (e.g., Maccoby, 1998).

Second drawing. Table 9, entitled *Victim's Facial Expression*, shows that 2 out of 15 (13%) participants identified the victim as having a positive facial expression, and 11 out of 15 (73%) participants identified the victim as having a negative expression. Two out of 15 (13%) participants identified the victim as having a neutral expression. Two out of 8 (25%) male participants identified the victim's facial expression as positive. Six out of 7 (86%) female participants identified the victim's facial expression as negative, while 5 out of 8 (63%) male participants did so. Only 1 male participant with advanced language capabilities drew a voice bubble from the bully's mouth with the word "shut-up" printed inside it. Meanwhile, 1 out of 7 (14%) female participants identified the victim's facial expression as negative, as did 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants.

Emerging Themes

The independent coder and I agreed that if we found a bullying behaviour that we were not coding for identified by 3 or more of the participants in their stories, interviews, and drawings, we would record our findings and later discuss them in order to identify the existence of emerging themes. One such emerging theme was a lack of sharing; often the participants would identify that because children were unable to share an item, such as a toy, bullying behaviours would occur; thus, not sharing preceded bullying episodes. Six out of 15 participants (40%) reported that bullying occurred when children were

unable to share an item, such as a toy, or space, such as a play environment. Three of these participants were female (3 out of 7 female participants [43%]) and 3 of them were male (3 out of 8 male participants [38%]). One girl (age 5 years, 9 months) said, “they’re fighting because the other kids, the other person, wants the thing that the other person has.” One boy (age 5 years, 7 months) said that two people were fighting because “one wants the toy and he’s saying no.” This finding is supported by recent research which reported that, overall, preschoolers engage in relationally aggressive acts in a direct, reactive manner (Crick et al., 1999).

Another emerging theme was an invasion of one’s personal space by the bully, as pictorially depicted by the bully standing extremely close to the victim and crowding his/her personal space. In the first drawing, 7 out of 15 participants (47%) identified this invasion of space, 4 out of 8 male participants (50%) and 3 out of 7 female participants (43%). In the second drawing, 6 out of 15 participants (40%) identified this invasion of space, 3 out of 8 male participants (38%) and 3 out of 7 female participants (43%). This finding raises some interesting issues that future research could explore by studying how kindergartners define infringements on their personal space and if there are gender issues surrounding these perceptions.

Field Notes, Classroom Observations, and Debriefing Session

Throughout this study, I recorded attitudes, behaviours, and discussions about bullying that occurred in the classroom. There was a definite increase in the time children would spend discussing bullying and trying to resolve conflict situations in a prosocial manner throughout the course of this study. For example, the students began using statements such as “I feel angry that you won’t share that toy with me” (female, age

6 years, 2 months) when interacting with each other. This meant that they were not only using prosocial language, but they were also attempting to solve conflict in a prosocial manner.

One female participant told me she did not like that two female friends would not share a bike as they were bullies (female, age 5 years, 8 months). A male participant began putting his hand up after class stories and discussing characters within the stories who engaged in bullying behaviours (male, age 5 years, 7 months); this would often generate a class discussion about bullying and prosocial behaviours. This served to portray that students were able to understand a bullying vocabulary and were attempting to implement it in their day-to-day interaction.

The students really enjoyed Naylor's (1991) picture book, *King of the Playground*, and were incredibly insightful when sharing their thoughts and feelings about bullying within the context of the book. The book was about a child being bullied by another child on the school playground and how he was able to use his family as a support to address the bullying and stop it from occurring again. Students were eager to share their thoughts and ideas about bullying in a more personal context as they discussed experiences of bullying they had witnessed, been involved in, or seen in movies or on television. Almost all participants, both male and female, discussed bullying within a personal context such as fighting with playmate (female, age 6 years, 1 month) or a child family member (female, age 5 years, 10 months). The participants were very capable of defining bullying and the feelings it elicited, such as sadness, while we discussed and brainstormed regarding their thoughts and ideas about bullying.

By the end of our debriefing session, I was amazed at the bullying behaviours being discussed and identified, as conversation flowed freely for most children. As our session progressed, the children began to offer suggestions to other students regarding problem solving and respecting other people's feelings. Thus, I was pleased to see that it appeared that talking, listening, and discussing bullying with early learners had impacted on their ability to assess a bullying situation and hopefully work towards solving and decreasing bullying incidents. However, when I was just about ready to conclude our session and turn off the tape recorder, a male participant (age 6 years, 2 months) asked the other students how they would react if they were the character in our book who was being intimidated and verbally taunted. I was amazed at how quickly the male participants, (participants 6, 8, 12, and 13, all age 5 years) starting yelling out that they would want to "get" the bully and make him "pay." This in itself was interesting, as it supports the idea that males are more physically aggressive (Banks, 1997; Sullivan, 2000). Thus, I quickly realized the incredible importance that needs to be placed on the follow-through and follow-up of antibullying prevention programs in the early years. Early learners need consistent, supportive environments to learn how to stop bullying; it is not good enough to teach children what it means to be a bully and what we can do to stop and prevent bullying if we are not modelling and reinforcing constant prosocial behaviour focused on kindness, emotional awareness, and empathy.

Researcher's Journal

During the course of this study, I looked at each participant three individual times and recorded acts of kindness they performed. Since I began teaching kindergarten, it has never ceased to amaze me how few independent, interpersonal problem-solving skills

young learners appear to possess. I have often wondered if these skills were not being taught at home prior to the start of school, or if class sizes are simply so large that the environment is not conducive to prosocial interaction. After recording these acts of kindness, I am inclined to think that it is the social environment of schools and the large classes that teach children that there are not enough toys, books, bikes, and adult support and attention to go around; thus the quicker you act the more likely you are to get what you want; there is no time for interaction, only reaction. This is in line with Crick et al. (1999), who reported that preschoolers do indeed engage in relationally aggressive acts, much like older children; however, preschoolers do so in a more direct, reactive manner.

Nonetheless, as my study progressed, I was often humbled by the wisdom that children possess with regard to human emotion and empathetic awareness. The majority of acts of kindness I recorded occurred between two children during one-to-one interactions. I quickly became aware of the fact that children seem to respond almost intuitively to the crying of another child. During outside play, a male participant (age 5 years, 8 months) spontaneously put his arm around another child who had fallen off a bike and was crying. Neither child sought adult intervention; rather, they comforted each other. Similarly, a female participant (age 5 years, 8 months) was crying one day over the loss of a pet; immediately a female participant (age 6 years, 1 month) began to rub her back and soothe her with words by saying, "It's okay, you can cry." A female participant (age 6 years, 2 months) came up to me one day, said I looked sad, and asked if I was okay. A male participant (age 6 years, 2 months) told an apprehensive student that his new haircut was "awesome" and that he wished he had got it. It was not at all difficult to record three acts of kindness performed by each participant. I was absolutely amazed at

the children's ability to recognize human need and respond physically, verbally, and emotionally. I think as adults we often forget to ask the questions that do not have a right or wrong answer; they simply encourage early learners to explore their thoughts, ideas, and perceptions (such as, "How do you think this person is feeling?") and show them that they are more important than the school curriculum. It was evident that the children reveled in the importance and validation they felt as they shared their stories and drawings with me throughout the course of this study.

Thus, this study has enriched me personally, professionally, and academically. I have gained a research base upon which to improve my own educational practice by recognizing the wisdom of children and incorporating the holistic teaching ideas presented in Chapter Five in my daily lessons. Prior to completing this study, I completed an extensive review of bullying literature, I conferenced with my professors, as well as my colleague, but for me it is the children's stories I will never forget. Although these stories were often confusing to weed through and understand, the underlying messages were often quite profound. I have learned that children have a great deal to teach, as well as learn, about kindness, emotional awareness, and empathetic understanding. The children's stories have led me to believe that although bullying is definitely a societal problem that needs to be continually addressed, children are willing and capable to address bullying provided they are shown how to acquire and nurture the tools of empowerment needed to do so.

Summary

This study found that male kindergartners were more likely to report that bullying occurred at home and female kindergartners were more likely to report that bullying

occurred at school. Physical and cognitive bullying were identified as the types of bullying most often reported by male and female kindergartners. When discussing bullying with the participants, 87% of them identified themselves as being the victim present in a bullying situation, thus suggesting that by kindergarten children are aware of bullying and know what it is and how it feels to be victimized by a bully. A majority of kindergartners identified bullying situations occurring between two children, the bully and the victim, representing a bullying dyad and not a social group situation.

There were very few adults present in participant stories, drawings, and interviews. Forty percent of all participants identified the victim as male, while 60% of all participants identified the victim as being female. Meanwhile, all female participants identified the victim as female, while all male participants identified the bully as male. Overall, it was found that more female participants than male participants were able to identify the existence of emotions in the other. This finding is in line with research which supports the notion that girls may be emotionally aware and mature at an earlier age than boys (Dunn et al., 2000). The emerging themes that were found were the inability to share items and space as well as the invasion of one's personal space.

This chapter has presented and summarized my study's finding regarding kindergartners' perceptions of bullying. I believe this study speaks to the need for future research in the area of early learners and bullying. There is still a great deal to be discovered and learned with regard to stopping school bullying in the early years before it has a chance to start. Chapter Five explores the conclusions, recommendations, and implications that have arisen as a result of my study.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The present study allowed me to examine and explore the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of kindergartners in a Canadian classroom with regard to bullying. It encouraged me to listen to the voices of these early learners and acknowledge the fact that bullying is a school problem that is present at the very beginning of school and needs to be addressed at this time. My hope is that this study will encourage parents and educators to address bullying in the early years in an effort to stop it before it becomes a part of everyday school life. As well, I hope to encourage future researchers to explore the largely underdeveloped research area of bullying in early childhood.

Summary of Main Findings

Setting/Context

The majority of participants (60%) identified that bullying occurred at home rather than at school. Only 6 (40%) participants identified that bullying occurred at school. Furthermore, male participants were more likely to report that bullying occurred at home, while female participants were more likely to report that bullying occurred at school. Thus, my study found that bullying appears to be an issue prior to early learners entering school as it is occurring in the home environment, yet it also begins to occur in the school setting in the kindergarten years. Hence, bullying and gender differences in early childhood need to be explored in both environments, and parents and educators need to work together to decrease its existence. Furthermore, as more bullying was

reported to occur at home, this could suggest the existence of sibling rivalry, which warrants future research.

Types of Bullying

Stories. The majority of the bullying stories identified the occurrence of physical bullying; however cognitive bullying was also identified as a concern. Five out of 7 (71%) female participants reported that physical bullying was a problem as compared to 5 out of 8 male (63%) participants. Meanwhile, 2 out of 7 (29%) female participants identified the existence of cognitive bullying as compared to 4 out of 8 (50%) male participants. This is an interesting finding as it suggests that the gender differences discussed in Chapter Two regarding the types of bullying males and females engage in need to be explored within the context of early learners. I found it surprising that more females reported the existence of physical bullying, as current research would suggest this to be a male-dominant bullying measure (Banks, 1997; Dunn et al., 2000; Ma, 2001).

First drawing. Participants pictorially identified cognitive bullying as their most prevalent concern, followed by physical and emotional bullying. One out of 7 (14%) female participants and no male participants pictorially depicted physical bullying, despite the fact that 71% of female participants and 63% of male participants had identified it as a major concern in their initial stories. As well, 4 out of 7 (57%) female participants and 1 out of 8 (13%) male participants pictorially reported emotional bullying, yet there were no verbal reports of emotional bullying in the participants' initial stories. This finding speaks to the need for researchers to explore the types of bullying present in the early years and to create a body of literature that highlights whether the types of bullying are indeed gendered in the early years.

Interviews. As with the participants' initial stories, more female participants (57%) reported the occurrence of physical bullying than male participants (25%). As well, once again more male participants (75%) verbally reported cognitive bullying than female participants (14%). This finding warrants future research to assess the gender differences with regard to the types of bullying identified by young children. It would also be interesting to study the role that language competence has in male/female ability to report bullying in kindergarten.

Second drawing. Sixty-three percent of all male participants pictorially identified physical bullying as a major concern versus only 29% of all female participants. This finding is interesting as more females than males pictorially identified physical bullying as a major concern in their first drawings. Thus, it would be interesting to examine if participating in this study by thinking about and talking about bullying impacted on the thoughts and views of male/female participants regarding bullying.

Characters Present

When discussing bullying with the participants, 87% of them identified themselves as being the victim present in a bullying situation, thus suggesting that by kindergarten children are aware of bullying and know what it is and how it feels to be victimized by a bully. Only one male participant out of all participants (1 out of 15 [7%]) reported himself as having at one time been a bully. Thus, this finding speaks to the need for future research to address how honest and capable young learners are at self-reporting the role they play in bullying situations. In order to address this issue, educators could encourage young children to role play situations in which they are the bully and have

them identify possible prosocial ways to rectify the bullying situations and avoid them in the future.

Stories and interviews. A finding I found particularly interesting was the fact that a large majority of kindergartners identified bullying situations occurring between two children, the bully and the victim. Thus, the majority of bullying situations represented a dyad and not a social group. This speaks to the need to address early childhood one-on-one peer interaction both at home and at school. This finding is not in line with research that suggests bullying is a social and multiplayer activity (Marini et al., 1999; Sullivan, 2000); thus it warrants future research with regard to the social dynamics of bullying and young children. The participants appeared to find it easier to react and then have to solve their interaction problems, rather than being proactive and avoiding one-on-one conflict from the very beginning. Similarly, Crick et al. (1999) found that preschoolers engaging in relationally aggressive acts do so in a direct, reactive manner. Perhaps if children were taught how to discuss and negotiate from the earliest stages of peer interaction this finding would diminish. Hence, I think that antibullying measures in the early years need to initially address proactive social behaviour, followed by prosocial reactive behaviour, in an effort to decrease and diminish bullying behaviour in the early years.

Another finding that warrants future research is the fact that there were very few adults present in participant stories, drawings, and interviews. Often it appeared that adults were an afterthought, meaning they were a final resort to turn to when trying to resolve bullying problems. Unfortunately, verbally some children did allude to adults as bystanders, which is an interesting finding that speaks to the need for future research to assess how kindergartners perceive and view adult beliefs and behaviours regarding

bullying. This is particularly important, as research supports the notion that the way adults react to childhood bullying plays a major role in whether or not it decreases or escalates (Sullivan, 2000; Towers, 1997).

Males and females present. Of all my study findings, I found this one particularly interesting as, 40% of all participants identified the victim as male while 60% of all participants identified the victim as being female. Meanwhile, all female participants identified the victim as female while all male participants identified the bully as male. I found this interesting as this finding very much conforms to the Western gender stereotypic norms that promote the notion that boys are more aggressive and dominant while females are less aggressive and more likely to be victimized (Banks, 1997; Ma, 2001). Thus, a more in-depth study needs to be done to explore this finding and assess its implications with regard to early childhood bullying behaviour.

Social/Emotional Awareness

Stories. These initial stories depicted the fact that the majority of participants (93%) were able to identify the presence of basic human emotions, such as sadness, meanness, and anger, in their initial bullying stories. However, it was also found that kindergartners were unable to elaborate with regard to the emotions present in terms of more complex, in-depth emotional awareness and language. Thus, this finding suggests that these early learners would benefit from class discussions and lessons that promote social emotional awareness in terms of a wide variety of human emotions (Denham, 1998; Eisenberg, 1992). Such discussions and lessons would focus on the appropriate use of expressive emotional language and would encourage kindergartners to discuss

human emotions in a social context and promote the development of prosocial behaviour, such as the ability to share, in young children (Denham).

Interviews and drawings. These findings demonstrated that, overall, more female participants were able to identify the existence of emotions in the other than were male participants. This finding could reflect that the young females were more mature than the young males (Dunn et al., 2000; Maccoby, 1998). This finding points to the fact that being taught to recognize the emotions of others in early childhood may be a useful antibullying strategy for both females and males (Eisenberg, 1992).

This study also found that the use of drawings was able to serve as a tangible, personal frame of reference for the participants when discussing human emotions and was a useful tool of empowerment that allowed the kindergartners to authentically share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas with regard to bullying and the emotions it elicits. Thus, the drawings were able to help define an abstract concept (bullying) and make it more concrete for the young child (Tamm, 2001).

Discussion

Bullying is a contentious issue as so many definitions and frameworks currently exist with regard to what exactly bullying consists of (Marini et al., 2001). I would suggest that working with young children is limited by the fact that a questionnaire or straight interview about bullying is not going to work, as young children lack the literacy skills needed to complete such tasks. Hence, this study allowed children to speak through their drawings (Tamm, 2001) and asked them to describe how the victims of bullying felt. The privileged position I had as both teacher and researcher allowed me an inside look at the dominance and humiliation described by the participants during their interviews.

Often participants would lower their voices during taping when discussing bullying, look downwards rather than at me, or the tape recorder, and describe situations marked by humiliation and dominance. One female participant (age 6 years, 1 month) was barely audible when she turned her head downward and reported that two older girls “were pushing me, they were hurting me.” A male participant (age 5 years, 10 months) whispered that a bully had told him to “shut-up” outside on the school playground. Initially, I did not recognize what a privileged view of bullying the children were sharing with me; I knew them so well I was able to encourage them to share and expand on their answers by responding to their body language.

As well, it is important to recognize that the children identified a lack of sharing as an emerging theme. The reported incidents often identified a misuse of power and implied that not sharing constituted a violation of a social rule. This finding is supported by recent research, as preschoolers tend to engage in relationally aggressive acts in a direct, reactive manner when a social rule is broken (Crick et al., 1999). Furthermore, the children identified an invasion of space by the bully as a violation to one’s right within our society to personal space. Thus, both of these emerging themes involved a sense of violation, which in itself is central to the issue of bullying.

Within the context of this study, I found that kindergartners were able to analyze their own actions and discuss bullying situations (Vygotsky, 1962). An interesting finding from this study is the fact that both boys and girls primarily reported engaging in physical bullying; this finding is not supported by research that shows that boys tend to engage in direct bullying methods, whereas girls tend to use indirect strategies (Banks, 1997). However, this finding is supported by Loeber and Hay (1997), who proposed that

girls do indeed engage in physical aggression against their peers. As well, due to the prevalence of bullying suggested by this study, future research could explore if and how children differentiate between altercations and bullying situations.

Just as Lambert (1999) proposes a holistic approach to addressing school bullying that does not underestimate the tremendous amount of learning and development that takes place on the school playground, I too would assert that, based on this study's findings, more time needs to be spent addressing school playground bullying. In order to diminish school bullying there appears to be a definite need to train and support playground supervisors to respond effectively to incidents of bullying (Towers, 1997).

After all, kindergarten is still considered a place where children can be nurtured and allowed to grow at their own pace, and as my findings support, kindergartners appear to be more than happy to share their thoughts and perceptions about bullying (Moyer, 2001). I would assert that my attitude as the teacher played a major role in determining the extent of bullying occurring in my classroom, and that since I would often speak out against bullying the children recognized that I did not condone this behaviour (Froschl & Sprung, 1999). Furthermore, as I fully embraced the notion that the early years teachers are next in importance to the family in helping a child become a cooperative member of society, I was able to model antibullying behaviours for my students throughout the school year (Froschl & Sprung). Thus, within my classroom we adopted a "no blame approach" to the problem of bullying that encouraged both bullies and victims to engage in solution finding (Chodzinski & Burke, 1998). As this approach was nonpunitive, the students were empowered to explore problems faced by students and to engage in conflict resolution. Furthermore, throughout the course of this study, I taught and involved students in

mediation and reflection, teaching empathy, and teaching “positive regard for others and unconditional acceptance and unselfishness” (Chodzinski & Burke, p. 9).

As an early years teacher, my goal was to teach social/emotional awareness in an effort to dissuade children from bullying one another. The early years are a time when human bonds must be nurtured and positive social interactions encouraged in order to lay the foundation for a person’s sense of belonging and importance in later life (Paley, 1999). Unfortunately, despite my teachings the children had many bullying stories to share, the majority of which were not reported to adults. When asked where the adults were when a boy was being bullied outside at home, a boy (age 5 years, 11 months) reported “they’re at home.” Thus, as research supports, a sizeable number of bullying victims do not report the bullying (Eslea & Smith, 1998). Thus, it is important that schools continue to promote antibullying awareness programs that encourage children to report school bullying.

Implications

Theoretical/Conceptual Issues

This study supports the notion that bullying does indeed occur in early childhood settings. As reported by Crick et al. (1999) in their study of preschoolers ranging from 3-5 years of age, bullying behaviour occurs much earlier than middle childhood, despite the fact that very little victimization research focuses on early childhood (p. 382). Thus, this study speaks to the need for more research to be done that focuses on bullying, emotional awareness, and empathy in early childhood in an effort to understand and decrease peer victimization in these formative early years. Thus, as Vail (1999) points out, it is dangerous to view childhood bullying as a rite of passage, and if as educators it is our

desire to diminish school bullying, then it is our duty to protect children from all forms of maltreatment by not accepting bullying in the classroom.

In order to teach children how not to bully, they need to be taught social/emotional, empathetic awareness at an early age. Hesse and Cicchetti (1982), reported that, as we cannot feel the emotional states of others it is important that young children be taught to ascribe emotions to others on the basis of “facial and gestural expressions, situational variables, and emotional language” (p. 7) in order to promote early developmental emotional awareness. Denham (1998) reported that young children are motivated to change certain emotions, and the easiest way to teach them how to do so is to cite an emotion and ask them to act out how to change it. Another approach cited by Denham is to tell young children stories and ask them how to help the protagonist in changing emotions, thus presenting antibullying strategies outside of a real bullying situation. This strategy may also allow children to be more open regarding situations in which they are the bully. Hence, as young children are active social cognizers who pick up on the emotional expressions of others, modelling appropriate antibullying behaviours is very important (Denham). Educators, parents, and caregivers “need to carefully consider open, though not overwhelming, discussions of feelings with their children” in order to promote antibullying attitudes in young children (Denham, p. 117).

Eisenberg (1992) reported that empathy was linked with prosocial behaviours, such as an increased desire to share one’s possessions with an upset friend, among very young children. She stressed the importance of promoting empathy training in the socialization of prosocial behaviour in young children. These strategies included stories that point out other people’s feelings and the effects of a child’s behaviour on others,

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role-playing empathetic reactions to a given situation, and the modelling of empathetic responses.

Dunn (1995) reported that early childhood emotional understanding was related to kindergarten children's positive perceptions of their peer experiences, understanding of mixed emotions, and moral sensibility. Therefore, in an effort to diminish and combat bullying in schools, educators and parents need to acknowledge that school is often the first community that children join outside of the family unit, and it is vital they are taught to be morally and socially responsible and accountable within that community (Coles, 1997). Children must feel safe and comfortable questioning moral challenges and transgressions within their newly formed community in order to be able to recognize that bullying is a cruel and inappropriate way to interact. Therefore, as kindergartners often come to school with few preconceived notions and are able to learn through play and social interaction, kindergarten does indeed seem to present itself as an ideal time to teach children emotional, empathetic, and antibullying awareness. Piaget and Inhelder (1969) reported that between 2 and 7 years old symbolic play played a major role in the socialization of the self and in developing the types of social exchanges (personal and interpersonal) in which children are likely to engage. This developmental notion of play has also been supported by other researchers (Maccoby, 1998; Paley, 1999). In an effort to diminish early bullying practices, more research needs to be conducted with early learners (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001), especially since it is a vital developmental period where the regulation of basic human emotions and behaviours, such as physical aggression, are learned (Tremblay, 2000, p. 138). Furthermore, as Marini et al. (2000)

conclude, “bullying prevention efforts should be implemented as early in a student’s life as possible” given the stability of antisocial behaviour (p. 22).

A holistic environment may help decrease bullying in the kindergarten classroom as it encourages students “towards their own connection to the world...and may allow them...to view themselves and others from a more inclusive and accepting lens” (Bosacki, 1997, p. 59). Holism is a “curriculum of hope that teaches children to learn to listen, love, and accept” all of which promote inner and outer peace (Bosacki, p. 59). Holistic social theory calls attention to the importance of “personal and community wholeness” (R. Miller, 1991, p. 26). Therefore, holism may be viewed as a spiritual and emotional quest that can promote human interconnectedness, emotional awareness, and empathetic awareness, all of which I would suggest lead to connectedness within the classroom and can decrease school bullying. One is being nurtured spiritually, which may serve as an inner guide, while also nurturing one’s mind, body, and soul.

Thus, holism would encourage early learners to use their five senses to truly experience the real elements of nature and human existence. Holism would encourage early learners to internalize and recognize that we all belong to a larger human family and that by disregarding one family member, we are only contributing to the disintegration of the family (J.P. Miller, 1993). Therefore, educators need to encourage students to recognize the common familial bond that we all share and to stress the importance of respecting that bond and developing a sense of self, free from negative attitudes towards one’s communal body. Hence, holism stands in direct opposition to bullying behaviour and dismisses the notions of separation and fragmentation that currently prevail in our society (Kessler, 1991, p. 5). Thus, holistic education encourages a sense of emotional, intellectual, and societal

responsibility and stands in direct opposition to bullying behaviour. As Kessler asserts, "the absence of a spiritual dimension in our culture is a crucial factor in self-destructive behaviour;" holism would nurture a spiritual dimension in early learners that promotes the abhorrence of destructive behaviours such as bullying (p. 5).

In fact, in support of a holistic curriculum delivery, "current findings show preadolescent children, especially girls, are finding the task of self-construction and self-acceptance increasingly difficult" (Bosacki, 1997, p. 54). These findings point to the dire need for the classroom to present today's children with a holistic program that addresses personal integration and social awareness, if one is to promote emotional, empathetic, and antibullying awareness (Bosacki, 1997; 1998). Holism looks at the individual and the need to examine one's connections to society and society's norms; such inner exploration is an antibullying measure within itself as it encourages a deep sense of emotional and empathetic awareness. Thus, a holistic framework "based on the idea of connectedness and interdependence" (J.P. Miller, 1992, p. 2) can serve to allow the establishment of peaceful school climates by establishing and encouraging human connections.

Hence, holism addresses the sacredness of being. It is the search and evolution towards balance. In my opinion, holism would allow early learners to develop finely tuned interpersonal as well as intrapersonal skills, thus reducing the existence of bullying in the kindergarten classroom. In order for peaceful classrooms to be established, individuals must be taught to connect with themselves and their peers, for example by role playing and discussing human emotions, in an effort to listen and reflect to one's own voice as well as the voices of others.

Therefore, since the “holistic conception of education is both child and culture-centred” it is the perfect framework within which to address emotional, empathetic, and antibullying awareness (Bosacki, 1997, p. 54). A holistic educational program would value one’s social and intellectual needs and thus give equal importance to one’s emotions and empathetic awareness. Since “the vision of holism is a vision of healing” (R. Miller, 1991, p. 31), it would appear to be the ideal framework within which to teach early learners to value peaceful school environments free from victimization and human cruelty while striving toward an integration rather than fragmentation of body, mind, and soul.

Education

The early elementary school years are marked by the eager, lively searching of the child to determine the rights and wrongs of life (Coles, 1997). Furthermore, Coles asserted that kindergarten children’s moral imaginations were “fueled constantly by the willingness, the eagerness of children to put themselves in the shoes of others, to experience that way of life” (pp. 98-99). Therefore, “early education at its best can indeed bring about significant change in the lives of young people” by promoting early positive social development (D.B. Gardner, 1973, p. 350). Gardner stated that early childhood education had the ability to allow students to develop more positive attitudes to themselves and others and allowed them to “use a wider range of adult and peer models as basis for one’s emerging social competence” (p. 355).

Therefore, educators must discuss bullying during the early years, encourage children to discuss their feelings, and allow them ample opportunities to express their emotions in stories, drawings, role plays, and class discussions in order to diminish school bullying. As Marini et al. (1999), reported bullying has long-term implications;

thus in order to promote antibullying measures educators must start from the beginning of school to denounce bullying and promote peaceful school climates. Children must be taught and encouraged to analyze their own actions, as well as the actions of others, in order to promote emotional, empathetic, and bullying awareness in the early years (Vygotsky, 1962, 1976).

Thus, it is imperative that young learners feel safe and valued at school; teachers must consistently speak out against bullying in order to model for children that it is a deplorable, unacceptable form of human interaction. (Froschl & Sprung, 1999). Teachers in the early school years need to recognize that often they are next in importance to the family in helping a child become a cooperative member of society (Froschl & Sprung). Thus, they must model human kindness, empathy, and cooperation in an effort to model antibullying behaviours to their students. These early-years teachers must embrace classroom opportunities to discuss conflict situations, to role play possible resolutions, and to encourage, recognize, and nurture prosocial interactions. After all, empathy builds on self-awareness, and if we are taught to be aware of our own emotions we become more skilled at reading the feelings of others (Goleman, 1995). Goleman asserted that a key social competence is “how well or poorly people express their own feelings” (p. 113).

As Goldstein (1997) highlighted, it is important that early childhood teachers embrace human curiosity and are willing to listen to what children have to say and be open to the fact that once adults recognize how much children have to both learn and teach, true human understanding and learning opportunities begin. As the current study has taught me, kindergartners are able to learn a great deal about human emotions and

empathy if they are given the time and opportunities to discuss, decipher, and evaluate their own feelings and emotions within the classroom. Hence, it is imperative that kindergarten teachers draw from the current Ontario social skills curriculum and allow classroom teachable moments to occur in order to promote authentic antibullying teaching opportunities in the early years.

Kindergarten teachers need to adapt a social learning approach in their classrooms in order to increase one's understanding of the origins of violent behaviour in an effort to promote peace in the classroom (Morris et al., 2000, p. 41). However, educators must be willing to assume the responsibility that bullying intervention brings with it by consistently conferencing, storytelling, and role playing with students in an attempt to change attitudes, behaviours, and unproductive routines in school life (Olweus, 1997).

However, it must also be acknowledged that bullying cannot be addressed only at the classroom level if antibullying measures are to be effective in the kindergarten years; thus:

1. Organizational components such as school boards and schools need to develop and implement zero-tolerance, consistent antibullying policies, procedures, and practices.
2. Instructional components such as the curriculum and classroom need to begin by making teachers, students, and parents aware of the issue of bullying.
3. Individual components such as victims, victimizers, and bystanders need to be empowered and educated regarding bullying and more appropriate forms of social interaction (Marini et al., 2000, pp. 10-11).

As previously mentioned and highlighted in Chapter Two, there currently is a lack of conceptual and empirical literature on bullying from a child's perspective; thus there is

also a lack of educational curriculum that addresses the spiritual and/or emotional life of the child. Thus, the current study supports the idea that a holistic curriculum that addresses the spiritual and/or emotional life of the child would serve as an excellent starting point when attempting to implement antibullying measures in the early years. Since holism encourages the continuous development of self-worth and self-esteem by maintaining a connection between one's mind, body, and soul, it can serve as a tool of empowerment that promotes emotional awareness and empathy, both of which may be able to encourage peaceful school climates free from peer victimization.

Therefore, a holistic program would encourage emotional awareness and empathy by first promoting a physical, spiritual, and emotional connection within the child. For example, educators could initially use physical movement as a means of building success for young children, which may in turn lead to increased positive self-images and decreased victimization behaviour (J.P. Miller, 1993, p.10). Furthermore, self-connections may be built and strengthened through meditations and guided imagery (Bosacki, 1997). Physical movement and guided imagery encourage one to go inside and get to truly know their mind, body, and spirit and thus aid in promoting both emotional and empathetic awareness. Such relaxation strategies may "assist in the development of cognitive strategies that can be later used as a coping strategy to deal with real-life emotional stress," such as that elicited by bullying situations (Bosacki, p. 58).

As well, early learners can benefit from hearing and talking about antibullying cultural stories as they promote an awareness and understanding of cultural values (Bosacki, 1997). "Stories are especially useful devices for dealing with situation, conflict or obstacle...they help...to impose order and coherence...and work out the meaning of

incidents and events in the real world” (Carter, 1993, p. 7). Furthermore, since teachers become the stories that they tell, it is important from a holistic perspective for one to address sociocultural values and norms in the classroom in an attempt to reconnect one’s body, mind, and soul (Jalongo, 1992). As well, in an effort to combat bullying and increase both emotional and empathetic awareness, it is also important for educators to allow and encourage early learners to tell their stories in an effort to promote inner exploration and allow all students to feel validated and honoured. Students are the stories that they tell; thus it is imperative that they are comfortable with their inner selves so that their stories enhance their sense of wholeness, well-being, and inner peace. Thus, a classroom environment that promotes inner peace would also promote collective peace within the classroom, thus creating an accepting, inviting space that honours all children’s self-worth and value.

Future Research

This study explored only children’s views about bullying; thus, future researchers may wish to also explore teachers’ and parents’ views about bullying behaviour in kindergarten. However, this study very much supports the notion that school principals, staffs, and parents need to implement appropriate discipline programs, and opportunities for professional teacher development in the early years, in an effort to teach children to denounce bullying from the very beginning of school (Craig et al., 1998, p. 21).

However, as Chodzinski and Burke (1998) report, it would appear that our current antibullying educational programs are not adequate. In particular, this study’s debriefing session supports this point, as even after participation in this study male and female children were stating that they would want to physically “get” a bully if they were being victimized. This also emphasizes that there must be consistent follow-through and

follow-up when teaching and implementing antibullying measures in the kindergarten classroom. Future researchers may wish to continue to investigate the victim's perspective and develop and implement educational programs based on this perspective (such programs would need to incorporate an evaluative component).

There is definitely a movement to prevent school bullying, and educators and parents must access and use the resources available to them, such as Sullivan's (2000) book, *The Anti-bullying Handbook*, and the antibullying pamphlet created within this study. However, this study also speaks to the need for future research to address the issue of bullying from the young child's perspective while also exploring the best possible ways to promote emotional and empathetic awareness in young children. In order to decrease incidents of school bullying it is important that one understands what this bullying is and why it is occurring. Developmentalists support the notion that early childhood is a unique developmental period where one's self-concept and social skills are constantly evolving (Maccoby, 1998; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). As such, school bullying needs to be addressed from the early childhood perspective in a proactive attempt to decrease the development of all school bullying and increase the empathetic awareness of all children (Eisenberg, 1992; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987).

Summary

The present study adds to a body of knowledge furthering the discourse on bullying. It took an in-depth look at bullying from the participants' view of bullying. Early childhood bullying was explored through kindergartners' own words and perspectives. A link was made to holistic education and bullying by examining the emotional aspect of learning.

The present study aimed to encourage students, parents, and educators to acknowledge the existence of bullying in kindergarten. It is my hope that this study will serve to attest to the fact that kindergartners do experience bullying and that future research needs to focus on early learners. Such focus will help to explore the most effective antibullying measures to implement in the kindergarten years. Furthermore, this study serves to show that a curriculum that embraces holism and allows for the integration of mind, body, and soul is the ideal teaching tool to promote bullying prevention. By stressing emotional and empathetic awareness and understanding at an early age, educators may be able to diminish school bullying and nurture the establishment of peaceful school climates. After all, research has shown that bullying behaviour is lowered when students perceive their peers and teachers as providing social support and emotional understanding (Natvig et al., 2001).

This study was an incredibly valuable personal and professional learning opportunity. It taught me how incredibly emotionally in tune and perceptive young learners truly are. Furthermore, perhaps one of the best antibullying measures is simply to listen to children's stories, to encourage their developing emotional and empathetic awareness, and to embrace class discussions, role playing opportunities, as well as verbal and pictorial story telling, in an effort to promote human kindness and denounce and discourage bullying.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval

Senate Research Ethics Board**Extensions 3205/3035, Room**

FROM: David Butz, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Sandra Bosacki, Education
Susan Gillies-Rezo

FILE: 01-173, Gillies-Rezo

DATE: February 27, 2002

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the research proposal:

Perceptions of Bullying in Kindergarteners

The Subcommittee finds that your proposal conforms to the Brock University guidelines set out for ethical research. Your research proposal has been approved through the expedited review process for the period of **February 27, 2002 to September 30, 2002**.

**** Accepted as clarified.**

Expedited Review of a research proposal (by 2 members of the Research Ethics Board and review by the Chair of the REB) is equivalent to approval provided by the full REB (i.e., it does not mean conditional approval). However, the Chair of the REB must report to the full REB on a monthly basis about any expedited reviews that they have conducted. At such meetings, the full REB could ask for additional changes to the research protocols being used in a particular study. If this were to occur, the decision of the full REB will always over-ride the earlier decision of the two REB members and the Chair.

Appendix B

Information Letter for School Principal

Information Letter for School Principal

Dear School Principal,

I am currently a Master of Education student at Brock University and I am interested in studying kindergartners' perceptions of bullying and bullying behaviour. To further my understanding of kindergartners' perceptions of bullying I wish to conduct a research project entitled "Perceptions of Bullying in Kindergartners". The results of this research project would allow me to gain insight into kindergartners' perceptions of bullying and may also highlight gender differences within these perceptions. Also, as an educator and researcher, I am interested in applying the information gathered from this study to fields of teaching/learning and curriculum development.

Please note this study has been reviewed and received ethics approval through the Brock University Research Ethics Board (File #01-173) and has also been approved by Superintendent Campbell, Mountain East, and the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. Therefore, as the morning kindergarten teacher at Pauline Johnson School, I am asking your permission to approach the parents/guardians of these children in order to have them participate in this study. This would occur, upon your own and the parents' written permission in late February or early March 2002.

Given that the activities and stories involved in this study have been used in past educational research with children, there are no obvious physical or psychological risks associated with participation. However, this study does encourage children to think about social experiences, which may arouse anxiety in some children. Thus, to ensure that the risk of being exposed to the sensitive nature of some of the questions is kept to a minimum, children will be reminded frequently throughout the study that they have the right to refuse to participate and to stop the tasks at any time they wish.

If a child participant reveals a problem regarding bullying and/or victimization during the research study, to ensure that participants have opportunities to express any concerns, the participants will be reminded throughout the study they can speak to an adult (e.g., teacher, principal, parent, etc.), if they wish to do so. If a child indicates

she or he would like to speak with someone, the researcher will speak with the child and facilitate an opportunity to speak with the principal who may suggest a referral to a professional. In addition, the researcher will always be in the room to answer questions and will be available to forward on any requests to the school principal. To detect and handle potential psychological/emotional distress, all participants will be aware of referral options. If needed phone numbers of agencies in the Hamilton-Wentworth Region that are on hand to obtain help or advice such as the City of Hamilton, Social and Public Health Services, 905-522-3304; Children's Aid Society, 905-522-1121 will be available for the researcher, school principal, or parents to contact.

For your inspection, I have enclosed the consent forms and task protocols involved in this study. I hope that you will consider this worth the time that it will require. At the end of the study, I would be happy to provide you with a summary of my findings. If you have any questions or comments regarding this research please feel free to contact my thesis advisor Dr. Sandra Bosacki at Brock University, Faculty of Education (Office Phone No.: 905-688-5550 ext. 4970), E-Mail: sbosacki@ed.brocku.ca or myself at Pauline Johnson Elementary School (905) 388-1761, E-Mail sgilliesrezo@hotmail.com.

Thank-you very much for your time. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Susan Gillies-Rezo
Master of Education Candidate
Brock University

Appendix C

Information and Consent Form for Parent/Guardian

Information and Consent Form for Parent/Guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am currently a Master of Education student at Brock University and I am interested in studying kindergartners' perceptions of bullying and bullying behaviour. To further my understanding of kindergartners' perceptions of bullying I am requesting your permission for your child to be a participant in my research project entitled "Perceptions of Bullying in Kindergartners". The data collected from this research will be kept **confidential**, no child's name, class, school, or school board will be identified. The results of this research project will allow me to gain insight into kindergartners' perceptions of bullying. As well, as an educator and researcher, I am interested in applying the information gathered from this study to fields of teaching/learning and curriculum development.

I will begin by asking students individually to tell me a story about bullying. Students will be told that bullying involves not being kind and can lead to hurt feelings. Students will be instructed that bullying can involve them being mean to someone else or someone else being mean to them. Individual student stories will be audio taped and they will be student directed, the only questions I will ask for clarification will be: 1) What do you mean? and/or 2) Can you tell me more about this story?

Students will then be asked to create an illustration of their story, students will work individually on these pictures and I will collect all drawings once they are completed. Once completed, I will conference with each individual student regarding his/her picture. The student's picture will serve as a starting point for his/her narrative description of bullying. These student directed narratives will be recorded on audiotape to ensure for accuracy. I will not prompt students to answer any of the above noted questions, I will only ask the questions and use words of inquiry such as who, what, where, when, how, and why in order to help students expand their answers. I will limit interviews to no longer than 20 minutes. Student drawings and audio taped interviews will be assigned an **anonymous** identification number. I will not prompt students during their individual interviews, I will only use words of inquiry such as who, what, where, when, how, and why in order to help students expand their answers.

I will then examine how children perceive bullying as expressed through their drawings and interviews and I will look for common themes and perceptions that occur. I will use the common themes and perceptions that occur in order to present anti-bullying strategies to the students, other teachers, and parents. The anti-bullying strategies prepared will be shared with teachers, parents, students, and the Hamilton-Wentworth Teachers' Kindergarten Association in the form of a pamphlet. This pamphlet will be available as a parent and school resource to be used during the initial kindergarten school intake process through the Hamilton-Wentworth Teachers' Kindergarten Association, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and your child and you have the right to withdraw from any part of this study at any time, without penalty. Please note neither agreeing nor declining to participate in this study will have any influence on your child's school evaluation as the data collected will not become a part of your child's school records. Students will not be penalized academically if they do not participate in this study. Please note that social skill development is part of the current Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum, and there are no obvious physical or psychological risks associated with this study.

This study will be conducted according to the ethical standards established by Brock University and the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. As a professional, I am seeking to understand children's beliefs with respect to bullying, I will not be judging nor evaluating these beliefs and perceptions.

Given that the activities and stories involved in this study have been used in past educational research with children, there are no obvious physical or psychological risks associated with participation. However, this study does encourage children to think about social experiences, which may arouse anxiety in some children. Thus, to ensure that the risk of being exposed to the sensitive nature of some of the questions is kept to a minimum, children will be reminded frequently throughout the study that they have the right to refuse to participate and to stop the tasks at any time they wish. If a child participant reveals a problem regarding bullying and/or victimization during the research study, to ensure that participants have opportunities to express any concerns, the participants will be reminded throughout the study they can speak to an adult (e.g.,

teacher, principal, parent, etc.) if they wish to do so, and the appropriate protocol will be followed. If a child indicates she or he would like to speak with someone, the researcher will speak with the child and facilitate an opportunity to speak with parents and the principal who may suggest a referral to a professional. In addition, the researcher will always be in the room to answer questions and will be available to forward on any requests to the school principal. To detect and handle potential psychological/emotional distress, all participants will be aware of referral options. If needed phone numbers of agencies in the Hamilton-Wentworth Region that are on hand to obtain help or advice such as the City of Hamilton, Social and Public Health Services, 905-522-3304; Children's Aid Society, 905-522-1121 will be available for the researcher, school principal, or parents to contact.

At the end of this study (Autumn of 2002), upon your written request, I will provide you with copies of the reports of the study as well as the pamphlet. Please note this study has been reviewed and received ethics approval through the Brock University Research Ethics Board (File #01-173). If you have any questions or concerns regarding the nature of the research and/or your involvement in the study, please contact either Dr. Sandra Bosacki at Brock University, Faculty of Education (Office Phone No.: 905-688-5550 ext. 4970), E-Mail: sbosacki@ed.brocku.ca, myself at Pauline Johnson Elementary School (905) 388-1761, or Dr. Michael Owen, Director of the Office of Research Services (905-688-5550, ext. 4315).

Please rest assured all print and audio information gathered will be kept **confidential** and no identifying information will be used in reports of the study. Please rest assured that I am not looking for your child's individual responses, but rather at how children respond as a whole. The final results will be presented in an anonymous form. Audiotapes and data will be kept securely in my thesis advisor's locked research office and will only be seen by those involved in the research. Upon completion of the study, the data will be stored in a secure area for archival purposes, **please note this data will be destroyed after one year.**

Yours truly,

Susan Gillies-Rezo

Please retain this letter for your records.

Declaration of Informed Consent

I have read all of the above information. I have been informed that all information gathered, including the identity of my child and myself will be kept confidential. That is, the information will be coded so that neither my name, nor my child's name will be associated with this study. I understand that there is no obligation for my child to answer any questions/participate in any aspect of this project that I, or my child considers invasive, offensive or inappropriate.

In addition, I understand that participation in this study is voluntary, and that my child and I have the right to withdraw from any part of this study at any time, without penalty. I have also been informed that neither agreeing nor declining to participate in this study will have any influence on my child's school evaluation.

+++++

I consent for my child _____ to participate in this research study entitled "Perceptions of Bullying in Kindergartners".

Parent/Guardian

Signature

Date

Child Participant

Signature

Date

I do not consent for my

child _____ to participate in this
research study entitled "Perceptions of Bullying in Kindergartners".

Parent/Guardian

Signature

Date

Child Participant

Signature

Date

I have fully explained the procedures of the study to the above participant.

Susan Gillies-Rezo

Signature

Date

Principal Investigator

Optional request for feedback

If you wish to receive reports from the findings of this study, please provide a mailing address.

Appendix D

Class Introduction to Research Study

Class Introduction to Research Study

Boys and girls aside from teaching kindergarten, Mrs. Gillies also goes to school to learn new things just like you. I go to Brock University in St. Catharines and I have a project I am working on that I would like you to help me with. I am interested in studying how kindergarten students think and feel about bullying. Because kindergarten is such a special year, teachers are interested in finding out what it's like to be a boy or girl just like you! Remember that you are experts on your own thoughts and feelings and that this is your chance to help to "teach teachers" on how you think about bullying.

This research study consists of you drawing two pictures, telling me a story about one of the pictures, and discussing bullying with the class. I will be using a tape recorder to tape your stories. These will not be tests and altogether these activities will take about an hour and a half.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary – that means you do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. These activities have nothing to do with your school work or report cards. If you do participate in the study, your names will not appear on any of the pictures or on the cassette tapes. Only my research helpers and myself will see your pictures and hear your stories. You have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions and/or to stop the interview at any time. If you have any questions during the study please feel free to ask – especially if you do not understand the instructions.

I will now hand out the letters that you need to bring home to your parents. These letters will tell your parents about the study and in the letter I ask your parents'

permission to let you be in the study. Your parents are asked to sign the letter and tell me if you can be in the study. You will be asked to bring the signed letter back to school. Does anyone have any questions before I hand out your parents' letters?

Appendix E

Scripts for Researcher Conducting Child Interviews

Scripts for Researcher Conducting Child Interviews:

Group Introduction:

I would like to remind you that this is not a test and is not part of your schoolwork. I would like you to tell me about bullying. You will also get a chance to draw a picture of your story. This will take about half an hour. Please remember that your participation in this study is completely voluntary – that means you do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. These activities have nothing to do with your school work or report cards. There are no right or wrong answers. Remember that you are the expert on your own thoughts and feelings – you know more about these things than I do. This is your chance to help me learn something – it is your chance to play the “teacher” and to teach me about what children in kindergarten think about bullying.

Also, please remember that your name will not appear on any of the papers or on the cassette tapes. Only the research helpers and myself will listen to the tapes and see your drawings. You have the right to ask questions, to tell me when you have had enough, and to leave at any time.

Interview:

Please remember that I am recording your story on a cassette tape. Also, please remember that your name will not appear on any of the papers or on the cassette tapes. Only the research helpers and myself will listen to the tapes and see your drawings. You have the right to ask questions, to tell me when you have had enough, and to leave at any time.

Please look at your picture and complete the following incomplete sentence

“When I look at this picture I see...”

I am now going to ask you some questions, please answer each one the best you can:

- 1) Can you tell me more about your picture?
- 2) Are you in the picture?
- 3) Who else is in this picture?
- 4) Where does the picture take place: inside, outside, at home, or at school?
- 5) What is happening in the picture?
- 6) How do you think the people in this picture are feeling?
- 7) How do you feel when you look at this picture?

Additional Notes for Researcher:

Once child draws picture state, “What a wonderful picture – you’re a great artist!”

Your drawing looks like an interesting story, can you help me learn more about your picture and tell me a story about it?

During the second interview if a child responds to 3 or more consecutive questions with “I don’t know”, or does not respond (e.g., sits and does not say anything , may avoid eye contact), ask the child “How are you doing?”

If a child states that he/she does not know what “bullying” means, provide them with the following definition, “Bullying is when someone is mean to you or someone else.”

If child states “I cannot draw – I’m not a good drawer, etc.”, provide them with positive feedback such as, “Every person is an artist in his/her own way. You can draw any way you like, there is no right or wrong way. Just give it your best try.” If a child still refuses to draw, state “That’s okay, maybe you’ll feel like drawing later on.”

Appendix F

Transcript: Bullying Stories

Stories

Participant 11 Female (age 6 years; 2 months)

Interviewer: So you're going to tell me a story about not being kind or not being very nice to someone ok? Tell us your story.

Participant: My friend comed over and we play and I found my doll, and she wants to play with it and I want to play, so we got in a fight

I: what kind of fight?

P: For the doll

I: For the doll? and was the fight using words or using hands?

P: Using words and using hands

I: And what happened once you started fighting using hands and words, then what happened?

P: And then we said sorry to each other, um, then we and she went home and she got her doll and then she comes back and we played with our dolls.

I: So when you were having your fight with your hands and your words how did you feel?

P: Mean

I: You felt mean and how did your friend feel?

P: Mean too

I: You think she felt mean too? And when she went home and got her doll and you were able to play together, how did you both feel then?

P: Happy

I: Happy, was everything ok then?

P: Yes

I: Ok, is there anything else you want to tell me? No?

Participant 1 Male (age 5 years; 8 months)

I: Tell me a story about bullying

P: There is a guy that has two radios and he doesn't share

I: And who is this guy can you tell me more about your story? Is he somebody you know?

P: Yeah

I: Yes he is? Is he a friend of yours?

P: He is a friend of mine

I: He's a friend of yours? Yes? And he won't share the radios?

Why won't he share?

P: Because they are his

I: And what happens because he won't share

P: He's supposed to share

I: Will he share

P: No

I: How do you feel when he won't share

P: Just a little bit unhappy

I: And what did you do since you wanted to use the radio but couldn't share one with him, what did you do?

P: I just saved up some of my money
 I: To buy your own? Do you share yours?
 P: My brother has one
 I: You share with your brother?
 P: He shares some, he gets all of it.
 I: What do you mean?
 P: My brother has all the money
 I: And do you have a radio now?
 P: Uh...
 I: Are you saving for one?
 P: When it comes my birthday, I'll get my own one.
 I: And will you share yours? Yes? Ok!

Participant 2 Female (age 5 years; 10 months)

I: Could you tell me your story? What's happening?
 P: Jessica is pushing me off her lil tree house, cuz she wanted to go first.
 I: What happened then, when you got pushed, what happened?
 P: I got a big cut right there and it was bleeding
 I: A big cut on the back of your leg? Oh my goodness, you must have fallen a long way out of the tree house. What did you do?
 P: I was almost at the top, she climbed up to where I was, and there she grabbed my shirt, she pulled me and then I let go, I didn't let go, I tried to hold on but she pushed me so hard I fell.
 I: And what did you do then? Did you run home? Did you go to Jessica's house?
 What did you do when you saw you were bleeding?
 P: I said I did not want to play anymore with Jessica, then she came over to my house...and we both said sorry.
 I: And why did you say sorry, what were you sorry for?
 P: I was sorry because it was really her birthday and I know it was her day
 I: And you think maybe you should have let her go first. Was it ok though that she pushed you?
 P: NO
 I: How did you feel when you got pushed?
 P: I feel sad and mad at the same time.
 I: Did you feel like you wanted to push back? Did you push back?
 P: No
 I: What did you do instead?
 P: I goed home and I told my mom I got a cut from Jessica and then Jessica came over to my house and said sorry
 I: Then it was ok? Do you have any more tell me?
 P: Then I picked flowers for her and picked flowers for me
 I: Very nice

Participant 3 Male (age 5 years; 10 months)

I: Can you tell me what you think it is to be mean to somebody else or to be a bully?
 P: Calling names

I: What kind of names?

P: No response

Or saying what kind of things

P: Shut up

I: Why would someone say shut up

P: If they were talking loud

I: What other reasons would someone say shut up

P: No audible response

I: Is it nice to say shut up, no? Why do you think it's mean to say shut up.

P: It's a bad wad (word- that was cute)

I: And how would you feel if someone told you to shut up

P: Sad

I: Why would you feel sad

P: Because people call names

I: If someone tells you to shut up why does that make you feel sad

P: Because it's mean

I: Why is it mean to tell someone to shut up, why is it not ok to say shut up

P: It's a bad wad

I: Has anyone ever said that to you

P: No

I: That's good; if they did how would you feel?

P: Sad

I: wouldn't make you feel good? Why would it make you feel sad?

P: Because it's mean.

Participant 4 Female (age 6 years; 1 month)

I: Can you tell me a story about being mean?

P: Two girls just came up to me and started pushing me.

I: When did this happen?

Um, a week ago

I: And where did it happen?

At school

I: Inside or outside?

Outside

I: And do you know why they thought it was ok to push you? How did you feel?

Angry

I: What did you do?

When they stopped pushing me I went to go and tell my teacher

I: And then what happened

And then I never saw them again

I: You weren't happy when they were pushing you

No

I: Did you want to push them back

No

I: Why didn't you want to

Because then I would get in trouble

I: Did you tell anyone other than your teacher?

Yeah my mom and my dad and the teacher

I: Did it ever happen again, the pushing?

No

I: Were you happy that it stopped?

Is there anything else you can tell me?

I: No

I: You didn't know these two girls

NO

Were they older or younger than you?

Older

I: What grade were they in?

P: Grade 3

I: So they were bigger too. Did you get hurt when they pushed you? Yes

Where did they hurt you?

I: On my knee.

Participant 5 Female (age 5 years; 8 months)

I: Can you tell me a story about bullying about people not being nice

P: These two girls were pushing me and bugging me at school (the sound is garbled here...)

I: So you didn't like it you felt really hurt, so what did you do

P: I went to go tell the teacher

I: And what did the teacher do

P: She came with me and she talked to the girls, that they're not being nice. Then they went to the principal's office and then they got a tracking sheet

I: Did they ever push you again?

P: No

I: Were the girls older or younger. What grade were they in?

P: Grade 5

I: Did they hurt you when they pushed you?

P: Yeah

I: And you didn't feel happy then?

P: No

I: No, is there anything else that you can tell me about your story?

P: Well, there's another one then they went on the bus and they told their mommy I:

How did they feel

P: They were sad that they'd done it

I: Why were they sad that they'd done it

P: It wasn't a nice thing to do

I: Has it ever happened again?

P: no

I: Does that make you feel better

P: nod

I: Very good thank you

Participant 6 Male (age 5 years; 11 months)

I: What does it mean to be mean? What do you think about when I say being mean to someone else

P: punching and calling names

I: Where does that happen? At school?

P: At home, Downstairs

I: With who, with friends

P: No, with my..big brother

I: How do you feel when that happens?

P: I don't know

Do you like it?

P: No

I: How does it make you feel?

I: Does it happen at school?

P: No

I: No? Just at home.

Participant 7 Male (age 6 years; 2 months)

I: Can you tell me what it means to be a bully

P: Yep, when someone comes up and says a bad word

I: And where does that happen?

P: It happens on the blacktop

I: So at school?

P: Yep

I: So, that's being mean when people say bad words?

P: Yep

I: And has that happened to you before, someone said a bad word to you?

P: No, at home my sister says it a lot to my dog

I: And why do you think it's mean to say bad words?

P: Cuz it's not nice

I: what does that mean? Not nice?

P: It's when someone says something that you don't like

I: Oh so if I say something that you don't like, that's not nice?

P: Only bad words

I: And how do bad words make other people feel?

P: Angry

I: And what should you do when someone says a bad word

P: Tell the principal or the person outside or the peer mediators on duty

Participant 8 Male (age 5 years; 7 months)

I: So can you tell me what it means to be mean?

P: Um, when people start fighting

I: Fighting how

P: Uh because whoever starts the fight other kids get in it

I: What kind of fights do you think they are

P: I don't have them

I: What does it mean to have a fight? What's fighting?

P: When you getting angry

I: And what do you do when you get angry

P: Uh, I start to punch people

I: And what about words, what kind of words happen when people are fighting
Are they nice words?

P: No

I: What kind of words are they? Well you don't have to tell me the words but if people are fighting, are they saying nice words?

P: Nooo

I: What kind of words are they saying then?

P: Uh, they're saying, like, I think they might say shut up

I: What's something that people fight about

P: All kinds of things

I: Like what

P: Like, playing football

I: When else do people fight? Is there anything else people fight about?

P: That's all I think, Football

I: And?

P: Soccer...they are fighting about if it's foggy or sunny

I: They are, have you ever fought about the weather? Over whether it's foggy or sunny?

P: Yeah, I always watch the weather station

I: Who do you fight with about if it's foggy or sunny?

P: My father

I: and why do you fight about that

P: Ah because sometimes we do!

I: And how do you feel when that happens?

P: Angry

I: And then what happens

P: I get sent to my room...

Participant 9 Female (age 5 years; 9 months)

I: Can you tell me a story about not being mean, about bullying?

P: When you're mean to someone that means you should be friends with them and then be friends with them so you will be nice to each other

I: Ok and what's your story about not being nice, about bullying; what's your story

P: It's about those two getting mad at each other and they uh, Cassie has the hook and we both want it so Cassie he wants it really much and so do I. So we both want it? So we went home by ourself and one of us took the hook and I came over to Cassie's house and I would share the hook.

I: You made up and then you shared the hook, is there anything else in your story you want to tell me?

I: no that's it? Ok thank you.

Participant 10 Male (age 5 years; 7 months)

I: And can you tell me what you mean about not being very nice

P: ...sister...trucks...

I: So when you and your sister fight over trucks at home and then what happens when you're fighting? How are you not nice to each other, what do you do?

P:Each other....

I: When you were fighting what did you do to each other. Did you grab the trucks, did you push each other, what did you do?

P:Pull the truck

I: You were going to pull it right from her? Then what happened?

P: Then my sister cried

I: How did you feel when she cried

P: Uh sad

I: Why were you sad

P: My mom will be trouble

I: Because she's upset now and that's why you felt sad

P:

I: oh! Do you have anymore to tell me, no ok!

Participant 12 Male (age 5 years; 10 months)

I: Can you tell me a story about not being nice

P: One kid.. her hair

I: One kid was making fun of her hair, who is she?

A girl, where was that happening where someone was making fun of her hair at school?

I: And why do you do you think that's not being very nice.

P: Because they're not nice people

I: Why are they not nice people

P: Because they are brats

I: What kind of things do they do that make them not nice people?

P: Not..wanna be brats

I: Anything else you want to tell me?

P: Don't want peoplewant people..... don't want to be sad

I: The girl is sad and they want her to be sad because they're not nice?

Anything else you want to tell me, what else? You nodded your head when I asked you if there was anything else. Is there any more?

P: ...brats.....go home...cry.

I: The boys at the park are brats and they want to make the girl sad and go home and make them cry...why would they want to do that?

P: Because they're brats

I: Is that it? Ok.

Participant 13 Male (age 5 years; 4 months)

I: Can you tell me about not being nice, about something that's not good?

Ok go ahead, what's your story?

P: Um Zech threw the ball at me and it hurt

I: Where did it hit you?
P: In the leg
I: Why did he throw the ball at you?
P: Cuz he was very mad
I: Do you know why?
P: No
I: He just got upset when you were playing. Where were you playing?
P: On my front lawn.
I: After you got hit with the ball, what happened
P: I went inside
I: Why, were you upset? What did you do when you were inside
P: Stayed in
I: What did your friend do?
P: He went home
I: And then what happened?
P: He didn't want to play
I: Anymore? Why? He threw the ball at you.
P: I didn't want to play
I: You didn't want to play anymore, why not?
P: Cuz he threw the ball at me.
I: Are you still friends?
P: Yeah
I: What happened then, how did you become friends again?
P: He didn't remember it
I: Did you remember it, were you not upset anymore
P:
I: no? Is there anything else you want to say about your story? No? ok

Participant 14 Female (age 5 years; 9 months)

I: And can you tell me a story about not being very nice

Yes

I: Ok what's your story?

Um....Billy and Jocelyn were making fun of me ...of my hair in JK
was it happening at school?

....

Where was it happening?

On the bus

On the way to school

...

and what was happening

the bus driver...I was mean to them too and they were mean to me

and how were you mean to them? You told me they were mean to you by making fun of you. What do you do to be mean to them?

P: All the time I stick my tongue at them

I: Does this still happen or was this last year in JK?

P: Last year in JK but they are still mean

I: They're still mean to you and you're still mean to them. Do you still stick your tongue at them
P: Only at Billy
I: And do they still make fun of your hair
I: Why were they making fun of your hair
I P: don't know
I: What else is in your story
P: I made a picture frame
I: Yes ok so do you want to tell me anymore about what happened when they weren't nice to you and you weren't nice to them. Did you tell the bus driver?
P: No
I: Why not?
P: I don't know
Did you tell anyone at home or at school
P: I think my parents
I: You told your parents
P: I don't know if I told my parents
I: You can't remember because it was last year?
Is there anything else you want to tell me about your story
P: Uh yes ...I made ...because I know buses and cars have lots of lights
I: But there's nothing else you want to tell me about the boys being mean to you and you being mean to them
P: Um no I can't remember
I: You can't remember it all because it happened last year.
P: That's all I remember

Participant 15 Female (age 5 years; 7 months)

I: Can you tell me a story about not being very nice?
What happens when people aren't very nice?
P: Sometimes me and my brother fight
I: What kind of fighting? With your words or with your hands?
P: With our hands
I: What kind of things do you fight about?
P: About when he wants play my piano and I won't let him.
I: And what other kind of things do you fight about?
P: He won't let me play hockey with him
I: What happens then when he won't let you play hockey?
P: I tell on him
I: And then what happens?
P: Mommy tell him to be nice to me
I: Why is that not nice to tell you that you can't play hockey
P: Long pause.....I forget what to say again
I: How does it make you feel when he doesn't let you play hockey?
P: Makes me feel bad
I: Can you tell me any more about your story?
P: Shaking head no.

Appendix G

Transcript: Bullying Interviews

Interviews

Participant 1 Male (age 5 years; 8 months)

I: when you look at this picture what do you see happening

P: see this boy with the smile on his face is being mean to this boy

I: What's happening here? Can you tell me more about this?

P:.....

I: what's he holding

P: a skipping rope

I: and this boy is not sharing his skipping rope?

P:.....

I: how is this boy with the sad face, how does he feel?

P: sad

I: are you in this picture are you here? Are you one of those people

P: I'm this one

I: So why aren't you sharing your skipping rope?

P:...my brudda....

I: so this is your brother not sharing with you...

P: at the beach

I: you're at the beach and your brother's not sharing the skipping rope with you and you're sad about that are you

P: yeah

I: are there any other people in this picture or is it just you and your brother

P: me and my brother

I: who are you with at the beach?

P: my brutha

I: how do you think your brother is feeling if he's the one who's not sharing the skipping rope ?

P: a little bit happy

I: your brother is happy; how do you feel in this picture? you're not very happy?

P: a little bit

I: a little bit happy but you'd be happier if he would share with you; does this picture make you feel happy or sad

P: a little happy

I: what could you do to let your brother know that you're not happy that he's not sharing

P: he plays with stuff his own; he stays inside...I take skipping rope.

I: but if you're both outside does he like to use it himself and not share with you

P: when always my daddy sees he shares it

I: so if your daddy's there, then you both share.

P: there's a mouse and a bike.....

I: excellent

Participant 2 Female (age 5 years; 10 months)

I: if I say to you when I look at this picture I see...how would you finish that sentence

P: I see me and my friend

I: can you tell me more about the picture, what's happening between you and your friend?

P: weren't getting mad at and we're not playing with each other anymore

I: so you're in the picture with your friend, who are you, which one is you?

What kind of face do you have on?

P: a mad face

I: what kind of face does your friend have?

P: a mad face too; we're both mad at each other

I: is there anyone else in the picture? No? Where is this picture taking place? Is it inside your house? Where is it?

P: outside in Jessica's backyard she got really mad because she wanted to go up her tree house first, but actually I goed first and we both got mad at each othershe was already down.....

I: how do you think your friend is feeling in this picture

P: mad

I: why is she mad?

P: because she wanted to go first

I: and who did go first?

P: me

I: and how do you feel in this picture?

P: mad too, because she tried to push me off the tree house

I: wow, that wouldn't be good. How do you feel when you look at this picture?

P: I feel mad at her

I: still?

P: what she did hurt

I: did you fall out of the tree house?

P: mmhmm

I: did you hurt yourself? What happened after that?

P: well, she climbed up the tree house, then she was still on the ladder, she pushed me, she got, pulled my shirt and then I fell down on the ground

I: then what did you do?

P: I got really, really, really mad. Very mad at her

I: and what did you do then?

P: I goed inside and I thought about what she did to me and what I did to her.

I: and then what did you do?

P: I said sorry

I: and what did she do?

P: she said sorry to me too

I: but when you look at this picture because it's happening when you weren't getting along does it make you feel sad?

P: nod?

I: yes? Anything else you want to say? Ok.

Participant 3 Male (age 5 years; 10 months)

I: So when you look at this picture what do you see ?

P: Somebody is calling some names

I: can you tell me more about this? Are you one of these people? Are you in this picture?

P: no

I: who are the people in this picture?

P: one is me

I: who is this

P: a bully

I: and what is the bully saying to you.

P: shut up

I: where are you in this picture? Inside or outside?

P: outside

I: and where are you? Are you at the park? At school? At home?

P: ?

I: well look at the picture...where did you mean this to be?

P: Schoolyard

I: are there other people around you in this picture?

P: no

I: just you? And this bully, is this bully a boy or a girl?

P: boy

I: and why is this boy telling you to shut up?

P:

I: were you fighting about something?

P:

I: ok

P: long pause

I: how do these boys feel? Look at his face what does he feel?

P: mad

I: you think so? I think so too. Look at that face. It doesn't look very happy.

And how would you feel if someone was yelling shut up at you?

P: sad

I: sad or mad?

P: I said sad

P: So you feel sad if someone yells at you like that? Yes? Do you have anything else you want to say about this picture? No? You did a good job. Thank you very much

Participant 4 Female (age 6 years; 1 month)

I: can you tell me about your picture

P: yes. Two people are pushing me

I: which one are you in the picture

P: that one (in the middle)

I: and then you have somebody pushing you on either side? Are they boys or girls pushing you?

P: girls

I: who are these girls? Are they friends of yours

P: I don't know

I: where is the picture taking place? Is it inside or outside?

P: inside in the hallway
 I: at home or at school
 P: at school
 I: what are they pushing you for? Do you know
 P: I don't know
 I: They're just not being very nice by pushing? How do you feel?
 P: not happy
 I: why not?
 P: because they're pushing me, they're hurting me
 I: how do they feel?
 P: good
 I: why do you think they feel good?
 P: because they're pushing somebody else
 I: and why would that make someone feel good, by pushing others?
 P: it wouldn't
 I: but you think they feel ok because they're pushing you? Yeah? How do you feel when you look at this picture?
 P:.....
 I: When you look at this picture you don't feel good. Why don't you feel good?
 P: cuz somebody else is pushing me
 I: and how does that make you feel, does it make you feel....
 P: sad
 I: what does it make you sad
 P: cuz somebody else is hurting me
 I: when this happens what do you do
 P: go tell the teacher or my mom or dad or somebody else's mom or dad
 I: that's very good. You did a great job. Is there anything else you want to say about this one? Ok

Participant 5 Female Absent

Participant 6 Male (age 5 years; 11 months)

I: when you look at this picture, what do you see?
 P: two people are fighting
 I: can you tell me more? Why are they fighting?
 P: cuz they're mad at each other
 I: what are they mad about?
 P: ...name..
 I: because one guy called the other guy a name?
 P: yeah
 I: are you in this picture?
 P: I'm not
 I: they're just two boys outside? And where is this taking place? Outside of school, the house or at the park?
 P: at the park
 I: are there any adults in this picture

P: no
 I: where are the adults?
 P: they're at home
 I: how do you think the boy that's being yelled at feels
 P: sad
 I: why?
 P: because he got called a name
 I: how do you think the boy feels who is calling names?
 P: bad?
 I: why do you think he would feel bad
 P: he feels bad for saying calling names
 I: and how do you feel? how does this picture make you feel
 P: sad
 I: why do you feel sad?
 P: I don't know
 I: you just don't like it. when you look at it, you feel sad

Participant 7 Male (age 6 years; 2 months)

I: when you look at this picture what do you see happening here
 P: the boy said a bad word.
 I: the bigger boy said a bad word?
 P: nope this one
 I: what's the other boy saying
 P: if you keep saying that word, I'm going to tell
 I: and who would you tell?
 P: the principal
 I: could you tell me anymore about this picture? Where is it happening
 P: outside
 I: where?
 P: on the blacktop
 I: and are you in this picture?
 P: yeah
 I: where are you
 P: (points to the kid who is being bullied)
 I: who is this bully then
 P: a boy
 I: a boy here at school?
 P: yeah
 I: why does this bully come up to you and say bad words
 P:you shouldn't play with them
 I: he told you not to play with your friends? Ah that wasn't very nice....how are you feeling in this picture?
 P: angry
 I: why are you feeling angry
 P: because he said a bad word to me
 I: and how does he feel

P: happy
 I: why
 P: cuz he said a bad word
 I: and why would that make him feel happy?
 P: cuz he likes saying bad words
 I: why is that?
 P: I don't know
 I: how does this picture make you feel
 P: it makes me feel so mad that I have to tell

Participant 8 Male (age 5 years; 7 months)

I: when I look at this picture I see.....
 P: I see me and Alex fighting my brother's name Alex
 I: ok sorry, so you see a man fighting with who?
 S me!!!
 I: what's the man's name
 S JR
 I: that's the man's name- why is he fighting with you
 P: he's trying to say.....he's telling me it's supposed to be foggy....and I say it's sunny and look it , he's wrong!
 I: so the man is wrong...
 P: because lookit the sun's out-
 I: you're in the picture with the man. are you touching each other here?
 P: no
 I: who is this man?
 P: my father!!! he's picking me up from school!
 I: that's your daddy picking you up from school
 P: NO I meant today he is!
 I: you had a fight on the way home – was it about being foggy or sunny?
 P: yes, and I was right
 I: where is this picture then. Is it outside?
 P: yep
 I: when you get picked up? How do you feel in that picture?
 P: angry
 I: why are you angry?
 P: because we're fighting. I always get angry when we're fighting
 I: and how does the man feel in this picture?
 P: angry
 I: and why is he angry
 P: because he thinks it's foggy
 I: and when you look at your picture how does it make you feel?
 And how does this picture make you feel?
 P: uh, angry
 I: you feel angry when you look at this picture? Why?
 P: because they have angry faces

I: that was really good do you have anything else you want to say?

P: aaahhhhh no.

Participant 9 Female (age 5 years; 9 months)

I: So when you look at this picture...what do you see?

P: I see people getting angry at each other

I: can you tell me more about that? Why are they angry at each other

P: they're fighting because the other kids the other person wants the thing that the other person has

I: and what is that thing?

P: that thing that thing through the hook and they each want the hook. She gets the hook and she wants the hook too

I: ok so they both want that toy. are you in the picture?

P: yep that's me

I: and who else is in the picture?

P: um Cassie

I: oh so another friend and you two are fighting? Where is this picture happening?

P: outside

I: at home or outside at school

P: at school

I: how do these people feel?

P: angry

I: do you feel angry?

P: yep

I: why are you angry?

P: because I want the hook and so does Cassie

I: how does this picture make you feel. Is this a happy picture or a sad picture? How does it make you feel?

P: angry

I: so what could happen next in this picture?

P: we could share it?

I: and how would the people feel if they could share it?

P: happy

I: anything else you want to share? No?

Participant 10 Male (age 5 years; 7 months)

I: and when you look at your picture what do you see?

P: they are fighting with each other

I: can you tell me more- why are they fighting with each other?

P: one wants the toy and he's saying no

I: are you in the picture? Which person are you the one who wants the toy or the one who is saying no.

P: I want the toy

I: and who is this then

P: my sister

I: and your sister is saying no you can't have the toy. Inside or outside?

P: outside
 I: and where are you ...in the park or in your yard
 P: in my backyard
 I: and what toy are you and your sister fighting over
 P: a truck
 I: and how do you feel in this picture
 P: angry
 I: why are you angry
 P: because I want the toy and my sister says no
 I: and how does your sister feel
 P: angry
 I: why is she angry
 P: you know why...she doesn't want me to have the toy
 I: so when you look at this picture how does it make you feel?
 P:
 I: This is not a happy picture it makes you angry? Is there anything else you can tell me about your picture when you look at it.
 P: I have a pond

Participant 11 Female (age 6 years; 2 months)

P: my friend is pushing me
 I: why is your friend pushing you
 P: we're getting in a fight
 I: what are you fighting about?
 P: a doll
 I: who are you? That's you in the picture. Where is this picture taking place?
 P: outside in my backyard
 I: what's happening in the picture
 P: fighting about a doll
 I: with your words or your hands
 P: using words
 I: and are you fighting as well? You're both fighting? And how do you feel
 P: kinda mean
 I: why do you feel mean? Not sure? What about your friend how do you think she feels?
 P: mean too
 I: what does it mean to be mean..what's feeling mean. Is it feeling good or feeling bad
 P: feeling bad
 I: do you like feeling mean
 P: no
 I: do you think your friend likes feeling mean. so how do you feel when you look at this picture
 P: I don't know
 I: what kind of picture is it? Happy picture or sad picture?
 P: sad

I: why
 P: because we're pushing each other
 I: so you're using your hands and your words then. So what could happen to fix this problem
 P: just say sorry
 I: and what would she need to do too?
 P: say sorry too
 I: and what could you do about what you're fighting over
 P: I can go home and play with my doll and she could come over with her doll
 I: anything else you want to tell me? You did a great job.

Participant 12 Male (age 5 years; 10 months)

I: so when you look at this picture what do you see?
 P: he's making fun of her hand
 I: why
 P: because he's being a bully
 I: what does that mean to be a bully
 P: um. Um I don't know
 I: what do you mean
 P: they talked about bullies
 I: tell me more about this picture. What's wrong with her hand... why is he making fun of it.
 P: Cuz, he's not being a very nice kid
 I: who is in this picture? Are you in this picture? Who is this girl?
 P: my sister
 I: who is the boy
 P: I'm not sure
 I: where is this happening?
 P: outside
 I: at home or school?
 P: at home
 I: what are they doing?
 P: he is making trouble with her
 I: how is your sister feeling in this picture
 P: sad
 I: why
 P: because he is making fun of her hand
 I: how do you think he's feeling?
 P: bad
 I: why would he be feeling bad?
 P: cuz he's a bad boy
 I: and what makes him a bad boy. Because he's being mean? Yes. How does this picture make you feel
 P: not happy
 I: why? because he's making fun? why doesn't that make you happy?
 P: because?

I: what do you think...you're not happy...how does that make you feel that he's making fun of her

P: not happy

I: anything else you want to tell me about your picture?

P: fire hydrant...he's trying to put her hand in the fire hydrant so it can get wet.

I: is that it? ok

Participant 13 Male (age 5 years; 4 months)

I: when you look at this picture, what do you see happening?

P: Josh threw the ball at me

I: is josh your friend? And you're in the picture? Can you tell me anymore? Why is josh throwing the ball at you?

P: because he was mad.

I: did the ball hit you?

P: on the leg

I: it did hurt?

P: nod

I: Is this josh and is this you? Why is josh so much bigger than you? Is josh your friend?

P: yeah

I: where is this taking place. Is it inside or outside?

P: outside

I: at school or home

P: home

I: in your backyard?

P: in the front yard

I: how do you feel in this picture

P: sad

I: why are you sad?

P: because he hit the ball at me

I: and how does josh feel?

P: happy

I: why would he be happy if he hurt you?

P: uh because he's very mad

I: and it would make him feel better to hurt you. How do you feel looking at this picture?

P: mad

I: why are you mad

P: because I didn't like it

I: is there anything else you want to tell me?

Participant 14 Female (age 5 years; 9 months)

P: me and Josh and Billy are making fun of my hair

I: where are you?

P: inside the bus

I: where are you going?

P: to school
I: what kind of face do you have there?
P: sad
I: why are you sad
P: they are making fun of me
I: why are they making fun of you?
P: fun of my hair
I: who else is in the picture with you?
P: the bus driver
I: mmhmm
P: me and Billy and josh
I: what's the bus driver doing?
P: driving
I: does the bus driver know that they're making fun of you?
P: no
I: did you tell the bus driver?
P: no
I: why not
P: I dunno
I: you're not sure? How did you feel when they were making fun of you? Look at your face. What does your face show us you feel?
P: Sad
I: Why would you feel sad if they were making fun of you?
P: cuz they're bullies
I: what does bullies mean?
P: they beat up people?
I: are they beating up you? What are they doing to you?
P: hurting me
I: they're not using their hands though are they
P: I'm nice to them!!!!
I: are they nice to you?
P: no
I: why not?
P: now I'm mean to them because they're mean to me. I invited them to my birthday party and he has to go on vacation.
I: you're not nice to them anymore? How do you think they feel in your picture?
P: happy
I: why would they feel happy if they were not being nice to you?
P: because they're not nice to me
I: why is that?
P: because Billy and Josh are on teams
I: and you're not with them? And you think it makes them happy to make you sad?
P: they like to tease me a lot
I: how do you feel when you look at your picture. Anything else you want to tell me?
P: long unintelligible tirade
I: ok! So the bus is just about to get to school ok!

Participant 5 Female (age 5 years; 8 months)

I: When you look at your picture what do you see?

P: someone I don't know is pushing me.

I: so this is you? And who are these two people?

P: I don't know them

I: where is this happening

P: at school

I: what grade are they in?

P: grade 4

I: boys or girls?

P: girls

I: so how do you feel

P: sad

I: why

P: because they pushed me and I don't like that

I: do you know why they pushed you?

P: no, I can guess. Because they're not very nice to me

I: have you ever told anyone these girls push you

P: no

I: how do these girls feel?

P: really nervous

I: why would they be nervous?

P: because they pushed me andsay sorry

I: did they say sorry?

P: no but when they got home they thought about that they pushed me

I: how do you feel when you look at your picture

P: really sad

I: why

P: because they're pushing me

I: is there anything else you can think about you want to tell me about this picture?

Participant 15 Female (age 5 years; 7 months)

I: Tell me what you see in your picture?

P:

I: You're in the picture? Which one are you?

P:

I: Who else is in this picture with you?

P: My brother

I: your brother is smiling but you're not smiling. Why aren't you smiling? What's happening?

P: we're fighting

I: what are you fighting about?

P: um

I: where is this picture taking place

P: outside

I: at school or at home

P: at home

I: what are you and your brother fighting about

P: he won't let me play

I: and how do you feel

P: bad

I: why do you feel bad? You're not sure why you feel bad?

P: nO

I: how does your brother feel

P: happy

I: why

P: not sure

I: how does this picture make you feel when you look at it? You're not sure? Is there anything else you can tell me about this picture? Not sure...okay!

Appendix H

Debriefing Instructions

Debriefing Instructions

Debriefing Script for Researcher after Drawing Task and Story-telling Interview

We are now finished the first drawing and storytelling part of the study.

We are now going to read the picture book *King of the Playground*, you will then be allowed to share your thoughts and feelings about bullying within the context of the book that I just read. You may also wish to share your experiences of bullying. We will discuss and brainstorm as a class regarding your thoughts and ideas about bullying. I will be audio taping this group discussion. When we have finished talking, you are going to draw one more picture about bullying. This picture has to be your own ideas and not something you have seen in a book, a movie, or a television show. You may now go sit at a table and do your drawing.

Thank-you for helping me with my research project about what kindergarten boys and girls think and feel about bullying. Remember, you are the expert at being in kindergarten, and by sharing your thoughts and expertise with me, you have helped me learn more about what it is like to be in kindergarten. With your help, my study will help teachers and your parents to better understand what it is like to be a boy or girl in kindergarten. Do you have any questions about the study or what I do at university? Before you go home today I will be handing out thank-you letters that you can give your parents for allowing you to participate in the study. Thank-you for all that you have done, you have been great helpers!

Appendix I

Transcript: Debriefing Session

Debriefing Session

Researcher: In our book, King of the Playground there were two people. There were three people actually. There was who...? Participant 2 (female)?

Participant 2 (female): the king of the playground.

R: And who was the King of the Playground? What was his name? Do you remember his name? Sammy. Who else was in the book? Participant 5 (female)?

P5 (female): Kevin.

R: Kevin was in the book. And who else was in the book? Participant 10 (male)?

P10 (male): His Dad

R: His Dad. And what was the problem in our story? Participant 8 (male), what was the problem for Kevin, every time he went to the park, what was the problem?

P8 (male):

R: why couldn't he play?

P8 (male): Because Kevin was around

R: Ok Kevin was the little boy going to the park and Sammy was the boy who was not letting him play. Right? What would we call Sammy?

P8 (male): Tattle taler.

R: A tattletaler? Why was he a tattletaler?

P8 (male): Because um, Sammy couldn't play.

R: Ok we need to get their names straight. Kevin went to the playground and Sammy was the king of the playground. So Sammy was the one who wouldn't let Kevin play. How do you think Kevin felt every time he went to the playground to play? How would he feel? Participant 6 (male)?

P6 (male): Sad

R: Why would he feel sad?

P6 (male):

R: Because he won't let him play. Was Sammy a very nice friend? What could he have done that would have been nicer Participant 4 (female)?

P4 (female): He could have let him play everyday.

R: Did they solve their problems in the end Participant 11 (female)?

P11 (female): yes

R: yes they did. Has anybody here ever felt like that? Participant 11 (female) when have you felt like that?

P11 (female): um, when my um cousin comed over.

R: when your cousin comes over? What happens when your cousin comes over?

P11 (female):fight....

R: you always fight over it? And what happens? How do you solve it?

P11 (female): we can share....

R: eventually you can share it? Participant 4 (female), have you ever felt like that?

P4 (female): Uh-huh! When Enrique and Emma come over from across the street, sometimes they won't let me play with something and when I was at their house a couple of days ago they weren't letting me be in their store that they were making and Enrique, he kept saying that he had more chocolates than me and I just said that I was starving.

R: Right, and what happened in the end.

P4 (female): Well then I had to go home

R: Did you feel good when you went home?

P4 (female): Kind of because I didn't have to play with them anymore.

R: You didn't have to play anymore? Participant 5 (female)?

P5 (female): When my cousin come over um she always put like um..well, me and my mom and my cousin, well she had like 3 barbies and I only had one, she wanted to bring them

R: then what happened

P5 (female): then we solved the problem, I got two and she got two.

R: Participant 8 (male) have you ever felt like that? When have you felt like Kevin would have felt like?

P8 (male): Because when I went over to my dad's, he didn't let me have his old cars

R: He didn't let you use them? And how did you feel? You felt sad and then what happened.

P8:....

R: how? Did you play with something else? Yeah, what about you Participant 9 (female)? Have you felt like that before? No, you've never felt like that? That's good. Anyone else? Participant 14 (female)?

P14 (female): My cousin doesn't share, but um..she wants to have something...she has the most....my cousin....I think.

R: Participant 3 (male) has the same birthday? You have a weeklong birthday? Is there anyone else who wants to share a story with us. Participant 2 (female)?

P2 (female): My cousin it's a girl, her name is Martina. She bosses me around all the time and she's 12. She bosses me all the time. She keeps saying: "no you can't do that. No you can't play with that." Then she keeps saying that every time I want to play with something.

R: So what happens next?

P2 (female): Solve it out by saying sorry and hugging each other so we feel a little better.

R: Anyone else? Participant 13 (male), did you want to share a story? What's your story?

P13 (male): he's always copying me and I don't like it....

R: and what do you do when he's upsetting you by copying you?

P13 (male): go away.

R: You go away? And then when you come back does he bother you again?

P13 (male): ...nod?

R: so every time he upsets you, you just leave? Do you ever ask for help from anybody? No? Who else wants to share something they've seen happening?
Participant 1 (male)?

P1 (male):.....

R: Your dad doesn't let you play with the big car? Why not?

P1 (male): because it is his

R: I see. How do you feel when that happens?.....hmm. a little bit? Ok...anyone else?
Participant 4 (female)?

P4 (female): um, my cousin when we were up at the cottage once? Um, well, he wouldn't let me have a book. And I was looking at my book and I said can I have the next book and he said, no I haven't looked at it yet, and he did and a lot of times and then I got in trouble. Because he wasn't sharing, but I got in trouble.

R: now, in our story we had Kevin who kept trying to go to the playground but was never allowed to play because Sammy wouldn't let him play. And Sammy calls himself the king of the playground. I would think that Sammy was a bully. Would

you think that Sammy was a bully? Participant 7 (male), what does it mean to be a bully?

P7 (male): When you're not nice

R: And how was Sammy not nice?

P2 (female): not letting Kevin play

R: That's not nice, what else? What else makes a bully?

P10 (male): being mean

P4 (female): It means that you won't let other people do stuff that they want to do sometimes and they hurt you

R: very good, and they hurt you?

P5 (female): sometimes you might be tattletaling...

R sometimes you tattletale...that's a bully?

P8 (male): calling people names

R: good

P2 (female): lying about things you do...

R: how was Sammy a bully? Did he use his hands? Did he use words? What did he do?

P2 (female): by lying

R: and how was he lying?

P2 (female): by saying he was going to tie a rope?

R: and do you think Kevin may have been a bit afraid? I think so, because he had someone telling him that they were going to hurt him, they were threatening him

P7 (male): I would run away and go get someone to help me get him....

R: get someone...get who?

P7 (male): my dad or someone else

R: to get him? You mean to hurt him?

P12 (male): get someone else to hurt him back...

R: would anyone else do that?

P5 (female): every time when my cousin comes over she gets the most stuff and I get stuck with a little bit.

R: you get stuck with a little bit?

P13 (male): my brother and I were fighting over a ball.....play...

R: You started to play after you stopped the fight? Yes? Good work. What about participant 7's (male) comment, would anyone here get...if they were on the playground and there really was a Sammy, king of the playground and they hurt you...would anyone else here want to hurt Sammy?

P7 (male): yes I do, I would, I would, (4 male participants P6, P8, P12, P13 all yelling agreement in the background)

Participant 4 (female) shaking her head

P4 (female): I would go and tell my mom and dad and then my mom and dad would call his mom and dad

R: Who else would call their mom and dad? A few of you would? All right....is there anything else or can we go onto the next part now.

P5 (female): Ready for the next part

R: Ready for the next part, ok. So, we'll stop this now.

Appendix J

Debriefing and Thank-you Parental Letter

Debriefing and Thank you Parental Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank-you for permitting your child to participate in my research study, which took place in the winter/spring months of 2002. I am grateful that you provided your child with the opportunity to participate in a research project. Your cooperation, and that of your child, was the key factor that enabled this study to take place.

The goal of this study was to examine kindergarteners' perceptions of bullying within the school setting. It is my hope that the results from this study will provide students, teachers, and parents with some insight into kindergarteners' perceptions of bullying and some useful strategies to promote anti-bullying behaviour.

Given your request for a summary of results, I have enclosed the following: 1) a summary of the research findings, 2) a copy of the anti-bullying pamphlet I have written. To ensure anonymity of participants and confidentiality of data, individual results are not available, and your child's name (or the name's of your child's school board, school principal, teacher) will not appear on any of the data or future material based on this study. If you have any questions regarding the research, please contact Dr. Sandra Bosacki at Brock University, Faculty of Education (Office Phone No.: 905-688-5550 ext. 4970), E-Mail: sbosacki@ed.brocku.ca, myself at E-Mail: sgilliesrezo@hotmail.com.

Again, thank-you very much for your time and support!

Sincerely,

Susan Gillies-Rezo
Master of Education Student
Brock University

Enclosures

Appendix K

Pamphlet: Bullying Prevention in the Early Years

Available Resources for Teachers and Parents

Community Resources:

Social and Public Health Services for the city
of Hamilton
905-546-3550

City of Hamilton,
Police Services
905-546-2949

Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation,
Chedoke Child and Family Centre
905-522-3304

Children's Aid Society
905-522-1121

Catholic Children's Aid Society
905-525-2012

Websites:

www.bullying.org
www.bullybeware.com
www.stopbullyingme.ab.ca/
www.nfb.ca/nomorebullies/resources
www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/
www.safety-council.org
www.bullying.co.uk/

Books:

Coles, R. (1997). The moral intelligence of
children: How to raise a moral child.

Denham, S.A. (1998). *Emotional development
in young children*.

Eisenberg, N. (1992). *The caring child*.

Garrity, C., et. al. (2000). *Bullyproofing your
school: A comprehensive approach for
elementary schools*.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*

O'Donnell, V. (1995). *Bullying: A resource
guide for parents and teachers*.

Paley, V.G. (1999). *The kindness of children*.

Sullivan, K. (2000). *The anti-bullying
handbook*.

Bullying Prevention in the Early Years

“Tenderness and kindness are not signs of
weakness and despair but manifestations of
strength and resolution.”

Kahlil Gibran,
(Lebanese Poet/Novelist, 1883-1931)

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as an imbalance of power, which allows the bully to physically or psychologically abuse the victim while creating a negative atmosphere marked by anxiety, humiliation, intimidation, and fear. Bullying is sometimes also referred to as peer victimization.

Who is Affected by Bullying?

Sullivan (2000) states that bullying has five levels of impact: 1) the person being bullied, 2) their parents and family members, 3) observers to the bullying who feel unsafe and afraid, 4) the school where the bullying occurs, and 5) the wider school community.

Types of Bullying:

Physical Bullying involves direct physical attacks, such as shoving, punching, and kicking.

Cognitive Bullying involves teasing, insulting, and threatening.

Social Bullying involves groups or gangs and attacks are often instigated or ordered.

Emotional Bullying involves the spreading of rumours, excluding, or ostracizing.

(the above descriptions are adapted from Martini, 1997; Martini, Spear & Bombay, 1999).

Anti-Bullying Measure at Home

- 1) Discuss bullying behaviours with your child.
- 2) Encourage your child to tell an adult, a teacher, a parent, the school principal, if they are being bullied.
- 3) Encourage your child to tell the bully how they feel by using an "I message":
For example, "I feel sad when you push me."
- 4) Discuss feelings that are evoked both at home and at school with your child.
- 5) Do not ignore or condone bullying behaviours as children learn by observing.

Anti-Bullying Measure at School

- 1) Use a stuffed animal as a pro-peace mascot. Use this mascot to help children discuss their feelings and emotions, as well as to discuss the feelings and emotions of other people.
- 2) Incorporate holistic teaching strategies into one's daily lessons. A holistic approach to education encompasses the whole child and promotes the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development of the child. Holism also promotes the development of empathy and kindness, which further promotes prosocial, anti-bullying behaviours.

Such holistic teaching strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Role Playing-Encourage children to role play conflict situations and collaboratively develop strategies to avoid and diffuse such situations.
- 2) Perspective Taking-Encourage children to take the perspective of another person by identifying how a character in a book or a movie may be feeling.
- 3) Discuss Feelings and Emotions-Encourage children to verbally and/or pictorially portray their feelings and emotions. Discuss with children that it is okay to feel negative emotions, such as anger, and be proactive by discussing prosocial ways to respond and react to such negative emotions.
- 4) Model Anti-Bullying Behaviours-Model for students the importance of respectful, human interaction both with adults and children.
- 5) Establish a Safe and Inviting Classroom-Encourage students to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a classroom free from ridicule and intimidation. Allow all students the opportunity to feel valued and needed within the school environment.
- 6) Communication-Establish open communication between home and school. Never ignore bullying, address it immediately and try to work together to stop it.

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