

October, 2005

Chicago Dept of Public Health



OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Violence Prevention E-Brief

October is Violence Prevention Awareness Month

Animal Cruelty, Bullying, Children and Kindness

One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it. (Margaret Mead)



The FBI and Scotland Yard recognize that violence towards animals is one of five key indicators of a person who will commit violent acts against people. A past history of violence is a predictor of future aggression. In one American study, 118 out of 135 incarcerated individuals, including those convicted of rape and robbery, admitted that when they were children, they had burned, hanged and stabbed domestic animals.

Bullying May Be A Bigger Problem Than We Think

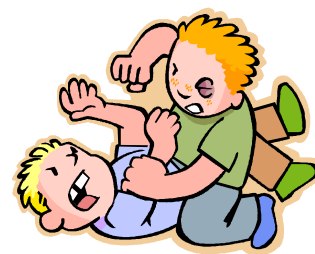
Of 65,193 students 6th through 12th grades:

- 63% reported they would learn more at school is they felt safe
- 43% avoided restrooms
- 20% avoided hallways
- 45% avoided school grounds

There are two kinds of bullying—

direct—hitting, stealing, pushing, threatening and **indirect**—social exclusion, rumors, gossip, body language.

All children are affected: **victim**, **perpetrator**, **bystander**



Teasing and bullying are not the same- teasing is when both are having fun- bullying is a violation of another person—one person is no longer having fun.

Tool Box for Adults: Teaching Respect

Respect for Animals

- Teach by example
- Invite your child to feed birds with you; rescue a bug; admire a butterfly
- Discuss with older children, animal cruelty cases publicized in the news
- Encourage children to speak up for animals
- Encourage children to do school projects about humane treatment of animals
- Encourage the inclusion of Humane Education at your child's school

Promoting Healthy Friendships: Preventing Bullying

- **Teach/Role Model Empathy**—challenge your child to think about how someone feels when they say something mean or cruel...how would they feel if it happened to them?
- **Teach/Role Model Compassion**—use lots of healing words—thank you; I appreciate that; I forgive you; I'm sorry; I understand
- **Teach/Role Model Assertiveness**—children are safer when they know how to speak up and say how they feel and express what they need...I don't like it when; I need to tell you; I feel angry when; that hurt me, please don't
- **Teach/Role Model Self Respect**—celebrate the uniqueness of every child; encourage them to look their best— I'm so proud of you; You look great; You are so interesting!