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# Module 4. Relationship between parents and schools in preventing bullying



Robotics vs  
Bullying

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Consejería de Educación. Junta de Castilla y León

ARID Association

Polo Europeo della Conscenza

## European online training course



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# OUR TOPICS

- The role of parents and families in children's development
- The importance of the teachers-parents relationship
- How schools can engage parents in preventing bullying?
- Warning signs of being involved in bullying dynamics
- How parents can prevent their child from becoming a victim?
- How parents can prevent their child from becoming an aggressor?

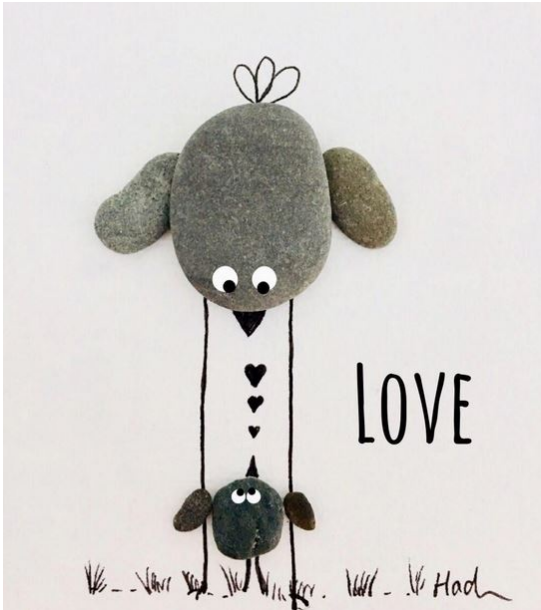


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# The role of parents and families in children's development



- Family is the primary institution of an individual's socialization and also the institution which shapes the personality and behavior of its underage members (Kataki, 1994).
- Family is the institution that longest influence in every aspect of children's life.
- Families can play a key role in bullying prevention, detection, and intervention.
- By including parents in these programs, they could learn ways to build a healthy parent-child relationship that encompasses warmth, empathy, kindness, and compassion which children may then emulate in their peer relations and decrease and eliminate bullying and victimization in schools.



- In **early age**, children are not able to reason about the behavior they are adopting, they are only following their emotions.
- **However**, there are behaviors that if not corrected in time and children are taught to **express themselves** in another way and to respect their peers can degenerate into bullying.
- Bullying can start at an early age - if we intervene early, it will also end early.



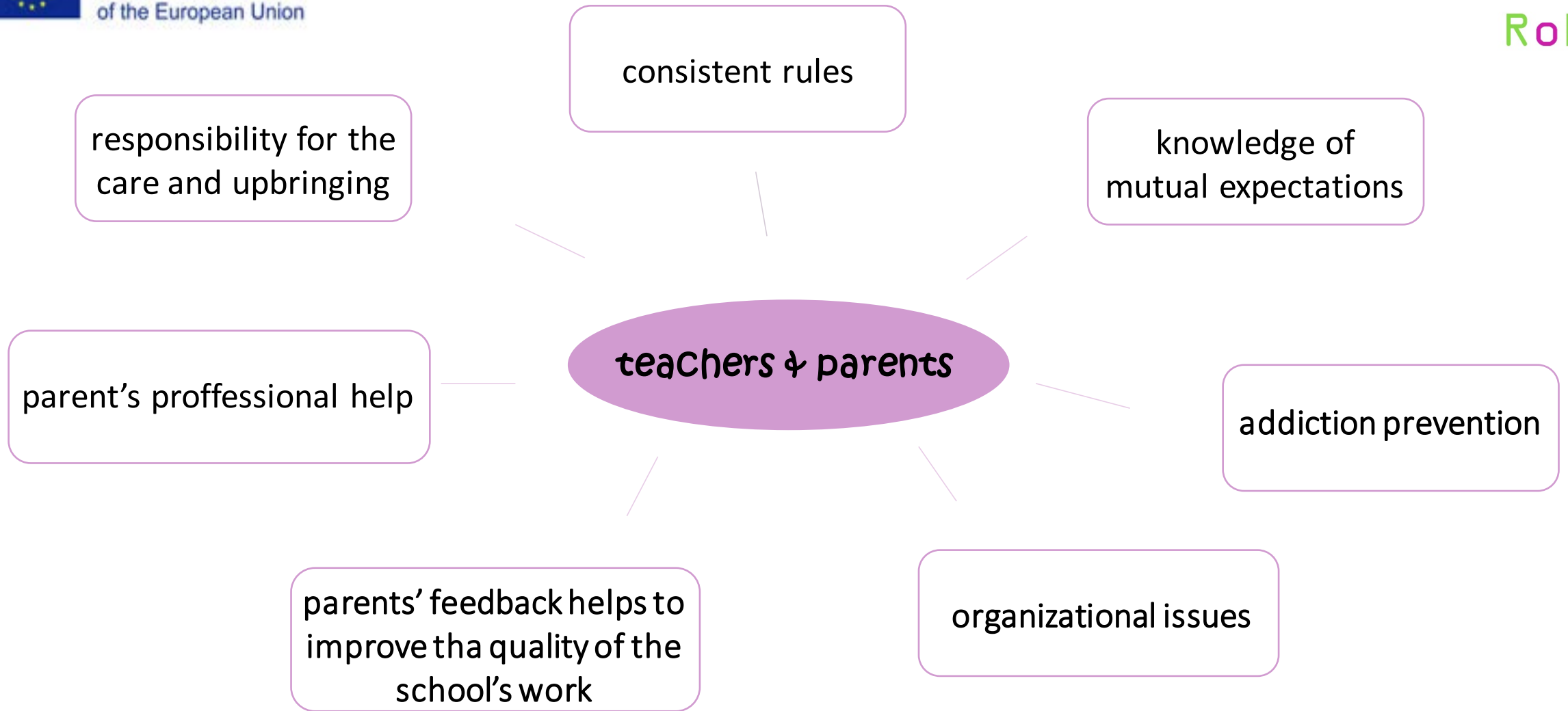
# The importance of teachers-parents relations

- The lack of a parent-school relationship is a risk factor for violence.
- Teachers and parents share a common goal of action.





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# How schools can engage parents in preventing bullying?

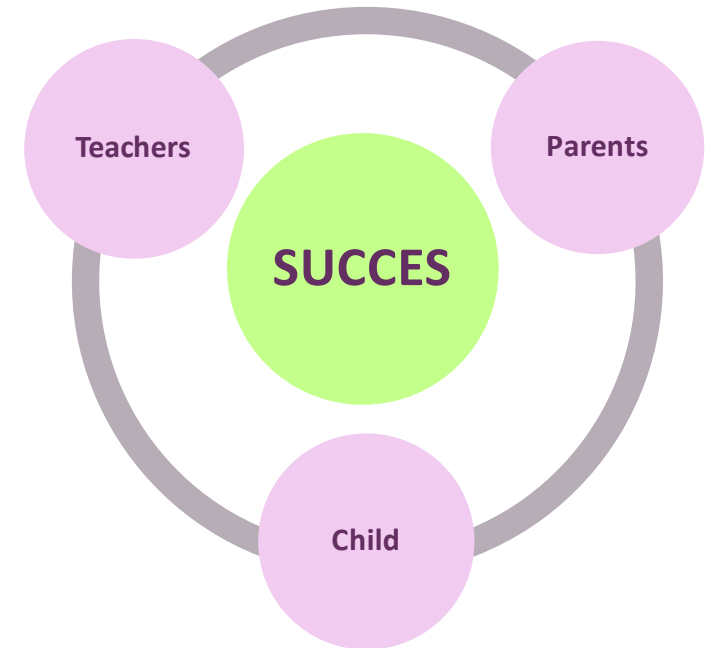
INFORMATION	EDUCATION	INTERVENTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ periodic parents-teachers meetings</li><li>❖ possibility to meet with school specialists (e.g. psychologist)</li><li>❖ newsletters for parents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ development of parents' psychological, pedagogical and social skills (workshops, open meetings with specialists)</li><li>❖ information about knowledge, skills, talents, successes, problems in realtions or learning problems</li><li>❖ information about behavioral disorders, their causes and symptoms, ways of dealing with them</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ individual meetings in difficult situations (behavioural or learning problems)</li><li>❖ telephone contact</li></ul>





## Useful tips

- Create a space and time for conversations with parents.
- Do not talk only about problems. Tell something positive. Show you care.
- Let parents express their opinions, fears, and doubts.
- Listen carefully.







- Propose solutions. Encourage parents to share their opinions.
- Explain to parents how important is their role and how important is consistency between parents and teachers.
- Create an atmosphere of openness and trust.
- Prepare leaflets for parents where you will gather the most important information about a relevant topic.





## How to prepare a leaflet?

- Provide the **most important** information.
- The text should be **short** and **clear**.
- Try to give it an **interesting form**.
- If the topic is about some problem, you can add the **addresses of institutions** where the parents can find help.



# Example – a leaflet



symptoms of problems



information on what to do




**⚠ Youth and intoxicants ⚠**

More and more young people come into contact with narcotic drugs.  
**Parent, be vigilant!**

**Signs that may indicate your child is under the influence of drugs:**

- excessive appetite / lack of appetite
- rapid emaciation, sudden weight gain
- reddened eyes
- nosebleeds
- slurred speech
- dilated pupils
- lack of care for hygiene
- needle marks on the body
- having unidentified tablets, bags with powder, etc.



**Attention! These singular signals do not necessarily indicate a drug problem. However, if they do accumulate, this should not be underestimated.**

**It is worth paying attention to:**

- conflicts at school
- isolation from people
- changing the group of friends (especially associating with "difficult youth")
- trouble concentrating
- mood swings
- exaggerated reactions
- irritability, depression, anxiety
- truancy, low grades, neglect of duties
- speaking positively about intoxicants
- aggressive behavior manipulations, frauds, thefts

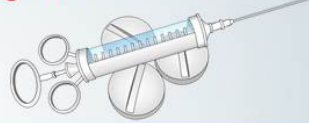
**When you suspect your child has a drug problem:**

- **immediately** contact an addiction therapist
- listen to the child, but don't be fooled
- „principle of limited trust"
- support the child, talk, show acceptance

**Useful phones**

Drugs - Nationwide Helpline (Poland): 0 801 199 990

National Police Helpline (Poland): 0 800 120 226




title



other important information



useful phone numbers



# Indicators of detection

- Families can pay attention to three basic indicators of detection:
  - isolation
  - character change
  - disclosure of bullying
- There are four ways to achieve a position of power over another person (Horno, 2009):
  - love
  - Authority
  - Strength
  - social difference

One of the essential strategies for the prevention and eradication of bullying is to teach children to recognize and choose who they want to empower in their life.





## Warning signs of being involved in bullying dynamics

- Somatizations (in the morning he feels bad, has a headache, a stomachache...), at school he says that he is not well and asks to be picked up.
- Changes of habits (does not want to go to school, wants to be accompanied or changes the usual route, does not want to go on the school transport, does not want to go out with friends...)
- Changes in attitude towards school tasks (low academic performance).
- Changes in character (he is irritable, isolated, introverted, more surly, anguished or depressed, begins to stutter, loses confidence...).





- Alterations in appetite.
- Sleep disturbances (nightmares).
- Begins to threaten or attack other children or younger siblings.
- He refuses to say why he feels bad and insists that nothing is wrong with him.
- Give weird excuses to justify all of the above.





# How parents can prevent their child from becoming a victim?

## **Build trust and openness in the family.**

Only then a child will not be afraid to say that he/she has problems.

## **Never underestimate the problems the child tells about.**

When children see that adults don't react, they stop telling them about problems they see or have.

## **Talk about bullying.**

Tell what to do when a child sees bullying or when he/she is a victim.





## **Initiate conversations about school.**

Ask specific questions.

## **Make sure the child has relationships with peers.**

Then the child will not be so lonely and defenseless.

## **Build the child's assertiveness.**

It will help him/her not to be a passive victim or observer.



## Stay alert!

When a child is sad or worried, parents should investigate the causes.

## Teacher,

you can pass this information on to parents – you can prepare an open meeting, a leaflet, or share it during conversations with parents.



## What the family can do if they suspect of bullying?

- Under suspicious, **ask** your child **directly**, encourage him/her to speak up, tell that you are concerned about what is happening and that you will help whatever the problem is.
- React calmly, **do not blame** or hold him/her responsible for the situation.
- Ask him to explain what happened, if it has happened on other occasions, who has been involved, who have seen it, where it has happened, what he did, who has he told about it.
- Get in contact with the school.





## What family can do if they think their child might be acting as a bully?

- React calmly, try not to act angry or defensive. Ask your child directly what he is doing and if he has behaved like this before.
- Try to help him/her, ask if he knows why he does it. Make him/her realize that he is hurting a peer, that violence is not a smart way to resolve conflict, and that he/she has to stop doing it.
- Make it clear that you find this behavior unacceptable and that you will work with him/ her to help him/her stop it.





## What family can do if they think their child might be acting as a bully?

- Find out if there is anything in particular that worries the child. Help him find non-aggressive ways to react. Make him see the difference between aggressiveness and assertiveness (assertiveness is asserting one's own rights without trampling the rights of others).
- Talk to the tutor and explain everything you know. Agree to actions.





## How parents Can prevent their Child from becoming the aggressor?

### **Aggression leads to aggression.**

When a child sees aggressive behaviour in the family environment, they can imitate them.

### **Show that the child is accepted.**

Aggression can be a cry to be noticed and loved.

### **Teach the child how to discharge his anger safely.**

Show that negative emotions are normal but we don't need to hurt others or ourselves to deal with them.



## **Set clear rules and boundaries.**

Rules and boundaries learn discipline and show that parents don't allow arbitrariness.

## **Teach values.**

Education is not only knowledge and skills but also values and attitudes.

## **Close cooperation with the school.**

Common rules and a consistent course of raising a child are needed.





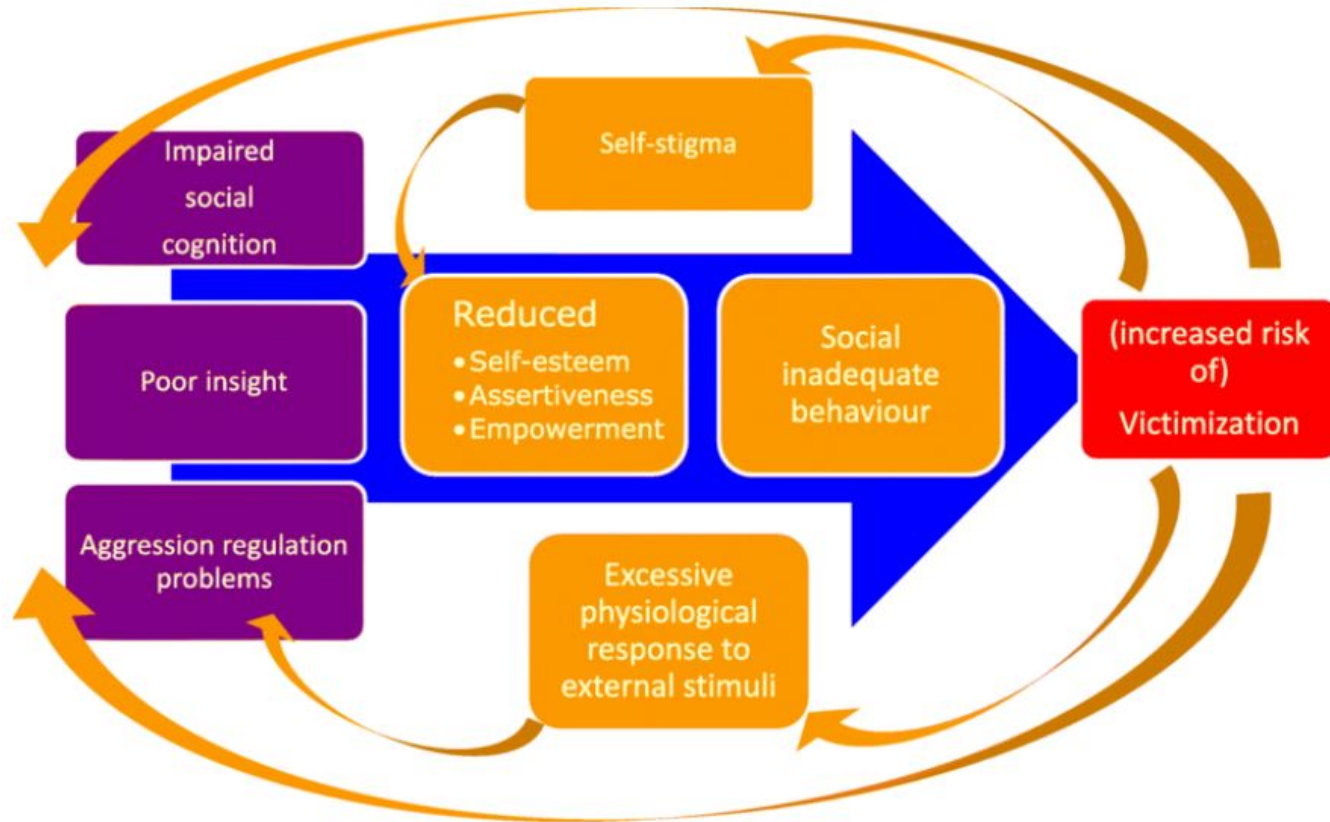
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Parents, school staff, and other adults in the community can help kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy.



# School-family Alliance



- **Reverse the circle of victimization by:**
  - Positive leadership
  - Empathy development
  - Developing assertiveness strategies
  - Awareness of the consequences of our actions in others and in ourselves (empathy)
  - Learn to trust in others



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# Flip the point

While many **bully prevention programs** aim to **put an end to negative behaviors**, our proposal from **Robotics vs bullying project** is **about teaching kids prosocial behaviors that empower** them to make positive choices both in school and out in their daily life and in the world.

It's not enough to teach kids what *not* to do; we also have to teach them what to do to promote **kindness** and **compassion** among their peers.





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- Simple acts of kindness are a win-win.
- It's heartbreaking to hear and you think that a child might be alone and upset at school each day. It's natural to want to "fix" the problem. The thing is ... **fixing rarely fixes.**
- The best thing adults (parents, teachers...) can do is to **empower kids to act as "includers."** When we instill kids with prosocial skills, we are spreading kindness, mutual understanding, friendship, compassion, empathy.





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## “Scanning” the playland





# Empowering children

- Listen and empathizes: Empathetic children can generate giant ripples of kindness.
- **They have an “includer” nature-** you can promote and enhance it. Teach your child to scan the room, the playground, or the park to look for someone who might need a friend.
- Practice ways to invite a new kid into the group or ask others to join a game. When kids practice these skills at home, they are better able to use them out.
- Unintentional exclusion: sometimes kids exclude others without intent to harm. Talk to your kids about what it means.



Some important questions for parents:

- How do they see the school?
- Which are the limits of the school?
- What would they/You improve in the school?
- Which power should have a teacher?
- Do they trust the school?





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