Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers’ Perceptions of Bystander Bullying: Resolution Strategies in Selected Picture Books

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Abstract

Previous research suggests that most incidents of bullying occur in school settings. However, teachers are not always aware of bullying incidences and often do not intervene. As bullying has negative long-term consequences for the bully, victim, and bystander, it is important to identify effective ways to reduce this problem. Responding to incidents of bullying at school, bibliotherapy is a cost effective way to support students and teach coping strategies. Numerous bully-themed books model a variety of strategies to deter bullying. Because of their busy schedule and limited opportunities to review books, teachers may need assistance in identifying books that promote recommended strategies to deter incidents of bullying. This research investigated teachers’ perceptions of bystander strategies in four selected bully-themed children’s picture books. Selected books contained bystander responses to bullying. Participants included two kindergarten and two first-grade female teachers. Teachers read the four selected books with their classes. Afterward, the four teachers participated in a focus group to discuss outlined research questions. Additionally, teachers reviewed the Anti-Defamation League’s recommended bystander strategies and rated the effectiveness of these strategies in reducing bullying. To assist young children in identifying with and understanding the story’s message, focus group discussion emphasized the importance of selecting books with a straightforward storyline. Teachers reported enjoying using bibliotherapy and appreciated the power of a story to encourage student discussion about bullying. They also suggested that selected books should contain story characters that model appropriate strategies to deter bullying. In regard to their young students, teachers rated two strategies as most effective in deterring bullying: (a) encouraging the bystander to go with the victim to tell an adult and (b) telling the bully to stop. Summarizing information from the focus group and based on teachers’ responses to a short questionnaire, suggestions are made to assist kindergarten and first-grade teachers in selecting books on the topic of bullying and sharing these books with their classes.

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This research investigated teachers’ perceptions of bystander strategies in four selected bully-themed children’s picture books. Selected books contained bystander responses to bullying. Participants included two kindergarten and two first-grade female teachers. Teachers read the four selected books with their classes. Defamation League’s recommended bystander strategies and rated the effectiveness of these strategies in reducing bullying. To assist young children in identifying with and understanding the story’s message, focus.