



Implement Bullying Prevention Programs in Your Synagogue or School

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism presents programmatic resources that you can implement in your school or congregation.

During Chanukah, we learn about standing up for what is right, especially in a world where some people force others to live in a way that is uncomfortable or dangerous for them. For many children, bullying is one of the greatest challenges they face. In a 1998 Study, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development concluded that “30 percent of students in grades six through ten were involved in moderate to frequent bullying as perpetrators, victims or both.”

Bullying can be “defined as aggressive verbal or physical behavior committed by a child or group of children to intimidate, harass or harm a child or group of children, [and is] universally reprehensible.” Bullying has harmful effects on children’s mental health and on crime prevention. Kids who are bullied are five times more likely to be depressed. And, “bullying is an early warning sign that children and youth may be headed down a path to more serious antisocial behavior.”

As people who suffered for our religious differences, we can understand what it is like to be attacked because we are perceived to be different. By developing and implementing programs to help kids take a stand against bullying and to help prevent bullying, we can help reduce this behavior and make a positive difference for the children in our communities.

Resources for these programs include:

- Operation Respect: Don’t Laugh at Me (DLAM) helps “sensitize children to the painful effects of behaviors that too often are accepted as necessary rites of passage in childhood—ridicule, disrespect (or ‘dissing’), ostracism and bullying. DLAM is designed to inspire children, along with their teachers and other educators, to transform their classrooms and schools into ‘[Ridicule Free Zones](#).’” DLAM also runs programs for camps. Information is available at www.operationrespect.org.
- “Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention,” a research brief by [Fight Crime: Invest in Kids](#), has statistics on bullying and information on bullying prevention programs.