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Teach children about bullying

The Point Pleasant Beach Board of Education is to be commended for the change in its policy on bullying. ("School to approve bullying policy." Jan. 24.) Bullying, no matter where and when it occurs, hurts those children who are being bullied.

Recently, a program on bullying was presented to the third-grade students where I teach. The Child Assault Prevention Program teaches children it is their right to feel safe and secure, no matter where they are. Through discussion and role-playing, the children learned the steps to take to stop bullying.

According to the presenters, 85 percent of students are witnesses to different kinds of bullying: verbal, physical or sexual. The third-graders were taught to stand up for a classmate being attacked as there is strength in numbers. A bully may think twice about continuing an attack if a group of students faces her and tells her to stop.

Children also are told to tell a responsible adult. It was made clear to the students that telling an adult about an incident of bullying is not tattling because ugly words, racial slurs and humiliation can hurt just as much as physical harm. All types of bullying are harmful.

Most important, adults must take action. This will send a powerful message to children who bully, and to their parents or other adults who excuse or cover up their reprehensible acts. Adult intervention also supports those child witnesses who were courageous in either telling the bully to stop or reporting the incident.

Other districts should follow the lead of the Point Pleasant Beach Board of Education. School board members should consider bringing the Child Assault Prevention Program to their school district for both students and parents.

Donna Morrows

OCEAN GROVE