

Safe School Program

*Kingsley Elementary School
Naperville, Illinois*

To help Kingsley Elementary students effectively counteract bullying, the School Family Community Partnership (SFCP) started the Safe School Program, a series of presentations focusing on peer relationships. School personnel developed the program with help from parents on the SFCP team.

Parents and Kingsley staff decided to launch the Safe School Program after they became concerned about bullying at school. Staff members attended a summer workshop on the subject entitled “Don’t Laugh at Me.” From that workshop, school administrators and staff learned that the strongest defense against bullying and similar behaviors is building community—understanding others and their feelings before jumping to conclusions about them. From these ideas, the Kingsley staff tailored a program to meet the needs of the school. They built on general behavior guidelines the school has followed for years: Is it safe? Is it kind? Is it respectful? Is it responsible?

Using one-hour, interactive programs appropriate for different grades, the program aimed to improve students’ ability to handle bullying effectively and increase their leadership skills within the Kingsley Code of Honor, which addresses traits such as kindness and involvement.

Each grade had four presentations during the school year; the topics were:

- Take Time to Be Kind
- Take Time to Understand Others
- Take Time to Understand What Others Are Feeling
- Take Time to Understand Point of View

The program ended with a “Take Time to Celebrate” assembly. Students participated in each presentation, and the school sent notes home summarizing each lesson’s objective and offering suggestions for topics to talk about at home.

Kingsley kicked off the program with a family celebration featuring Wheel of Wisdom, an interactive program tailored to the school’s needs that touched on the safety themes in a light-hearted manner. The school’s business partners underwrote the cost of this presentation.

Parents were involved every step of the way. Staff and administrators consulted with parents about the content of the sessions and discussed the various objectives of the program. They also talked about the programs at Home and School meetings.

By the end of the school year, school officials reported fewer incidents of bullying, and they noted that students had a common standard for behavior and peer relationships.

The parents were anxious to see the program continued next year, and even offered to be more involved.

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