

The BeCool Research Team

James Stanfield, Ed.D.

Content Areas: Special Education, Instructional Technology

Scott McCann, Ph.D

Content Areas: Assertion Theory, Child Development

Leonard Sushinsky, Ph.D.

Content Areas: Behavior Theory, Statistics, Clinical Psychology

The series was in development for approximately one year. During this period, literature reviews were completed and the BeCool: “Don’t be HOT, Don’t be COLD...BeCOOL” Assertion Paradigm was refined. Initial cuts of the video sequences were reviewed by the research team for accuracy in content and age appropriate style of delivery. Further, with every BeCool program sold, there is included an evaluation form and feedback from these field evaluations has been and is incorporated in the design of new BeCool Programs.

Nevada Study

GALLAGHER ELEMENTARY REPORT

The final report for conflict resolution grant for Gallagher Elementary in Virginia City, Nevada can be found on the following pages.

Our statistics showed definite improvement in several areas. We saw ten times as many students as the previous year who said they had not bullied anyone in the last three months. Suspensions were down by half and time-out citations were down by two-thirds. Overall, the students agreed that it was a good course and said they would recommend it to other students.

LOOK WHAT ELSE THE RESEARCHERS FOUND

There are many benefits of the BeCool series that our measurement tool didn't measure. For example, there is a progression in attentiveness from a primary curiosity exhibited by the students in the first tape to nonverbal increase in involvement in the second tape. Discussion has so increased with the third tape viewing that it has become more difficult to exit the classroom after the 30 minute time allotment. It is also interesting that the teachers are staying in the classroom in greater frequency now than when we were involved in other guidance programs. The results have been unexpected or I would have prepared an assessment system to measure these aspects as well.

If you wish to share this project, "Be Cool" has a wonderful 10 minute video explaining the program. They aimed it at parents and teachers. It explains the series and shows brief scenes from some videos. I can send you my copy if you wish. I have enclosed a flyer also. We can get more flyers.

Thank you again for all the help and guidance you gave us in writing this grant. It was a real privilege to be able to present such an outstanding conflict resolution program to all the students at Gallagher Elementary. We have learned a great deal from it.

GALLAGHER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Our conflict resolution program was based on a video series entitled "Be Cool". The series showed three ways to react to difficult situations. A student can be hot and blow-up. He can be cold and give up, or he can be cool and in control. Four major areas were covered: Handling criticism, teasing, bullying and anger.

The videos were shown to all students at Gallagher Elementary, kindergarten through 5th grade. Each group came in once a week for the entire semester.

As a reward for completing the program students voted for notebooks to be used as diaries to record feelings and experiences. The fourth and fifth grades also received worry stones. These are small stones with grooves in them to rub when you feel anxious, angry or nervous.

The facilitator attended a seminar in Las Vegas entitled, "The Second Annual Conference on Anger and Rage."

A. OBJECTIVE

When we gave the bullying test after the program, we saw more than ten times as many students who said they had not bullied anyone in the last three months. That figure rose from three students before the program to 34 students afterwards. (Copy of Bully test enclosed)

In 1999-2000, we had 142 students compared to 150 the year before. We had four suspensions for violence to students compared to 16 the previous year. We had 24 time-out citations for violence to students compared to 53 the previous year. We had one student suspended for violence to staff before and none the following year. However, in 1998-1999 we had two suspensions for possession of weapons, in the following year none. Sexual harassment suspensions went down by one, from 4 to 3. There were only five time-out citations for sexual harassment compared to 18 (with five more warnings) the previous year. Suspensions for teasing went up by one, however time-out citations for teasing moved down dramatically from 18 to one, and warnings were down from nine to seven with time-out citations moving down from three to none. There was one warning for the first year, none the second for threats of violence.

In summary, total suspensions were down 32 to 15 and total time-out citations moved down from 92 to 32. There were 11 warnings overall the first year and none the second. In conclusion, there were approximately half as many suspensions and one-third as many time-out citations as the previous year. (Violence and weapons summary enclosed.)

VIOLENCE AND WEAPONS DATA

	1998-99	1999-00
SUSPENSIONS		
Violence to students	16	4
Violence to staff	1	0
Possession of weapons	2	0
Sexual harassment	4	3
Teasing	0	1
Threats of violence	9	7
Total Suspensions	32	15
<u>TIMEOUT CITATIONS</u>		
Violence to students	53	24
Violence to staff	0	2
Sexual harassment	18	5
Teasing	18	1
Threats of violence	3	0
Total Time-outs	92	32
<u>WARNINGS</u>		
Sexual harassment	5	0
Teasing	5	0
Threats of violence	1	0
Total Warnings	11	0

EVALUATION

B. SUBJECTIVE

There are approximately 150 students at Gallagher Elementary. They come from four different areas: Mark Twain, Gold Hill, Virginia City Highlands and Virginia City itself. This gives us a mix of students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

Parents' response was excellent. Several parents of kindergarten children came in to visit and said they really liked the videos. Parents of older students reported that they noticed their kids were fighting less and accepting punishment with less crying and pouting. Several said their kids seemed to be calmer and were taking more responsibility.

Counseling sessions also benefited from this program. I found students were able to work through relationship problems much more smoothly. They were able to express their feelings clearly and were less combative, more compassionate.

Before the "Be Cool" Program classroom survey was done to get subjective answers to questions about teasing, criticism, and anger management.

We asked, "What do you say to someone who is teasing you"? Answers included: "Back off, you idiot", "Shut up", "Same to you" and, "Leave me alone". Some recommended cursing at their antagonist. Occasionally some one would say ignore them or tell an adult.

We asked, "What do you do when you're angry at someone"?

Answers were: "You get revenge", "You get even", "You pay them back", "You get your friends to threaten them or beat them up". Occasionally someone said. "You tell a teacher or the Principal".

Peer pressure questions also brought about hostile responses. When role playing as someone being pressured to do something wrong, the most common response was to rudely react to the offer with put downs and insults.

Criticism was greeted with "Who do you think you are?" "Leave me alone", "Who cares?" or silence.

With the "Be Cool" Program, students were able to recognize cold reactions (pouting, giving up), hot reactions (blowing up) or cool ones (staying in control).

When asked, "What do you say to someone who is teasing you"? They responded with specific ideas from the program. "Ignore them", "Try humor", "Change the subject", "Leave if you need to", "Get an adult".

When we asked, "What do you do when you're angry?" Answers were, "Step back", "Consider your choices", "Say to yourself, I can handle this", "Notice your body", "Take a deep breath" and, "Stay cool and in control".

When criticized their response was "Stay cool", "Don't be hot", "Don't pout or give up or cry." "Ask questions about how to do it better", "Work on improvement", "Ask for help and thank the person for helping you".

When asked about peer pressure they again had ready answers: "Use your important voice", "Ask them not to speak until you're finished", "Tell them what you don't like", "Tell them how it made you feel", "Tell them to stop pressuring you", "Tell them if they don't stop you won't be their friend anymore".

Texas Study

A Statistical Report on Pre- and Post-Test Scores for BeCool

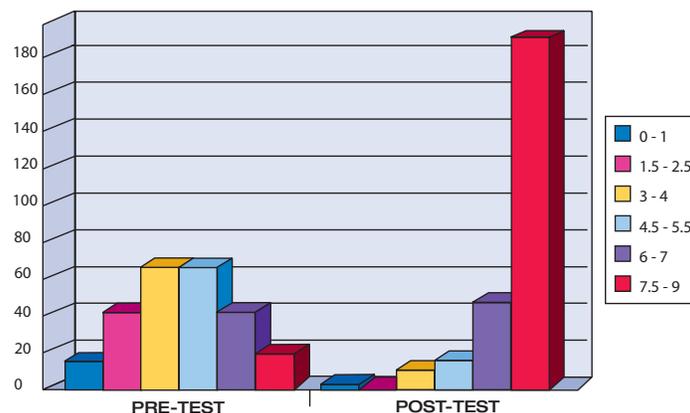
The data was collected from approximately 300 students ranging from 8 years old to 12 years old. The pre-test was given during the month of August 1998 and the post-test was given in December of the same year. Scores were collected from all participating students, but only those pieces of the data that had a paired score were included in the analysis. The resulting population consisted of 233 students.

The inferential method used to compare the means of the two populations is often referred to as the paired z-test. This method was chosen because of the large population size, and because the samples were paired. This analysis was also chosen because the distributions of the populations were different.

The assumption was made that data was drawn from a large population size. Below is a frequency distribution of the pre-test and post-test scores, with 0 being the lowest score and 9 being the maximum obtainable score.

SCORES	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
0 - 1	11	2
1.5 - 2.5	40	0
3 - 4	63	7
4.5 - 5.5	63	12
6 - 7	39	43
7.5 - 9	17	169
TOTALS	233	233

Side-by-side histograms of the distributions are given below.



The mean pre-test score is 4.320; the mean post-test score is 7.779. The mean of the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is 3.459 and the standard deviation of the differences is 2.058.

A large-sample hypothesis test for the means of two populations using paired data was performed using null hypothesis of $H_0\mu_d = 0$. In words, there is no significant difference in the means of the pre-test and post-test scores. The alternative to the null hypotheses is that there is a significant difference in the means of the pre-test and post-test scores. A two-tailed hypothesis was performed at the 5% significance level. The value of the test statistic exceeded the 1.96 critical value. Hence, the test results are statistically significant at the 5% level.

Therefore, at the 5% significance level the data provides sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a difference in the means of the pre-test and post-test scores.

—Marty Gorman, M.A., and Stacy West, Texas Women's University

Beaumont Study

“BEING COOL”

Beaumont schools use a conflict-management program to teach suspended pupils how to say out of future trouble

By Steve Moore

The Press-Enterprise

Beaumont- They could be sitting home watching TV or playing video games. But instead the suspended elementary school pupils are in special class learning how to keep from getting kicked out of school the next time. And after participating in the BeCool program, 87 percent of the youngsters are not suspended again, Beaumont Unified School District officials say. “The greatest payoff is kids are back in school, where we want them and they are learning”, Superintendent Frank Passarella said about the program, which began in December. And keeping suspended children in class also allows Beaumont Unified to receive the \$40-per-day, per-pupil attendance reimbursement from the state for each participant in the program. That’s the price of a new textbook, Passarella said. On Tuesday night, the district board will consider hiring a Success Class teacher to expand the BeCool to middle school and high school. The BeCool program is used across the Inland Empire and in more than 1,000 schools in the United States and Canada. Several Inland school districts, use the program including Riverside, Rialto, San Bernardino City, Moreno Valley, Lake Elsinore and Hemet. Research has shown that there is a significant reduction in behavior problems when BeCool is taught in schools, said Gari Stanfield, the programs curriculum coordinator in Santa Barbara. Her husband, James Stanfield, created the conflict-management program, which teaches coping with criticism as well as handling anger, teasing and bullying. He began as a special education teacher in the early 1970’s, made documentary films of his student and earned a doctorate in special education at the University of Southern California. He now operates an educational publishing company in Santa Barbara. A study of 150 pupils at Gallagher Elementary School in Virginia City submitted to the Nevada Department of Education found suspensions and school violence were cut in half and weapon incidents dropped to zero from two after the program was introduced in 1999-2000, Gari Stanfield said.

Learning Lessons

There were 463 suspensions incidents involving students in the district’s kindergarten through sixth-grade classes last year. Pupils in the new Success Class in Beaumont were suspended for a variety of offenses, including fighting, talking back to teachers and disrupting classes. The program is voluntary. BeCool teaches them to think about the consequences of their actions before reacting impulsively. They master practical ways of handling such everyday situations as bullying. Techniques range from a passive approach like avoiding a peer who teases them to being asserting and saying, “Please don’t tease me about my weight. It hurts my feeling. If you don’t stop, it’s going to hurt our friendship.” Pupils are taught to put situations in perspective by evaluating them on a “problem scale” of 1 to 10. Tony Silva, 61, a special education counselor, is one of the Success Class teachers at the Wellwood Center. On a recent morning, he told two boys and a girl, “We can control a lot of our behavior. We can’t control cancer or the house burning down.” BeCool is based on cognitive theory that holds that children are what they think. And how youngsters think controls how they feel and act. The program focuses on pupils’ “emotional intelligence.” Research shows that emotional intelligence isn’t fixed at birth and can be more important to social success and happiness than IQ, according to the program. Key elements of emotional intelligence taught in the BeCool program are empathy, self-awareness and controlling impulses.

Changing Pupils

“They’ve all been bullied or teased, and that’s something they can immediately relate to,” Silva said. “We want early intervention so they can learn to deal with these situations.” The program is now offered for kindergarten through the fifth-graders. Pupils complete their regular studies while learning the BeCool program. Silva and teacher Susan Watkins wrap up a 1 1/2-hour BeCool lesson. He steps forward to the center of the classroom and asks, “Does fighting solve the problem in the long run?” “No!” comes the answer from the suspended pupils. Youngsters appear to get Silva’s message. A scrappy fifth-grade girl once talked about grabbing girls by the hair and socking them in the face and kicking boys in the shins. She wants to avoid fights now. “I’ll try to just walk away,” she said.

Reach Steve Moore at (909) 849-4533 or stevemoore@pe.com

What Educators Have to Say about BeCool

- *“A 1st grade teacher overheard a student tell another classmate to ‘BeCool’ as he was about to be disciplined; a 2nd grade teacher overheard students referring to the videos on anger when trying to resolve a playground dispute; another 2nd grade teacher discovered a couple of students practicing the 4-step plan during recess. Quite a testimony to the value of this series.”* – Christy Reinold, Counselor Oakwood Elementary School, Winner, California School Counselor of the Year Award
- *“People who come to my school are amazed that there are not the number of insults/fights found in most inner-city schools. I credit BeCool for that.”* – Betty Jean Bingham, Kansas City MO School District
- *“When used across grade levels, it provides a “common language” for faculty and students.”* – Unknown
- *“Perfect for our clients; have been using BeCool for years now; it helps our clients to get a hold on their own life; and it has given workers the tools to work with them on these ‘subjects.’”* – Unknown
- *“We have used your materials extensively over the years. We ordered the Circles and BeCool back in 1998. We are currently replacing those due to the fact that they are worn out and we have expanded and are using these though out our program. We cover 23 counties here in West Texas.”* – Don Knight, High School thru Adult Administrator of West Texas Centers for MHMR, Monahans, TX
- *“I have enjoyed using LifeSmart, BeCool, First Impressions, etc.. They were helpful in teaching classes on manners and social skills.”* – Shirley Sanders, Teacher/Counselor at Johnson County Developmental Supports, Lenexa, KS
- *“I found both the Circles curriculum and the BeCool curriculum fun to teach. I used the BeCool curriculum at middle school level. I worked with special education students. The students created their own BeCool skits. I felt this was a very effective program for teaching alternatives to reacting to anger. I look forward to using your products at the elementary level.”* – Teresa May, Teacher, Craneville Elementary School, Pittsfield, MA
- *“I really like the video series. It touches on the needed topics in an appropriate manner.”* – Margaret Dolan, teacher

- *“Fantastic-easy to teach. Engaging. Adaptable for learning styles and attention spans.”* – Jacq Beith, Counselor
- *“Students really seem to enjoy and grasp the concepts being taught.”* – Tami Mazzella, Counselor
- *“Students can relate to the video scenarios.”* – Jennifer Swenson, Counselor
- *“It’s great, our students love it! The Losing It, especially the skateboard tape is great. I have taught it from grades 1-High school and have had kids who have graduated call and tell me to keep teaching it because ‘I was the only one who knew how to solve problems.’”* – Beth Bishop, Okemos Public Schools
- *“The videos are a great tool for our clientele- it is difficult to find situations to model issues that happen in your videos so it gives opportunities to talk and learn about issues relating to our clients deficits.”* – Daniel Hohmann, Community Support Services
- *“LOVE THEM!!!”* – Kelly, Teacher at Andrus Elementary
- *“I love them!”* – Shanna Margain, Teacher
- *“The BeCool series is a vital component of our daily instruction. We integrate the videos in our morning warm ups for middle school aged children. The series has provided strategies for our students to incorporate into individual action plans. BeCool is a wonderful tool that supports and encourages middle school students.”* – Jay Hooper, Teacher Maryville City Schools
- *“Excellent! WE LOVE CHESTER! I am trying to implement the lower elem Be Cool program to my whole school population (k-3). Unfortunately, the special ed teachers several years ago were provided the curriculum and I am trying to locate bits and pieces enough to use with my 500 plus kids. The program is very appealing! Our Central Office bought kits for every elementary school (3 schools) and maybe the two middle schools.”* – Becky Dale, Isle of Wight County Schools
- *“I have viewed the product from another counselor in the district. It appears to be a great program!”* – Nicole Walsh, Counselor, Shumway Elementary School, Chandler, AZ
- *“The heart of violence prevention is teaching alternatives to the use of demands and threats as a means of getting what we want. This program does just that!”* – Susan Simpon, Principal
- *“The BeCool series is an exciting program that gives children skills to manage relationships with their peers. These are lifetime skills necessary for our children to become responsible adults.”* – Barbara A. Coleman, Prinicpal, Evers Park Elementary School, Berton, TX
- *“Chester is a cartoon cat that is happy most of the time. Your kids will learn to be cool and not to be cold or hot. I liked it a lot.”* – Evan S., Cold Spring School

- *“If you liked BeCool: Coping with Difficult People, you’ll love BeCool: Give & Take. This new program teaches adolescents how to negotiate lasting resolution of interpersonal disputes...skills they’ll use all their lives.”* – Susan Simon, Principal
- *“BeCool is the best series I’ve ever used in any class! This program generates more discussion than any other teaching material.”* – Betty Christiansen, Living Skills Instructor, Wesco Industries
- *“Found BeCool to be very good with younger students.”* – Marty Vey, ON, CA
- *“The BeCool program was extremely effective with my constituents who have intellectual disabilities. I repeated the series three times and by the end they had a thorough grasp of the concepts.”* – Deann Canuteson, HI
- *“I used the Be Cool series at the elementary school I was in before and I loved it. I have now moved to Junior High and need new curriculum.”* – Unknown
- *“Our elementary school counselors highly recommend your program. We need James Stanfield to be listed on our state approved list of bullying programs that are research-based.”* – Jane Clark, Junior High Counselor, Glenpool, OK
- *“The BeCool series is wonderful! Not only are the video segments a good example of how to use the curriculum, but the lessons are already planned out which saves an incredible amount of time.”* – Kelly Volz, Jr. High Counselor, Cuba, NY
- *“Excellent resources!”* – Joyce Clarke, K-12 Teacher and Counselor, Kamloops, BC, Canada
- *“I use the BeCool series to teach conflict resolution skills to second graders. The feedback I have received from teachers, students and parents has been overwhelmingly positive. The curriculum is instructor friendly, informative and fun for the students. I have also had great success with the BeCool video series in small guidance groups.”* – Judith Herman, L.P.C, Elementary School Counselor, Boise, ID
- *“I found this program to be very good...well laid out, easy to use, and effective.”* – Casey Enright, Elementary and Middle School Teacher, Attawapiskat, ON, Canada
- *“BeCool is an excellent program!”* – Courtney Smith, K-12 Counselor, Covington, KY
- *“The students responded well to the videos and discussion.”* – Maureen Hoey, Teacher/Administrator, The Learning Spectrum, Columbus, OH
- *“Fantastic.”* – Therese Gray, Teacher, Centennial Education Center, Costa Mesa, CA
- *“I have been using the BeCool program for six years. Parents, children, and teachers all think it is superb. I am in a K-1 building with 700 students. The children all come back and rave about learning how to “BeCool.”* – Joan Sauer, Counselor, Evamere Elementary School, Hudson, Ohio
- *“Kids teaching kids is a powerful concept that James Stanfield employs to great effect in the BeCool videos. I am please to be able to endorse them.”* – Michael T. Brown PhD, Professor, University of California

- *“This series combines captivating graphics, impactful mnemonic devices, and the proven effectiveness of Assertion Theory. Kids teaching kids is a powerful concept that James Stanfield employs to great effect in the BeCool videos. I am pleased to be able to endorse them.”* – Michael T. Brown, PhD Professor, University of California, Nationally Recognized Authority on Child Development
- *“In 30 years of teaching, I’ve never seen anything that deals as effectively with teaching the skills of coping with everyday conflict situations as the BeCool series.”* – Carole L. Soden, Teacher
- *“I especially like the way anger is approached from 3 angles: fair, unfair, and dangerous. I have never before come across material that covers it in this way- especially teaching children what to do if anger directed at them is fair.”* – Judy Lancaster
- *“Just a quick note to let you know how thrilled I am with the Losing It! program. Your teacher guide is excellent. I have a 6th grade teacher anxious for me to begin using the series in his room. I also plan to give it a try in one of the special education classrooms when they come back on track in July.”* – Christy Reinold, Lodi Unified Counselor
- *“I even had them choose between a bullying video I was showing prior to having the BeCool series. I showed them both and BeCool won hands down! The length is perfect for 8th graders and they really want to know how others handle these kinds of situations. So BeCool never leaves them hanging. I’ll be using it from now on.”* – Carole L. Knopf, Guidance Counselor

You COULD be
HOT
and BLOW up...



You COULD Be
COLD
and GIVE up...



Or You Can
BeCool
and IN CONTROL!



TIME
ONLINE EDITION

Let Bullies Beware

Politicians are going after them. But what works best? Banishing them — or changing the culture?

By NADYA LABI

ANN STATES/CORBIS SABA FOR TIME

Sunday, Mar. 25, 2001

The 450 freshmen and sophomores gathered in the auditorium of Stephenson High School in Stone Mountain, Ga., are contemplating a red poster with a drawing of a large angry face and the word BULLY. That poster and two others, marked VICTIM and BYSTANDER, form the backdrop for the action onstage. Victor—with his black beret and long, stringy hair that scream “Victim!”—is enduring a stream of abuse from Brad. “I can call you anything I want because I’m a man and you’re a punk sissy nerd!” Brad shouts after stealing Victor’s hat. The audience laughs hysterically. “We don’t want punk sissy nerds like you hanging around our school. Right?” asks Brad, prompting the watching kids to chant “Punk sissy nerd” in an unconscious display of bystander cravenness. But when the play is over, the students are more reflective. “It was really good,” says Shina Mills, a sophomore. “It helps teenagers not to resolve problems on their own but to get help.”

A skit about big bad bullies may seem ludicrously quaint against the backdrop of teen shootings like the one last week in El Cajon, Calif. But the professional production, part of the local school district’s efforts to combat bullying, seeks in a small way to change the weekly headlines. More and more schools around the country are implementing antibullying policies. New laws in Georgia, New Hampshire and Vermont require them, and Colorado, home to the Columbine school massacre, is debating a measure. Skeptics say such legislation is fruitless and serves merely as a platform for politicians to display their practiced empathy. But some innovative programs around the country are showing concrete results that challenge the laissez-faire mentality that, after all, kids will be kids.

That bullying is a destructive force is not in dispute. Last fall the National Threat Assessment Center, run by the U.S. Secret Service, found that in more than two-thirds of 37 recent school shootings, the attackers felt “persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured.” And bullying is why more than 160,000 children skip school every day, according to the National Association of School Psychologists.

Georgia began its pioneering efforts to legislate against bullying after two school tragedies. In 1994 Brian Head, a chubby, bespectacled 15-year-old who had been taunted for years, broke when a classmate at Etowah High School in Woodstock slapped him. He shouted, “I can’t take it anymore!,” pulled out a gun and shot himself in the head. Four years later, Josh Belluardo was punched in the head—and killed—by a bully who also attended Etowah. The next year, Georgia passed a three-strikes-and-you’re-out policy. After three bullying offenses, middle and high school students may be shipped to a school for problem kids.

That kind of heavy hand has its opponents. William Pollack, a psychologist who wrote *Real Boys' Voices*, an exploration of boyhood, contends that such a punitive approach criminalizes childhood behavior and fails to address the root causes of bullying. Dorothy Espelage, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who co-authored a study on bullies, favors a comprehensive approach. "As soon as you pull a bully out of a school, another will take his place," she says. A deeper shift in school culture is required, she argues, because ultimately peer groups, not individuals, promote an ethic of aggression. She adds, "We need to change the climate so that most kids feel it's inappropriate to tease and harass."

That's what McNair Elementary in Hazelwood, Mo., attempts to do. In 1992 principal Peggy Dolan instituted a program to unteach kids what many had learned at home—that they should fight back when bullied. Instead, students are instructed to respond verbally, first with "I don't like what you said to me," then "I'm going to ask you to stop" and, if necessary, "I'm going to get help." Victims fill out a form describing the incident to a teacher or counselor. The issue is taken to peer mediation, and the offender is encouraged to sign an agreement not to bully.

Before the program went into effect, Dolan dealt with 55 fights a year; now she averages six. Also, the school's standardized math and reading scores have risen from the 40th to the 60th percentile—in part, she thinks, because students are better able to focus on their studies.

At Central York Middle School in Pennsylvania, incidents of fistfights have also declined—to four so far this school year, compared with 17 last year—after students in Grades 6 through 8 signed anti-teasing pledges and were instructed how to manage their anger. Bullies were required to offer "active apologies," detailing how they would modify their behavior.

Testifying last week before a Colorado legislative committee on education, Sherry Workman, principal of Laurel Elementary in Fort Collins, noted that behavior infractions fell 66% after she implemented various "bullyproofing" initiatives at her school. The younger children, for instance, are coached in how to walk confidently past older kids who are talking aggressively. Grades 2 through 4 undergo "BeCool" training, in which counselors present provocative scenarios and ask students to decide between a "hot response" and a "cool response." The latter choice wins praise for the kids.

Bullying is often performance art. Peter Fonagy, a psychologist who helped develop an antibullying model popular in Topeka, Kans., schools, believes that bullies and their victims usually make up no more than 10% to 20% of any school population. "The whole drama is supported by the bystander," says Fonagy. "The theater can't take place if there's no audience." Seeds University Elementary School in Los Angeles uses "equity guidelines" to target both bullies and bystanders. Parents and students sign contracts at the beginning of the year stipulating that no child may be put down for academic performance, appearance, family composition or gender, among other things. When an incident occurs—for example, some boys tried to pull down another boy's pants—bystanders are also sent to after-school mediation.

While the Seeds program involves parents, many others don't. "Research shows that the success of any program is 60% grounded in whether the same kinds of approaches are used at home," says Pollack. Sometimes parents need to be educated. When Debora Smith discovered that her two boys at Wolfpit Elementary School in Norwalk, Conn., were being bullied, she took action—by arming them with a hammer and screwdriver. Luckily, the school principal found the weapons in the kids' knapsacks before any harm was done.