



Supporting Parents *through* Communication *and* Education

How Self-Esteem Can Be More Powerful Than Bullies

Dr. Bill Page, a retired teacher and administrator with more than 30 years' experience, believes he has some useful advice to share about bullying.

Page, a PhD who in retirement became a

children's book author known as Billy D, said that he has dealt with the absolute worst kids in his school and the best ones, too. In most cases, he said that they were one and the same, just on different days.

"It doesn't take a PhD to figure out why a kid bullies another kid, or why that kid lets the other one bully him," said Page, author of the children's book series *The Marion Series*

(www.billydbooks.com).

"Both kids are scared of something. The kid who is being bullied is afraid of getting beat up, and the bully is afraid of most everything. The secret is being able to connect with them and figure out what both kids are afraid of and helping them face and defeat those fears.

"The heart of the matter," Page continues, "is one of the most basic truths I know: *every child is special*. If you want to prevent problems, then parents and teachers simply need to remind kids of this fact on a regular basis. If you tell them often enough, they'll begin to believe it and feel it, too."

Using Book Characters to Emulate Life

But as much as Page is an idealist, he also knows he has to channel that idealism to kids through some harsh realism.

"I put the characters in my books through some paces," he said. "They encounter the challenges of responsibility, honesty, self-pride, peer pressure, sibling rivalry, and race relations. On the other hand, my characters also see the benefits from loving people, befriending them and cooperating with others.

My characters are grounded by events that are true-to-life, so that the kids who read them, who are also dealing with the realism in their lives, can relate, understand and learn."

In that way, Page believes kids who read

his stories can unconsciously see the parallels in their own lives, and learn the same lessons his characters learn in his stories.

"Is the bully somehow less special than the bullied?" he asked. "Or are both simply good kids in a bad situation who need to see that their lives can be better if they only see how special they are and the difference they can make in other lives? We all need to know where

we keep our strength, the parts of ourselves that help us overcome adversities. If our children don't learn where those places are when they're kids, they won't know where to find those places as adults." ■

For more information, go to www.billydbooks.com.



Bullying Resources

❖ **Bullying – Free Powerpoints** – <http://facs.pppst.com/bullying.html>

❖ **Bully Prevention and Intervention Resources** – www.doe.mass.edu/bullying

❖ **Kids Against Bullying** – www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org

❖ **National Bullying Prevention Center** – www.pacer.org/bullying/resources

❖ **StopBullying.gov** – www.stopbullying.gov

ACTIVITY PLANNER

Easy Edible Crafts – Part II

A candy cane sleigh is a cute Christmas craft to keep or give away as a Christmas present! Filling the sleigh with little chocolates wrapped with ribbon is but one idea – as you can fill it with just about any treat!



Here's what you'll need:

- Cardstock paper to print template (construction paper or other sturdy paper is best)

- Printed sleigh template – go to www.busykids.com/support-files/sleightemplate.pdf
- 2 candy canes
- Glue
- Scissors
- Small chocolates and ribbon (Hershey Miniatures, for instance)

An adult will have to help preschoolers with the folding part. It may be better for younger children if you print the sleigh on white paper so they can decorate it with markers or glitter, since they can't do the folding part by themselves.

Here's how you make it:

1. Print and cut out the sleigh template on colored or white paper.

2. Fold on the dotted lines, and then fold the small tabs that have "glue" written on them.

3. Put some glue on the tabs and glue the corners together. Your sleigh is complete!

4. Glue the candy canes onto the bottom of the sleigh. Hold them there until they are completely dry.

5. Fill the sleigh with small wrapped chocolates, wrapped with thin ribbon around and tied in a bow. Or, fill the sleigh with a different treat! ■

Source: BusyBeeKidsCrafts.com



STUDY BUDDY

Math & Exercise – Part II

"[Too many] children [and adults] are overweight, and 61% of fourth graders are not proficient in math. It just makes sense that we start approaching these problems in a way that addresses both issues," says Carrie Scheiner, creator of *Exploracise*, an exercise DVD for kids and parents (www.exploracise.com).

Scheiner's tips include:

- ❖ **Shapes can be Healthy** – When Scheiner was a child in gym



class, they were told to make arm circles, but so many other shapes can be explored. Be creative and don't be content with your kids using their arms like windmills. Make it fun for kids, and it will help to create healthy exercise habits that will last a lifetime.

- ❖ **Scavenger Hunts** – Hide and Seek is a time-honored game, and with a little twist, you can use it to make math and healthy eating fun. Hide some healthy foods around the house, and set your kids to the task of finding them, but write down the calories and fat for each healthy food. When they find them, have them match up the foods with the numbers. ■

SNACK SMART!

Healthy Cookie Ideas!

Who wants to banish cookies and other sweet treats this holiday season? The following are a few tips:

- 🍌 Use all-natural ingredients and whole-wheat flour as much as possible.
- 🍌 Use sweeteners judiciously – try honey instead of sugar.
- 🍌 Limit hydrogenated fats – try canola oil instead.
- 🍌 Try olive oil as a delicious and healthy alternative to butter.
- 🍌 Try dried fruits like cherries, blueberries or Craisins®. ■

Source: www.eatingwell.com.

BEEHAVIOR MATTERS

Holidays & Meltdowns

Young children are always prone to "acting up," but why does this seem to happen even more than usual this time of year? First, this isn't unusual behavior. A child "erupting" as a major holiday or birthday gets closer is a fact of life for most families. Period.

Why? When a holiday or birthday nears, it puts extra demands and stress on adults who often overlook that children also become stressed! This is because they get less relaxed time at home, while increased expectations of good behavior are placed on them in stores, among people they may not know well, etc.

The following are several recommendations:

- ❖ **Be prepared.** Give up false hopes that tension will disappear this holiday season, and be prepared instead. Just as you're in the habit of preparing for a relative's quirky behavior, so should you be ready for a child's meltdown. Transitional times are crucial. Parents can ease a tense child by playing with him or her for 5 or 10 minutes before leaving for Grandma's. Elicit as much laughter as possible. This playtime is important – it'll help your child feel more connected to you and regain his/her sense that "life is good."

- ❖ **Recognize that children full of tension simply have to let it out.** Most children try to

do their best to cooperate and be flexible. Then they hit "the wall" and they can't go another minute without "exploding." Children full of tension simply have to let it out. They're "wired" to release their emotions when they just can't think any longer. As stated, parents set themselves up for disappointment every time they think the behavior won't happen again. It will! The good news is that when children are done letting go of these bad feelings, most youngsters will again be reasonable, thoughtful, and flexible. ■

Source: *Hand in Hand* (www.parentingbyconnection.org).

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