



## BEING AN UPSTANDER

### How we will help + why it matters

As we all know, bullying can have tragic consequences. In these next few weeks we will learn how to identify bullying, how we can be an “upstander” rather than a bystander; and what safe but helpful actions we can take when we witness bullying.

*“Strong people stand up from themselves. But the strongest people stand up for others.”*  
— Unknown

#### Talk more about it

It helps children to hear about bullying from you before they witness it. That way, they'll be more likely to share their concerns if they see a friend or classmate being bullied—or become a victim themselves.

- Is it easy to tell the difference between teasing and bullying? Why or why not?
- Do you ever see kids at your school being bullied? What did the bullying look like? How does it make you feel when you see it?
- How do you think you could help a friend or classmate who is being bullied?
- Would you tell a grownup if you were bullied? Why do you think some kids don't confide in an adult even if they're afraid of the person who bullied them?



#### Keep making a difference

Learning and practicing empathy and generosity when we're young can reduce bullying, decrease racism, inspire helping behavior, and promote tolerance.

- Play “What Would You Do?” at the dinner table. Offer challenging scenarios (e.g., your friend spills milk in the lunchroom and everyone is laughing at him, or you see one student intentionally trip another). Then talk about what you might say or do in each situation.
  - *Ask your child:* Is it hard to stand up for a friend who's being teased or bullied? Why or why not?
- Tell your children about the “bystander effect.” This is the phenomena where people find it difficult to intervene when others around them are not getting involved. Brainstorm why people might be hesitant to help out when they see bullying or teasing, or just notice someone who needs help.
  - *Ask your child:* When is it safe to intervene? When should you get an adult to help?



#### Read a book together

Research shows that reading stories can promote empathy, so make time for sharing books. Then reinforce the empathy ideas in each book by asking open-ended questions.

[\*The Invisible Boy\* by Tracy Ludwig](#) (ages 4-8). This charming story will speak to anyone who has ever felt invisible. It offers an easy-to-digest example of an upstander in action.

[\*Wonder\*](#) and [\*Auggie & Me: Three Wonder Stories\* by R. J. Palacio](#) (ages 9-12). The story of Auggie Pullman captured the attention of the world when *Wonder* was first published in 2012. Auggie's unusual face and charming personality inspires an entire community to discuss what compassion, empathy, and kindness means in practice. *Auggie & Me* tells the same story from three perspectives, including that of Julian, the bully who lets his fear of Auggie's difference rule his behavior. These books are essential reading for all who practice kindness.



This Kindness Marathon Family Follow-Up handout was created by the experts at Doing Good Together™. To view more of their resources for growing big-hearted families, visit <https://www.doinggoodtogether.org>.