



National parents' committee
for kindergartens

Bullying in kindergarten

How can home and kindergarten work together?



Barn og mobbing

Bullying in kindergarten takes place in many ways. Children are physically abused or are excluded from play, whether adults are present or not. When children are bullied, they miss out on good peer fellowship, play and learning.

The research report “The whole child – the whole way” [Norwegian: Hele barnet, hele løpet] shows that children, staff and parents all believe that bullying takes place in kindergarten.

The report confirms that play and friendship are the most important things for children in kindergarten, and in conversations with children it is evident that children’s experience of friendship and being included in play is decisive for their well-being in the kindergarten. Adults’ presence and interaction in the children’s play is therefore wholly necessary.

In the research report, bullying is defined thus:

“Bullying of children in kindergarten involves actions from adults and/or other children that negatively affect the child’s experience of belonging and being an important part of the kindergarten community.”



This underlines the principle that all adults have a responsibility to prevent a child from feeling they are being excluded. The kindergarten must help to ensure the child's well-being, joy of life, feeling of mastery and self-worth and prevent abuse and bullying.

FUB's aim is to ensure that the experiences of those that are subjected to bullying and children's experiences and emotions are taken seriously. The work on combating bullying must be an ongoing theme in the daily life of kindergartens.

The basis for later schooling and working life is formed in the kindergarten. Preventing bullying must therefore begin at an early stage so that children develop good attitudes and ways of interaction, both here and now and later in life.



**FUB is part of the
Partnership Against Bullying,...**

... which shall help to develop
leaders, kindergartens, skills and
knowledge.

What characterises bullying among younger children?

The figures from national and international research that between 6 and 12 percent of children in kindergarten are bullied, characteristics of bullying can be:

- **Exclusion from play and activities**
- **Teasing, being laughed at, being called hurtful names**
- **Personal items being broken or hidden away**
- **Hitting, pushing and hair pulling**



”Treating children with respect means taking their subjective experiences seriously by listening, understanding, confirming and passing on the knowledge from their standpoint.” (Lund, m.fl.2015),

What can the kindergarten and parents do?

Bullying often takes place outside the range of adults and can be difficult to discover. Therefore, it is necessary for adults to stay close and to observe children’s interaction and play, so that they know what is actually going on. Adults must have their “bullying glasses” on and take responsibility when abuse and exclusion occur. When bullying is discovered, adults must be clear and speak out in a friendly manner that bullying is not acceptable and introduce initiatives. For a child that experiences bullying, it is important to receive support and help there and then.

Adults can also hurt children with their words and actions. By putting labels on children, for example that a child is “whiny”, or by giving certain children a great deal of attention, staff and parents can actually stigmatize and discriminate against children. Staff in the kindergarten must have a commonly defined view of children, so that fundamental values such as respect and care for others characterise communication with the children. The adults around children must also have a conscious and reflective idea of themselves as role models and have a clear attitude in their interaction with other children, colleagues and parents.

Children themselves can help to create a good environment in their peer group. When they are involved in the process of creating a good community, the children – along with the adults – can speak about how everyone in the kindergarten should treat each other. The involvement of children is established in the Kindergarten Act Section 3, Children’s right to involvement: “The child’s viewpoints must be given emphasis, in line with the age and maturity of the child.”



”In their play and interaction with other children, children get the opportunity to express and feel that their world of experience counts, and in being able to share it with others around them it also creates a sense of community and attachment”
(Bae, 2005).

The adults must:

- Be together with the children so that bullying is discovered
- Be close enough to see and hear
- Be active, warm and involved
- Be concerned



In the kindergarten, personnel can converse with the children, to find out about their well-being and interaction within the group. Systematic work is required in order to promote respect and tolerance between children in kindergarten. Attitude-promoting work in the kindergarten can go a long way in preventing bullying and abuse between children, both during kindergarten hours and later in the child's life. Friendship between children is also an important premise for preventing bullying. Parents and staff have an extremely important task in facilitating and encouraging friendship between the children.

Cooperation between the home and kindergarten

It is extremely important that parents are involved in the work on preventing, revealing and stopping bullying in kindergarten. If parents discover bullying among children, they must report it to the kindergarten. It is very important that parents and staff speak and work together in order to end bullying and abuse and that a plan is created for how this can be prevented, revealed should it occur and stopped.

In addition to following up on a child's well-being, it is of great importance that parents show that they care about other's children and include them in their own everyday lives.

This can be done by greeting the other children in the kindergarten, speaking to them and inviting others' children to their own home. Parents can also help to promote a healthy environment in the kindergarten by speaking with the child positively about the kindergarten, the staff and the other children and their families.





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