

# BEST & STAR Newsletter

Monroe Township Public Schools

Fall 2005



Welcome to the 2005-2006 school year! There has been a lot of growth and changes at our schools recently. This newsletter was developed to introduce parents to some new elementary district programs and to offer additional information and support. The BEST and STAR programs described below will be available in mid-October to all in-district elementary students within the Monroe Township Public Schools who have been identified as possibly benefiting from participation. Two parent workshops will also be scheduled during the school year and are open to all parents of children within the Monroe Township Schools.

## BEST: Basic Elementary Skills Training

BEST is a 12-session social skills program that is available to all in-district elementary-level students within the Monroe Township Public Schools who have been identified as having friendship or social skills weaknesses that would benefit from direct skills instruction. The goal of the BEST groups is provide a safe place to connect with other students and to provide an opportunity for students to learn and practice a range of social abilities. It addresses the social and emotional learning of students by teaching them the skills essential to develop social and emotional competence. There will be a fall and a spring cycle of BEST. Sessions are 30 minutes each once per week during the school day.

## STAR: Strategic Training for Anger Reduction

STAR is an 8-session program that incorporates various components of effective emotional management and problem-solving programs (e.g., cognitive-behavioral interventions, social skills training, cognitive-relaxation coping skills). It is designed to assist students who have been identified as having difficulty controlling either the frequency or intensity of their emotions. There will be a fall and a spring cycle of STAR. Sessions are 30 minutes each once per week during the school day.



## Parent Workshop: Fostering Positive Social Skills with Your Children

This 1-session workshop for all parents and caregivers with students in the Monroe Township School District will be offered in the evening free-of-charge. It will introduce strategies and approaches to helping children learn and develop positive social skills (i.e., friendship skills, manners, getting along with others, responsibility, conversation skills) within the home environment and the community.



## Parent Workshop: Managing Challenging Behaviors in Children

This 1-session workshop for all parents and caregivers with students in the Monroe Township School District will be offered in the evening free-of-charge. It will introduce strategies and approaches to managing challenging behaviors in children at home including following directions, hyperactivity, defiant behavior, and aggression.

Any questions? Contact Teresa Herrero-Taylor, Ph.D. (Certified School Psychologist, BEST/STAR Group Facilitator) at (732)521-5200 or [ttaylor1@monroe.k12.nj.us](mailto:ttaylor1@monroe.k12.nj.us).

# 102 Ways to Praise Your Child

☺ Awesome! ☺ Great Work! ☺ Nice Try! ☺ That's Incredible! ☺ Outstanding! ☺ Far Out! ☺ Extraordinary! ☺ Fantastic! ☺ I'm So Proud of You! ☺ Great! ☺ I Can't Get Over It! ☺ Amazing Effort! ☺ Unbelievable Job! ☺ Wonderful! ☺ Marvelous! ☺ Cool! ☺ Excellent! ☺ Superb! ☺ Phenomenal! ☺ You're Special! ☺ You've Got It! ☺ Out of Sight! ☺ Way to Go! ☺ Thumbs Up! ☺ You're a Good Friend! ☺ First-Rate! ☺ You've Outdone Yourself! ☺ You Came Through! ☺ Terrific! ☺ You Tried Hard! ☺ Your Help Counts! ☺ You Did It! ☺ You're a Real Trooper! ☺ Bravo! ☺ Exceptional! ☺ You're a Great Helper! ☺ You're Unique! ☺ Wow! ☺ Breathtaking! ☺ Keep Up the Good Work! ☺ Your Practice Is Paying Off! ☺ You're Setting a Great Example for Others! ☺ Dynamite! ☺ I Knew You Could Do It! ☺ You Should Be Proud of Yourself! ☺ You're So Creative! ☺ Well Done! ☺ Sensational! ☺ Very Good! ☺ Super Job! ☺ Good for You! ☺ Take a Bow! ☺ Great Answer! ☺ A+ Work! ☺ You're Doing a lot Better! ☺ Thanks for Being Honest! ☺ Great Idea! ☺ Hooray for You! ☺ How Thoughtful of You! ☺ You're a Joy! ☺ You've Outdone Yourself! ☺ You Made the Difference! ☺ You Figured It Out! ☺ You're Amazing! ☺ You're On Your Way! ☺ You Deserve a High Five! ☺ You're Getting There! ☺ Thanks for Trying! ☺ You're Getting Better! ☺ You're a Big Help! ☺ You're the Best! ☺ Nice Progress! ☺ Neat! ☺ You've Got What It Takes! ☺ Out of this World! ☺ Alright! ☺ Beautiful! ☺ Very Impressive! ☺ Sharp! ☺ How Remarkable! ☺ You're #1! ☺ You're a Winner! ☺ Spectacular! ☺ You're a Great Listener! ☺ Thanks for Helping! ☺ You're a Champ! ☺ You're the Greatest! ☺ You're on Target! ☺ How Original! ☺ You're a Great Kid! ☺ Thanks for Caring! ☺ How Astonishing! ☺ You're a Pleasure! ☺ You're A-Okay! ☺ Very Brave! ☺ Hot dog! ☺ You're So Kind! ☺ Terrific! ☺ Tremendous! ☺ Splendid! ☺ I'm So Happy You're My Child! ☺ Magnificent! ☺



☪ Self-esteem development is addressed within the BEST groups.

# **Know Your ABC's**



## **(Activities that Benefit Children)**

These are suggested home activities that reinforce what we do at school. Children benefit when home and school families work collaboratively. In order to facilitate home-school collaboration, parents & teachers with children participating in BEST & STAR receive weekly handouts that include information about session topics and suggestions for reinforcing new skill development.

**A**sk your child about their school day.

**B**egin your child's day with a good breakfast.

**C**ongratulate your child for doing well.

**D**iscuss homework with your child.

**E**ncourage your child to read.

**F**ind a quiet place for your child to study.

**G**ive your child responsibility.

**H**ug your child- show your love.

**I**nclude your child in making simple family decisions.

**J**oin a library with your child and visit regularly.

**K**eep you child on a schedule that includes meals, exercise & sleep.

**L**imit TV & video viewing & select appropriate programs or movies with your child.

**M**onitor your child's use of computers and the internet.

**N**otice and discuss changes in your child's behavior.

**O**ffer to help your child organize school materials, but don't do their work.

**P**rovide your child with good role models.

**Q**uestion the activities your child shares with friends.

**R**espect your child's right to have opinions different from yours.

**S**hare a hobby or interest with your child.

**T**ake time to listen to your child.

**U**rge your child to say "NO!" to unwanted touching or invitations from strangers.

**V**isit places of interest with your child.

**W**ork with your child to establish rules of behavior.

**X**erox and save records or articles that may benefit your child.

**Y**ell encouraging words when your child is playing on a team- don't be negative.

**Z**ero in on some more good ideas for helping your child by getting to know school staff.

**Source: New Jersey Education Association Website**

# Bullying Prevention: What Can Parents Do?



“A bully is someone who directs physical, verbal or psychological aggression or harassment toward others, with the goal of gaining power over or dominating another individual.” Research has found that bullying is more prevalent in boys than girls, though this difference decreases when indirect aggression (i.e., verbal threats, social exclusion) is taken into consideration, which is more common among girls. Bullying behavior is not caused by one factor, but rather results from multiple influences in a child’s environment. It is the most common form of violence in our society with 15% to 30% of students being either bullies or victims.

✍ ***Be aware of changes in your child’s behavior or attitudes.*** Children who are bullied often give signals that something is wrong. They may become withdrawn or reluctant to go to school. They can experience physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, or problems sleeping. Speak to your child about their fears and concerns. Reassure them that you will work with the school to stop the bullying behavior.

✍ ***Let the school know if your child is being bullied.*** Talk to your child’s teacher and/or contact the school’s psychologist, counselor or social worker. Consider becoming involved in school programs to counteract bullying.

✍ ***Teach your child strategies to counter bullying.*** Useful strategies include verbally standing up for themselves, such as saying “I don’t like what you said/or did,” or “You can say whatever you want but it’s not true;” walking away from the bully; using humor (practice funny comebacks with your child); thinking of positive images or statements about themselves to bolster self-esteem; and getting help from an adult.

✍ ***Begin teaching good social skills early.*** The pattern of bullying can begin as young as age two. It is better the earlier children learn positive alternatives. Praise your child for appropriate social behaviors and model interactions that do not include bullying or aggression. Catch your child doing something good and offer positive reinforcement (i.e., praise, hugs, privileges/rewards). Encourage children to support their peers (e.g. asking a lonely classmate to eat lunch or sticking up for a child being teased.) Monitor the content of their television shows and video games.

✍ ***Foster positive social relationships and activities.*** Help your child identify peers with whom they get along. Suggest things they can do together (e.g., study, eat lunch, come home after school, go to the movies). Also, finding a variety of activities that your child enjoys and does well can help build self-esteem and confidence.

✍ ***Use alternatives to physical punishment.*** Children who are spanked too harshly or often learn that physical aggression is okay. Consistent alternatives, such as the removal of privileges or additional chores, serve as more effective consequences for inappropriate or difficult behavior.

✍ ***Stop any bullying behavior immediately.*** Supervising children is important. Intervene as bullying behavior is happening and have the child practice alternative behaviors.

**Source: National Association of School Psychologists (2002). *Bullying Prevention: What Schools and Parents Can Do.***

☛ **Dealing with teasing/bullying and developing general problem-solving skills are both addressed within the BEST & STAR groups.**