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Backpacks and Bullies. Is Your Child Prepared?

By Patricia Gatto

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by: **Patricia Gatto**

As the flurry of Back to School activities subside, parents are left to ponder more pressing issues than notebooks, backpacks, and sneakers.

Will my child succeed this year? Will his academic and social growth meet my hopes and expectations? Have I done everything I can to make this possible?

If you haven't prepared your child for the school bully, not only could your dreams and aspirations end in failure, but your child could fall victim to the violence, and suffer long-lasting repercussions.

Make no mistake; bullying is a form of violence. Experts estimate that almost 75% of today's youth will be involved in some aspect of bullying before they enter high school. And chances are, your child will be among the statistics.

Humiliation, fear, anxiety and depression are the constant companions of a child that is bullied. It can lead to harmful, shocking and unexpected behavior from an otherwise shy or timid child.

Victims feel ashamed and tend to view themselves as failures. They are more prone to stress related illnesses such as headaches and stomachaches. In extreme cases, the victim of a bully can experience severe depression and entertain thoughts of suicide.

Lack of safety is one of the top concerns of young people, and bullying is a real and constant threat. A child's emotional development is just as important, if not more so, than academic development. In fact, a safe, healthy emotional environment is essential to academic growth and success.

How do you prepare your child for the school bully?

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Become involved and make certain your school has active anti-bullying policies in place. Disciplinary guidelines, procedures for investigating and reporting incidences of bullying, adequate supervision, and an immediate plan of action to address reports of bullying are key elements to a successful program.

Teach your child to walk tall and proud and to maintain eye contact. Portraying a positive, self-confident stature will help your child cope in many areas.

Be certain to compliment your child and gently encourage changes that will bolster self-esteem. Use positive words that validate his or her rights as a person.

Use role-playing techniques to illustrate proper responses to negative situations. This will build strength, courage and provide your child with valuable emotional resources to pull from in times of trouble.

Help your child to identify role models, from sports heroes to everyday man. Discuss the obstacles and accomplishments they endured, focusing on the resilient human spirit.

Read stories together that inspire. Discuss how strength of character and perseverance can achieve a positive outcome without resorting to violence or force.

Encourage your child to keep a diary or journal, write poetry or songs. Writing provides a safe outlet for your child and creativity and self-expression are helpful tools used to work through negative issues.

If your child has difficulties making or maintaining friends, intervene – friendships are a protection against bullying. Identify children that might have things in common with your child and arrange a visit.

Encourage your child to join activities both in and out of school that will result in friendships while building strength and confidence.

But most important, don't diminish your child's concern over a classmate's taunting and teasing, it could very well lead to damaging repercussions. Instead, prepare your child for the bully by empowering him with confidence and self-esteem through your words, actions and embrace.

Patricia Gatto and John De Angelis are the authors of MILTON'S DILEMMA, the tale of a lonely boy's magical journey to friendship and self-acceptance. As advocates for literacy and children's rights, the authors speak at schools and community events to foster awareness and provide children with a safe and healthy learning environment. For more information, please visit Joyful Productions at

Luggage For Kids

By Jerry Smith

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Traveling with children is never easy and sometimes it's not even fun. There is help on the way to alleviate this problem. Luggage makers have created kid-sized luggage in bright colors and unique designs.

Like adult luggage kid luggage has wheels. Some brands of kids luggage have wheels that are gender based. Your children will feel grown-up pulling their own bags. Besides watching kids pull their luggage is cute.

Included in kids luggage are backpacks with animals that 'hug' your child. Backpacks and other luggage for kids are bright colors, cartoon characters, sports themes, flowers, dance, music, and space. Luggage can be personalized with their names. There are bags for boys in the shapes of cars.

Styles of luggage for kids include duffel bags, sport bags, backpacks with pockets for a radio or CD player. There are tote bags that will hold your child's toys and/or books. Other themes are flowers, animals, and camouflage design.

Kids luggage are sized for kids and designed for their needs. The kids luggage is also a way to ease your burden as they have their own carry on bag. Having kids use their own luggage can help them to care for their things and allows them to have fun as well.

Many backpacks and other luggage for both adults and kids have holders for bottles and have waterproof snack pouches. There is also an element of convenience with kids luggage. Be creative and have fun traveling with your child or children.

Jerry Smith can help you. Find out how thousands of people have been helped with the advice and information. Visit this link for details:

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