

CLIMB Theatre, Inc. presents
a discussion and activity guide for...

BACK-UP DOG & THE BULLY

Play by L.B. Hamilton
Discussion and activity guide by James Rone

“When you have a bully problem...it’s good to have a
friend around to back you up!”
--Back-Up Dog

**A guide for preparing your students to see the play and for
extending the play through activities and discussions**

BACK-UP DOG & THE BULLY

A play by CLIMB Theatre, Inc.

**“When you’ve got a bully after you, just stand up straight, look the bully in the eye and speak with a strong voice. Got it?”
—Back Up Dog**

About the play

Objectives of the play:

- To define bullying including various types of bullying behavior;
- To examine why bullying occurs;
- To define the two types of victims bullies tend to target: passive and provocative;
- To give victims tools and strategies to use when they are being bullied;
- To introduce the CALM strategy (Cool down, Assert yourself, Look at the bully straight in the eye, Mean it);
- To motivate bystanders to take action to create an environment in which bullying is not tolerated;
- To reinforce the concept that caring for fellow students is beneficial to stopping bullying
- To demonstrate friendship skills.

Synopsis of the play:

Discovery Elementary School’s playground is a real zoo sometimes. With lions, zebras, and a talking “super pup in training,” this playground may seem a little out of the ordinary, but the story set there is one that’s common to most elementary school students.

“Super-Pup in Training” Back Up Dog (you can call her BUD) has arrived on the scene only to witness an all-too-common incident of bullying. Tye, a Discovery Elementary student, is inadvertently wearing a target on his back that only bullies can see, and BUD is determined to help him get rid of it.

As BUD and Tye work on putting together a plan to stop the bullies, they encounter Tye’s brother and sister Dante and Courtney, who offer conflicting advice on how to deal with bullies. They also meet David, who invites bullies by provoking them, as well as Alex and Marya, two bullies with two very different attitudes. Soon BUD and Tye realize that it will take more than the two of them to stop the bullying, they

will need the help of the whole school. Will they succeed? That depends on what your students do after the performance.

Back-Up Dog and the Bully relies heavily upon the expertise of your students. Please encourage your students to raise their hands and ask questions as the occasions arise within the performance.

About this resource guide

This resource guide is designed to help you prepare your students for seeing CLIMB Theatre's production of *Back-Up Dog and the Bully* and to provide activities that can reinforce and extend the messages in the play. You will notice that the major purposes of the play are to help a victim of bullying know how to remove the "target" from her/his back and to activate the "passive bystander."

This resource guide provides questions for discussion/reflection and activities to help enhance these discussions. Any statements in this guide designed for you to read to your class are printed in *italics*.

Other Opportunities

For an additional cost, schools may elect to host follow-up classes led by CLIMB actor-educators. In these classes, a pair of actor-educators travel to each individual classroom to examine the concepts of the play in even greater depth. The actor-educators will invite the students to do some acting and through the story they tell together the students will help one of the characters with his/her bullying problem. The class covers all of the following:

- Body language, by allowing students to demonstrate a confident stance
- Strong voice and eye contact, by teaching students a song, a printed copy of which will be left with the teacher;
- Being an active bystander, by role-playing a bullying situation in which the bystander has the most power to stop the bully.

Before the play

Please take some time to prepare your students for seeing the play *Back-Up Dog and Bully* by trying some of the following activities and reviewing the vocabulary. Thanks!

Vocabulary:

- Bully** Anyone who is cruel to other kids again and again because those kids can't or won't stand up for themselves
- Helper** Someone who backs up a bully by joining in or laughing at what the bully does
- Target** Something that people aim for. Bullies think of you as a target when you slump, speak quietly, and don't look the bully in the eye
- Passive** A way of acting that shows that you think that other people's thoughts and feelings are more important than yours
- Compliment** Something nice that you can say about someone else. Like, "I like the picture on your lunchbox."
- Disruptive** A way of acting that upsets things and people
- Tattling** Telling a grown-up you trust about something to get another kid in trouble
- Reporting** Telling a grown-up you trust about something to keep yourself safe.
- Bystander** A person who is around when something happens to someone else. When you're talking about bullies, a bystander is someone who is doing nothing to help either the bully or the person being bullied.

Activity: Yellow Hat, Green Hat

1. **Say to your class,** *How many of you have played Simon Says before? Well, today's game is a lot like Simon Says. I need two volunteers to come up and help me.*
2. **Give each volunteer a hat.** Give a yellow hat, or some other yellow clothing item to one student; and a green hat, or some other green clothing item, to the other student.
3. **Say to your class,** *In this game, your job is to copy the person who is wearing the yellow hat. In a moment, I will ask both students to start doing some big physical actions. So, if the person wearing the yellow hat is doing jumping jacks, then you all do jumping jacks. If the person wearing the yellow hat is standing still, you all stand still. From time to time, our two volunteers will turn their backs to you and will mix around the hats. When they turn around, someone different may be wearing the yellow hat. You must still follow the person with the yellow hat*
4. **Say to your class,** *If you accidentally do something that the green hat person is doing, I'm not going to call you out. And nobody else can call you out either. Only you can call yourselves out. You are your own boss. If someone else starts to call you out, I will call them out. Let's play a practice round.*
 - Play a practice round, and then tell the students that they can begin eliminating themselves if they make a mistake.
 - Be sure to pay attention to whether other kids are calling each other out. If you notice that kids who do make mistakes aren't calling themselves out, simply restate your expectation that the students call themselves out.
 - Be sure to give praise to kids who call themselves out first. The game has ended when only one student is left standing or when the game has been played for a good amount of time.
 - Give a round of applause to everyone still standing and then a round of applause to everyone sitting down.
 - **Ask your students,** *Why do you suppose we gave a round of applause to kids who are still standing (they listened, followed directions, etc.) Why do you suppose we clapped for the kids who were sitting down (they were their own bosses, they took responsibility for their own actions).*

This activity can lead into a discussion of taking responsibility for your own actions. One problem with bullying is that bullies like to think of themselves as the bosses of people other than themselves. It is up to other kids to decide if they will be their own bosses, or simply fall in line with the bully.

Activity: Clubs

1. **Seat your students in a circle.** Think of an attribute that you share with several of your students. For example, white shoes or dark hair or a name that starts with the same letter.
2. **Say to your class, *I have a club. I'm going to pick some people out, and they are members of my club. If you are picked, you can come and stand in the center of the circle with me.*** Pick the students that share the common attribute with you and have them stand with you in the center. Have the students try to guess what everyone in the "club" has in common.
3. **Say to your class, *That's right, it's the white shoes club.*** Do another demonstration.
 - Then pick a student to come to the center, think of a "club" and pick people to be members before the class guesses what the club is. If you like, you can have the student whisper the name of the club in your ear before they begin to ensure that it is a club that has other people in it, or is appropriate for the game.
 - Finish the game by stepping into the center again and telling the students to simply stand if they are picked for the next club. One by one, pick each and every student so every student is standing.
 - **Ask your students** for suggestions as to the name of this big club (i.e. *What do all of us have in common?*). Accept all suggestions that apply. *This is the Human Beings Club, but it's also the First Graders Club and Recess Goers club and the Fun Club and the Lunch Eaters Club. There are a lot of things that we have in common and a lot of things that are different among us.*

This activity can lead into an discussion that illustrates the point that bullies don't bully people who are different, they bully people who they think they can push around.

Difference is just a justification, we are all different!

After the Play

Questions for Discussion:

Please spend a few minutes discussing the following questions after seeing the play. You may want to start out the discussion with a question or two like those in bold type below.

- ***If you were going to give the play a name other than Back-Up Dog and the Bully, what would you call it?***
- ***What did you like best about the play?***
- ***What were you thinking about or feeling as you left the play?***
- *How will Tye's life at school be different if he remembers everything Back-Up Dog taught him?*
- *How will David's life at school be different if he remembers everything Back-Up Dog taught him?*
- *Back-Up Dog taught Tye three steps to standing up to bullies. Who can remember one? (Pull all three)*
- *What could you do if you notice another kid being bullied?*
- *Why don't more bystanders stand up to bullies?*
- *Why do you think bullies act the way they do?*
- *How many of you are willing to make a promise to stop bullying? What can we do to stop it from happening?*

Activity: Sleepwalker

1. **Tell your students** to stand in a circle and to close their eyes. While walking around the room checking for “peeking” tell them that you will be picking one person to be the “sleepwalker” by tapping one person on the shoulder. The sleepwalker has the power to send people to sleep by simply scrunching her/his nose at them.
2. **Tell your students** *If someone scrunches her/his nose at you, you must fall asleep on the spot by carefully lying down on the floor.*
3. **Tell your students** *If, during the game, you think you know who the sleepwalker is, you can say, “Time out.” At that point, everyone must close her/his eyes except the person who is guessing who the sleepwalker is. You guess by pointing, silently, to who you think it is. If you are right, you win. If you are wrong, you must fall asleep.*
 - Begin the game. Several students may guess incorrectly before the sleepwalker is caught. The sleepwalker may not be caught at all. If, in every round, the sleepwalker is guessed right away, brainstorm with the group what the sleepwalker might do to avoid getting caught so quickly.
 - If the sleepwalker was caught, ask the students what might have happened if the “guesser” hadn’t stopped the sleepwalker. Bullies are a lot like sleepwalkers because they are always trying to think about how they can get away with giving other kids a hard time.
 - **Ask your students** *What could happen to you if you notice someone bullying another kid and you don’t do anything about it? This might be an excellent opportunity for a discussion about the difference between “tattling” and “reporting.”*

Activity: Emotion Detective

1. **Ask your students** *If you can tell me what an emotion is, raise your hand. If you can tell me what a detective is, raise your hand. Who can give me an example of a famous detective?*
2. **Tell your students** *There is a famous detective right here in this room. But this is no ordinary detective. This is an Emotion Detective. Emotion Detectives can tell how other people are feeling simply by reading their body language. Who would like to be our famous detective?*
3. **Bring a student up to the front of the room and say to your students,** *Little did you know, _____ is a famous detective. He has been on the Emotion Detective Task Force for about 27 years now, and has managed to solve over five million cases. Just to show off for all of you today, he is going to tell us how every single person in this room is feeling. Trouble is, he can't do that right now, as there are too many different emotions in the room, and it would just take too long. Instead, we are going to send _____ out of the room in a moment, and when he is gone, we are going to agree upon an emotion that we are going to pretend to have. When he comes back in the room, we are going to stand and move as though we have that emotion. For example, if we are pretending to be happy, we might move like this:*
Demonstrate moving as though you are happy. *And if we are pretending to be sad, we might move like this: Demonstrate. _____ is going to give us three things to do, like walking, shaking hands or doing a little dance, and we have to do each of those actions as though we have the emotion we agreed upon. Let's give it a try.*
 - **Send the Emotion Detective out of the room and brainstorm with the rest of the class to decide upon an emotion.** Bring the Emotion Detective back in the room and reiterate the instructions to the class and the detective. Tell the class not to talk unless instructed to do so by the detective. Be sure that the detective is having the class do three activities before making her/his first guess.

Once the activity is over, ask the detective how he/she knew what the emotion was. When they cite body language, lead the class in a discussion of what body language is, and how it can be used to tell how people feel.

Tell your students *Bullies use body language to find their targets. How? Some friends tease each other and because they both think it's funny, it isn't bullying. Bystanders can look at body language to tell whether bullying or friendly teasing is happening.*

Activity: The Back-Up Bunch

- **Ask your students** to raise their hands if they have ever seen bullying happening at school. Tell them that they have been chosen as the school's new "Back-Up Bunch" Their job is to stop bullying in their school. Their first job will be to come up with a list of promises of actions they can take to stop bullying.

1. The First Back Up Bunch Meeting

- Quickly pick up a gavel and add another costume piece that indicates that you, the teacher, are now the leader of the First Annual Back-Up Bunch Meeting. After the guidelines have been set, bang the gavel and ask for the first promise.
- If a Back-Up Buddy has an idea, he/she may raise his/her hand and will be called upon. The idea will be written on the board. Once several ideas for "promises" have been written on the board, hold an initial vote.
- If you think it appropriate to your class, hold a mini-debate over each promise, allow students to stand and give short speeches either for or against each promise on the board. Hold a final vote, and adopt the agreed-upon promises.

2. Getting the Word Out

- Now that the promises have been written, it is the Back-Up Bunch's job to let the rest of the school know about them. Brainstorm about ways to let the school know about the Back-Up Bunch and its mission (to stop bullying).
- Suggestions: posters, announcements, daily reminders over the intercom, etc. Have the students brainstorm for a slogan, a mascot, a logo, a flag, and start designing posters, etc.

3. The Principal Box

- Before this activity, discuss with the principal the possibility of making a "Principal Box," in which concerned students and Back-Up Buddies can write concerns about bullying and other issues and drop them in a box that the principal will empty and read daily.
- If the principal agrees, speak with other teachers of grades K-2 and pick a box that could be used for this purpose. Each class is responsible of the decoration of one side of the box each.
- Lead a discussion about the box and what it can be used for.

Resources

Books, Articles

“Bully: Small Word, Big Problem.” published by the MN Department of Children, Families, and Learning. (available as a PDF file online at <http://cfl.state.mn.us>)

The Bully Free Classroom: Over 100 Tips and Strategies for Teachers K-8. Allan L. Beane. published by Freespirit Publishing.

Bully-Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools. (there is also a version available for middle schools) published by Sopris West Publishers.

Facing the Schoolyard Bully. Kim Zarzour. published by Firefly Books.

Bullies and Victims: Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield. Suellen Fried and Paula Fried. published by M. Evans and Company, Inc.

The Bully Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Principals, Teachers, and Counselors. (designed for middle school environments) John H. Hoover and Ronald Oliver. published by the National Educational Service.

Internet Sites

www.stopbullyingnow.net

large internet resource

<http://no-bully.com>

the Colorado Anti-Bullying Project

www.childline.org.uk/factsheets/bullying.htm

information about bullying for kids

www.kidshealth.org

search engine for information.
Type *bullying*” in the search box
to find many great articles

www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/ssp/bullymanual.htm

CA manual for developing an anti-bully action plan

www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/ten-bully.htm

www.successunlimited.co.uk/bullycide

myths, misperceptions, and other good information