



## Educator Guide: Zink's Story

### **Recommended for Grades:**

5<sup>th</sup>

### **Time:**

3 minutes

### **National Health Education Standards:**

This lesson aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Use functional health information to support health and well-being of self and others.
- Standard 7: Demonstrate practices and behaviors to support health and well-being of self and others.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: [shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org).

### **Learning Objectives:**

After completing Zink's Story students will be able to:

1. Explain why Zink the Zebra was treated differently than the other zebras.
2. Identify at least one thing they could do to help if they see someone being bullied.

### **Activity Description:**

Zink's Story introduces students to the character Zink and what she stands for. The Zink character was created by a young girl named Kelly who was treated differently by her peers while going through cancer treatment. Later in this guide you will find a letter from Kelly's father sharing her journey.



## Pre and Post-test Questions:

Use the following questions with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool, etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. Why is Zink the Zebra treated differently?
  - a. Because she is mean to the other zebras
  - b. Because she doesn't have a mom
  - c. **Because she looks different**
2. What is one thing you can do to help if you see someone being bullied?
  - a. **Stand up for them with your words.**
  - b. Leave the situation quickly.
  - c. Watch what's going on.

## Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself and your students as you complete Zink's Story. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs.

- Acceptance – approving of and including someone even if they are different from you
- Bullying – unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is usually repeated over time
- Compassion – a feeling of wanting to help someone who is suffering
- Physical differences – differences in physical characteristics of people that can be seen, such as height, weight, hair color, eye color, body shape, etc.
- Respect – treating others how you would like to be treated, and valuing their opinions, feelings and boundaries
- Trusted adult – a grown-up at home, school or other safe place that you can go to for help
- Understanding – a state of cooperative or mutually tolerant relations between people



# Zink's Story: Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Complete this worksheet as you work through Zink's Story.

1. What four things does Zink stand for?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why is Zink treated differently by the other zebras?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are three ways you can help a person being bullied?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_



# Zink's Story: Worksheet Answer Key

1. What four things does Zink stand for?

- a. Understanding
- b. Respect
- c. Compassion
- d. Acceptance

2. Why is Zink treated differently by the other zebras?

Zink has spots instead of stripes so she looks different and the other zebras think she is weird.

3. What are three ways you can help a person being bullied?

- a. Stand up for the person with your words.
- b. Ask the person to join your group of friends.
- c. Find a trusted adult to help.

# Supplemental Activity: Similarities and Differences

## Objectives:

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Recognize that everyone is different, but that each student has things in common with at least one other student.

## Materials Needed:

- None

## Time Required:

15 minutes

## Instructions:

In this activity students will learn about similarities and differences in their classmates. It is important for students to recognize and appreciate that everyone is different. Read each statement aloud and have students stand if the statement holds true for them. If the statement does not hold true for them, they should stay seated.

1. Please stand if you live in the city of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Please stand if you've ever lived outside of this state.
3. Please stand if you have a pet.
4. Please stand if you have a sibling.
5. Please stand if you have other relatives living with you. For example, an aunt, grandfather, etc.
6. Please stand if you are the oldest child in your family.
7. Please stand if you enjoy reading.
8. Please stand if you enjoy dancing.
9. Please stand if you are having a good day today.
10. Please stand if you get at least 9 hours of sleep most nights.



11. Please stand if your favorite season is winter.
12. Please stand if you have allergies.
13. Please stand if you like playing sports.
14. Please stand if you enjoy listening to music.
15. Please stand if you eat breakfast every day.
16. Please stand if your favorite food is pizza.
17. Please stand if your favorite subject is math.
18. Please stand if you or your family speaks a language other than English.
19. Please stand if you have brown hair.
20. Please stand if you have green eyes.
21. Please stand if you've ever seen someone being bullied.

After completing the activity, discuss with students the fact that very few statements held true for everyone in the class. Everyone comes from different families, has different interests and looks different. This is a good thing. However, oftentimes people are bullied simply because they are different in some way. It is important to acknowledge and accept our differences.

If time permits, pair students up. Ask each student to talk with his or her partner and figure out at least one thing that they have in common and at least one thing that makes them different. Encourage students to delve deeper than physical similarities and differences. Ask for volunteers to share what they discovered with the class.

# Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.



# Effects of Bullying

## Bullying Hurts Everyone

Children who are bullied may:

- Feel insecure
- Avoid school
- Have trouble learning

As they grow up, children who have been bullied may:

- Be depressed
- Have low self-esteem
- Have health problems
- Get poor grades
- Think about killing themselves

Those who have observed bullying may feel:

- Afraid
- Powerless to help
- Guilty for not helping
- Pressure to join in

Children who bully are more likely to:

- Get into fights
- Damage property
- Drop out of school

Children who bully often get involved in other behaviors like:

- Breaking rules
- Stealing
- Carrying a weapon
- Drinking alcohol and smoking at young ages

*Repurposed from <http://www.stopbullying.gov> and <http://www.olweus.org/public/effects-bullying.page>*





# How to Tell if Your Child May Be Involved in Bullying

## What Is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone hurts someone else on purpose. A lot of the time it happens more than once. Some things to know about bullying are:

- **There is a difference in power:** Kids who bully use their power to control or hurt someone's body or feelings. Their power might be strength or being more popular than others.
- **It is repeated:** Most of the time bullying happens more than once.
- **It is done on purpose:** Bullying happens when someone means to do it. If a child doesn't mean to bump into another child in the hall, that is not bullying.

Bullying includes actions like:

- Making threats
- Spreading rumors
- Hurting someone
- Not letting someone join a group

Bullying is learned, and respect must also be learned. Children copy what they see other children and adults doing. Try to set a good example.

## Signs Your Child Is Being Bullied

Look for changes in your child. Some children who are bullied may not show warning signs. Some signs that bullying might be a problem are:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises
- Lost or ruined clothes, books, school work, art or toys
- Headaches or stomachaches, feeling sick or faking illness to avoid school
- Changes in eating, like skipping meals or eating a lot
- Lower grades, loss of interest in school or not wanting to go to school
- Loss of friends or being left out
- More angry words or actions after seeing certain classmates or coming home from school
- Nervous behaviors like chewing nails or pulling out hair
- Becoming more withdrawn or fearful



## Why Don't Kids Ask for Help?

Many times, kids don't tell an adult that someone is hurting or scaring them. Kids don't tell adults for many reasons:

- Bullying can make a child feel helpless.
- They might not want to be seen as a tattletale.
- They may be afraid of the child who bullied them.
- They may be afraid they will get in trouble.
- They may fear losing friends.

## How Can You Find Out if Your Child Is Being Bullied?

Ask your child:

- Is something or someone scaring you or making you upset?
- Are you ever afraid to go to school? Why?
- Does anyone make you sad at school? Why?

## What Can You Do to Get Your Child Help?

If you think your child needs help, don't ignore the problem. To deal with bullying at school, work with teachers and other school staff.

Always start with the classroom teacher. If the problem continues, the next step is to go to other administrators (counselor, principal or superintendent). If the bullying is happening outside of school, talk with the adult in charge. This may be a coach, club advisor or group leader.

## Signs a Child May Be Bullying Others

A child may be bullying others if they:

- Are being bullied by someone at home, in the neighborhood or at school
- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Blame others for their problems and make excuses for their actions
- Test limits or break rules
- Need to control others and situations



## How to Tell if Your Child Is Showing Bullying Behaviors

You can:

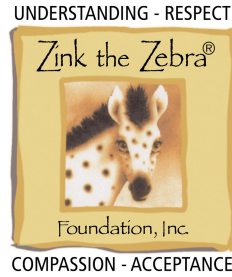
- Attend parent teacher meetings.
- Ask your child how school is going.
- Ask your child about their friends.
- Watch your child play with others.

## If Your Child Needs to Talk to Someone

If your child is a victim or is showing bullying behaviors, they may need to talk to someone. Start with your child's school and see what resources they have. Check with your health care providers to see if they can share where you can find help.

*Repurposed from <http://www.stopbullying.gov>. More information for parents and caregivers, children and educators may be found at this site.*





“It all started with a spot.”

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your commitment to improving the lives of your students. What you do every day both in and out of the classroom makes a difference in the lives of your students and their families.



Kelly Weil, Age 11

We are delighted to learn of your interest in implementing this innovative e-learning content and are grateful for your partnership in taking an active role to reduce bullying. As an introduction to this topic, and on behalf of Children's Wisconsin, I am pleased to introduce you to the “Zink the Zebra” story, and most significantly, a message that resonates with our children.

“Zink the Zebra” was written by my 11-year-old daughter, Kelly Weil (1982-1993) who died of cancer. As a result of her experiences Kelly wrote about a zebra named Zink, who has spots instead of stripes.

Although Kelly had numerous challenges with her health, these spots represent the challenges that she faced while battling cancer as a child. Because she was perceived by her peers as different, Kelly experienced the pain associated with the withdrawal of friendships. She was teased based on misconceptions that others had about her physical differences and was ignored by other students, all while she was being treated for cancer. These are the very same behaviors that today we call bullying. Included in Children's Wisconsin Bullying Prevention content is the story that Kelly wrote.

Kelly lost her battle with cancer, but the Zink the Zebra Foundation was formed with a commitment to ensure that Kelly's story, and that of a brave little zebra who learned to appreciate her differences, lives on. For many years, children have heard Zink's important messages and have received skills training and advice about bullying and how to safely intervene when it occurs. With Children's Wisconsin, we have built on the success of the “Zink the Zebra” story for elementary school-aged children by creating this Bullying Prevention e-learning content for kindergarten through twelfth grade students.

On behalf of Zink the Zebra Foundation, and my daughter Kelly, I would like to thank each and every one of you who are making a difference in your students' lives by implementing this content. Every student deserves the opportunity to succeed, grow and develop in a safe, bully-free environment with understanding, compassion, acceptance and respect.

Sincerely,

Les Weil  
Zink the Zebra Foundation



# Transcripts

## Slide 1

Welcome to Zink's story. This is Zink the Zebra. She stands for understanding, respect, compassion and acceptance. She is here to spread the word that regardless of interests, education, cultural background, economic status, level of ability or physical differences, everyone wants to feel accepted.

## Slide 2

In case you haven't noticed...she has spots instead of stripes. Sometimes she is treated differently because she looks different. Other zebras think she's weird. But her parents always tell her "Whatever you are is what you are. We are all different and being different makes you special." And you know what? They're right!

## Slide 3

This story was written by Kelly, a girl around your age, who was being bullied for being different. Her peers didn't understand her physical differences and instead of showing her respect, compassion and acceptance they chose to bully her.

## Slide 4

We should be celebrating our differences because all of us are different in some way. That's what makes each of us unique! So instead of bullying someone because they're different, ask questions instead. If someone in your class celebrates a different holiday than you, ask them about it. Or if the new girl at school has an accent, ask her where she's from.

Sometimes kids are bullied because they are seen as not being "normal". But really, what is normal? Just because your family acts or looks a certain way doesn't mean that's what's normal. We need to remember that we're all human. And that's the one thing we have in common with everyone around us.

## Slide 5

If you see someone being bullied for something that makes them different, step in and help them. That could mean:

- Standing up for them with your words,
- Asking them to join your group, which gets them out of the bullying situation,
- Or finding an adult to help.

Doing any of these things will help the person feel more understood, respected and accepted.



Slide 6

So the next time you see someone who looks different than you, try not to judge them. Instead, take some time to get to know them. You won't regret it.

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following individuals for providing your expertise and guidance during the development of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade Bullying Prevention lessons and activities:

Kerri Martinez Najera, Wisconsin Heights School District  
Michael Solheim, Oregon School District  
Annette Perleberg, Green Bay Public Schools  
Ashley Voterro, School Counselor, Milwaukee Public Schools  
Kerry Zdrojewski, Stone Bank School District

A special thank you to Les Weil – Zink the Zebra Foundation for providing dedication, passion and leadership to make the creation of our Bullying Prevention lessons and activities possible.





Contact us:

**Children's Wisconsin  
E-Learning Center**

(866) 228-5670

[healthykids@childrenswi.org](mailto:healthykids@childrenswi.org)

