

Educator guide: “Zink the Zebra” story

Recommended for grades: 3rd grade

Time: 2 minutes

National Health Education Standards:

This activity aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

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

For more information on the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: shapeamerica.org.

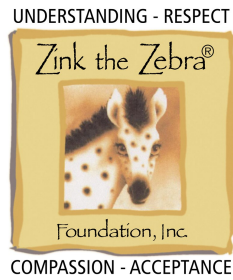
Activity description:

The “Zink the Zebra” story was written by a young girl named Kelly Weil. Zink lives in the Lipis Jungle with her parents and brother. She has spots instead of stripes, resulting in her being treated differently than other zebras. The “Zink the Zebra” story can be used as a starting point for learning about differences. On the next page is a letter from Les Weil, Kelly Weil’s father.

Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference as you complete the “Zink the Zebra” story. You may choose to use the list in any way that fits your needs.

- Different – not the same
- Jungle – a tropical area with lots of plants growing on the ground in between taller plants and trees
- Tale – a story
- Zebra – an African wild mammal similar to a horse with black and white stripes



“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



Supplemental activity: Just kidding

Objectives:

At the end of this activity students will be able to:

1. Identify bullying behaviors.
2. Recognize that everyone is different.
3. List at least two ways to deal with bullying.

Materials needed:

- “Just Kidding” by Trudy Ludwig
- Other books about bullying (optional)

Time required:

- 20 minutes

Instructions:

Show students the cover of “Just Kidding”. Both boys seem similar, but we find out that they are different. Sometimes we think we are only different from others based on our looks, but there are many differences that we can’t see. Discuss differences we can’t see with students.

Read “Just Kidding” to your students. After reading the book, discuss the questions below.

- Can friends sometimes tease each other?
- When does teasing become bullying?
- What could you say to a friend who was teasing you and hurt your feelings?
- What would you say if your friend told you that your teasing hurt their feelings?
- Do you know who you could talk to if you were having a problem similar to DJ’s?

If time allows, assign students another book about bullying. See the Recommended reading list for suggestions of other age-appropriate books on the topic. Have students write a short book report to share with the class.

Handouts

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



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, schoolwork, 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.



Recommended reading list

These books can be read aloud or read alone to help students relate to characters in different bullying situations. You may encourage students to check out one of these from the school library to bring home and read with their families. Grade levels are suggested, though the titles work in many levels.

Kindergarten (4 and 5 yr. olds)

- “A Duck So Small” by A.H. Benjamin and Elizabeth Holstien
- “Bootsie Barker Bites” by Barbara Bottner and Peggy Rathmann
- “Hugo and the Bullying Frogs” by Francesca Simon and Caroline Church
- “We Can Get Along: A Child’s Book of Choices” by Lauren Murphy Payne

First grade

- “Stop Picking On Me” by Pat Thomas
- “Hooway For Wodney Wat” by Helen Lester and Lynn Munsinger
- “Jungle Bullies” by Steven Kroll and Vincent Nguyen
- “Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon” by Patty Lovell and David Catrow
- “The Recess Queen” by Alexis O’Neill and Laura Huliska-Beith

Second grade

- “The Berenstain Bears and the Bully” by Stan and Jan Berenstain
- “My Mouth is a Volcano” by Julia Cook and Carrie Hartman
- “Chester Raccoon and the Big Bad Bully” by Audrey Penn
- “The Ant Bully” by John Nickle
- “Nobody Knows What to Do” by Becky Ray McCain and Todd Leonardo

Third grade

- “Kids Talk About Bullying” by Carrie Finn and Amy B. Muehlenhardt
- “Bye-Bye, Bully!” by J.S. Jackson and R. W. Alley
- “Bully” by Judith Caseley
- “Pinky and Rex and the Bully” by James Howe and Melissa Sweet
- “My Secret Bully” by Trudy Ludwig and Abigail Marble



“Zink the Zebra” story transcript

Screen 1

Zink the Zebra, a special tale.

Screen 2

Once upon a time, a zebra named Zink lived in the Lipis Jungle with her mother, her father and her brother Fink.

Screen 3

Zink was a normal zebra in every way. She had four legs, two ears, one nose, one mouth, one tail ... and spots.

Screen 4

All the other zebras - even her mother, father and brother - had stripes.

Because Zink had spots, the other zebras wouldn't play with her.

Because the other zebras had stripes, they thought Zink looked odd.

Screen 5

One day Fink said to Zink, "Why do you have spots? They're so weird."

Zink said to Fink, "Why do you have stripes? They're so weird."

Screen 6

Zink and Fink couldn't decide who was right.

No one in the Lipis Jungle seemed to have the answer.

Screen 7

Finally Zink and Fink went home to ask their parents.

"Which one of us is weird?" they asked.

"Neither of you," their parents said.

"Whatever you are is what you are," said their mother.

Screen 8

"We're all different," said their father.

"Being different makes you special."

Screen 9

Then everyone nuzzled...

Screen 10

and Zink and Fink went out to play.

Screen 11

The end.

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Les Weil – Zink the Zebra Foundation

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