



BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU
BARRA
RACIE J

GB BULLY PREVENTION

PARENTS GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENT

Preface	3
Chapter 1 - Bullying: Why should I care?	4
Chapter 2 - Is my child being bullied?	11
Chapter 3 - Empowering Children through Jiu-Jitsu	18
Chapter 4 - The Gracie Barra Bully Prevention Program	23



PREFACE

Bullying is more prevalent than ever in our society. As Martial Arts instructors with over 20 years of experience, we have witnessed many kids walk into our schools as victims of bullying.

Many parents seek Martial Arts schools for their kids as soon as they realize that bullying is a complex situation and many times when it has been an ongoing problem.

When it comes to Bullying, self-defense techniques are only the tip of the iceberg, in this book you will learn that the confidence and discipline a child gets from training in the martial arts will not only help him/her put an end to bullying but also better prepare them for many other difficult situation in life.

As great of a personal development program as Jiu-Jitsu is, many times the scars left by bullying are difficult to forget. In this book, parents will learn to recognize and guide their children on how to deal with bullying and utilize Jiu-Jitsu to turn it into a positive experience.

My hope is that the information contained here becomes a valuable asset in your child's growth.

For our healthy, strong and successful children,

Respectfully,

Gracie Barra Team

Chapter 1

Bullying: Why should I care?

It seems just about as old as time and unfortunately not going away any time soon – **bullying**. Defined by the organization stopbullying.gov under the guidance of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, bullying is *unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.*

Bullying: A real danger for children

As parents we hope that our children are fully insulated from the negative effects that bullying leaves on the lives of children, but we see more and more that our hopes might not get us very far. Practically every child is at risk for becoming the victim of a bully, a bystander to the bullying, or the one who demonstrates the bullying behavior.

- The National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics show that almost 30% of kids in grades 6-12 experience bullying.
- A whopping 90% of students in grades 4 through 8 report having been bullied at least once in a school year.
- That translates into more than 3 million students being the victims of bullying each year.
- Almost 20% of American students report that they are bullied 2 to 3 times every month or more.
- More than 70% of students report that bullying is a problem at their schools.

As we discuss the dangers of bullying for our youth, it is important to understand that there are three separate roles your child can have when it comes to bullying behaviors.

BULLY

- Risk factors include poor academic performance, low levels of parental involvement, and inadequate skills for social situations.
- Males are also more likely than females to engage in bullying behaviors.

VICTIM

- Often displays some characteristic that the offender perceives as weak.
- Risk factors include poor problem-solving skills, lack of confidence and self-esteem, and poor support systems.
- Are more likely to be isolated in social situations.

BYSTANDER

- Witnesses the behavior and can instigate the bully, encourage the bully, passively accept the behavior, directly intervene, or get additional help.
- When a bystander does not intervene it is often due to lack of self-esteem, intimidation by the offender, or lack of support and skills for helping the victim.

Bullying is not the schoolyard rite of passage that some might perceive it to be. It is a real, impactful, concerning trend that parents, teachers, and communities need to address. In terms of bullying, each of the roles [bully, victim, bystander] carries strong potential for impactful, harmful consequences. Not even the child demonstrating the bullying behavior is immune to the dangers, and in fact, he or she might have even more challenges finding the help he or she needs.

4 Types of Bullying

Verbal

Physical

Social & Emotional

Cyberbullying

Four types of bullying

There are four general categories of bullying that we need to understand in order to help our children, because they each have unique warning signs as well as require their own specific attention when addressing the risks and consequences to each person involved.

Verbal Bullying – This includes teasing, name calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, harassing, and threatening harm.

Physical Bullying – This includes hurting a person’s body or his/her possessions, or even the environment. Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, punching, throwing things, spitting, tripping, pushing, breaking someone’s belongings, damaging property, and making mean or inappropriate gestures.

Social and Emotional Bullying – This type of bullying at times is more difficult to identify as it attacks a person’s reputation, relationships, or emotional well-being. It includes things such as purposefully leaving someone out – also known as exclusionary bullying, telling other children to ignore a certain person, spreading rumors, gossiping, purposefully embarrassing someone.

Cyberbullying – This is the “newest” form of bullying to impact our children using electronic technology such as cell phones, computers, tablets, and related social media and websites. This type of bullying includes things like sending mean text messages or emails, spreading rumors via social media, sharing embarrassing pictures and videos online, or even creating fake profiles.

- The bystanders can be anywhere from 1 or 2 to millions of people who witness the behaviors.
- Kids who are victimized have a hard time getting away from the bullying behavior – they can’t just leave the schoolyard or get off the bus. Cyberbullying happens 24/7 and the victim isn’t safeguarded even in his/her own home.
- It can be almost impossible to trace some sources of bullying behaviors, meaning bullies can hide behind technology, and victims have to constantly wonder and worry about who is bullying them, and why.

Why must we take a stand against bullying?

When you look at the statistics about victims of bullying, it might be tempting to try to convince yourselves as parents that your child is in that other part – the percentage of kids who aren't reporting that they are being bullied. However, the risks are simply too real to ignore, the consequences too great to sweep under the rug, and the impact on their future too enormous to overlook.

Risks, Impact, & Consequences

Poor school performance

Increases in mental health issues

Increases in risk of suicide

Increases in likelihood of being an adult who abuses

Risks, Impact, and Consequences of Being a Bully, a Victim, or a Bystander

- Approximately 160,000 teenagers skip school every day because of bullying.
- Bystanders have increased tendencies to skip school out of fear that the bully will turn his/her attention to them, or out of anxiety and guilt over the situation.
- Communication about bullying declines as children age. By age 14, less than 30% of boys and 40% of girls will talk even with their friends about bullying.
- According to a study by the JAMA Pediatrics Network, 80% of children commit suicide because of peer bullying.
- Children who are bullied are more likely to report physical and emotional symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, anxiety, and depression.
- Victims, bystanders, and even the bullies have higher incidences of declining academic performances.
- Victims tend to withdraw even more so from social situations and do not participate in extra-curricular activities at school.
- All three groups of children in the bullying environment – bully, victim, bystander – have increased likelihoods of abusing drugs and alcohol.
- Children and teens that bully are more likely to become adults who abuse -- including physically, verbally, and sexually.
- Children and teens that bully have increased rates of growing up to be adults with criminal records.
- Kids who bully are also more likely to engage in sexual activity at an early age.
- Children, and even you – their parents – can be legally liable for the bullying behaviors.



When it comes to cyberbullying, all of the previous risks are true, but there are added consequences that follow these children into adulthood.



Known as digital footprints, the trail of cyberbullying material remains in essence – forever. This means that inappropriate pictures, false and harmful rumors, and fake profiles can exist when those childhood victims go on to apply for scholarships, college, and first (or tenth) jobs. Their own future children and friends might also find this information. The psychological,

emotional, and even economic impacts of these digital footprints are astounding.

For the bully, the added consequences exist as well. In order to crack down on the increasing rates and severity of cyberbullying, new laws are being put into existence to protect victims. These are causing children to be prosecuted to the fullest extent for crimes against other children – all in the digital world.

Who can help?

Bullying is a real threat against our youth. It puts them at risk for a myriad of problems, including emotional, social, physical, mental, and even legal consequences. While it is natural to focus on how these impact the victim of bullying, it is also important to remember that the bully and the bystanders are experiencing their own effects from the bullying environment.

In the efforts to stop bullying and the horrible effects of it, much emphasis has been placed on the school system. It is where our attention goes every time there is school violence and we learn that a child hurt other children because of bullying. So much bullying occurs within the walls of the school or at least in the overall academic setting, whether in a classroom or at a sporting event, that is it natural to seek the answers in these locations.

However, these measures don't necessarily get to the root problems that are causing the bullying behaviors. Unless we get to the heart of the matter – and into the hearts of these youth – the problem only has a bandage, instead of a cure. To get a better idea of the approaches to helping children – let's consider them in two ways: external and internal measures.



External Measures: These are things such as the policies, guidelines, and laws that are designed to deter bullying behavior. A popular recent measure is known as “zero tolerance” where students who bully others are suspended or even expelled from school. As we mentioned earlier, there are also laws in effect that in some instances can be applied to the parents of bullies, such as when a bully uses a home computer to harm peers.

Digital Footprints

As many as 25% of teens experience cyberbullying

Learn about the privacy settings on your child's social media platforms

Keep a copy of your child's user names and passwords

While these measures are often necessary, they should be applied in conjunction with internal measures, as external measures alone do not address things such as the psychological effects on bystanders or victims. They also do not often address the real reasons why the bully is acting in this way, so they do little to help him or her to change the risk factors that caused the bullying in the first place.

Internal Measures: These are the approaches that are designed to build the child from the inside – to get to the heart of the issues and change the heart of the child. Let's go back and look at those risk factors that affect all three roles in bullying circumstances:

- Inadequate social skills
- Poor family and friend support systems
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skills
- Fear

When you look at these risk factors it is easier to see that external measures such as school suspension and legal punishments do not address these issues at the core. What children need is something that will get to the core risks – empowering them to stop participating in their roles. Children need programs and resources that will give them the internal, personal tools so that they don't act as a bully, live in intimidation as the bystander, or live in fear as the victim.

Effective internal measures should help youth to:

- Experience personal growth
- Develop confidence and self-esteem
- Build interpersonal communication skills
- Embrace adversity as an opportunity to grow and learn
- Seek positive outcomes born of challenges
- Develop respect for all around him/her
- Build leadership skills

So we go back to that question: Who can help? The answer begins with you. You are reading this because you care about a child – whether that is your child or the youth in your community.

Because bullying is all around us, it is also up to all of us to help stop these behaviors from endangering the healthy lives of the children in our communities. Together there are things that we all need to do in order to help children overcome the need to bully, the effects of bullying, and the negative environment that it creates.

Measuring Up

External measures apply consequences and deterring pressure against bullying behaviors.

Internal measures supply youth with tools for preventing bullying and dealing with it at the core when it does occur.





Accept that bullying exists, and it is a real threat to our children.



Understand the different types of bullying, and the different roles our children might play.



Understand the external measures in place and learn how to apply them effectively.



Search for ways to implement internal measures to lead our children to success.

If solving the bullying problems facing our youth today was easy, it would already be a done deal. However, it takes a multi-faceted approach by responsible, enthusiastic, and understanding adults. In the next chapter we will give you insight into the warning signs that your child is the victim of bullying – or that perhaps he or she is the bully or the bystander. All of these children deserve our attention and dedication to helping them experience childhood and young adulthood in a more positive and engaging journey.

A Closer Look at a Real-World

When Ricardo and Flavio Almeida were children, their parents noticed signs that their sons might be experiencing bullying. At a minimum, these boys were not thriving as their parents thought they could be – thought that they deserved. At a neighborhood in Brazil, these parents took a step to equip their sons with the internal measures that would help them flourish – and be able to stand up for themselves in all situations.

First Ricardo, and then Flavio, entered their first Jiu-Jitsu school – and then neither looked back. Yes, they both gained the skills and tools needed to develop the confidence, self-esteem, leadership, respect, and other virtues necessary to defend against bullying – and defend others against it as well. Fast forward and now Professor Ricardo has a long history as a world champion in mixed martial arts and as a successful Jiu-Jitsu instructor who positively influences students every day. Professor Flavio went on to succeed in college as well as become a Jiu-Jitsu world champion. Now both brothers are the founders of Gracie Barra Arizona where they give back to youth the lessons that helped them turn their own lives around and gain the kinds of life skills that benefit both on and off the mats.

Resources:

<https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-bullying>

<http://nobullying.com/bullying-statistics/>

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/news/media/facts/>

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/about/media-kit/stats.asp>

http://www.makebeatsnotbeatdowns.org/facts_new.html

<http://www.ncab.org.au/parents/typesofbullying/>

<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2010/07/bully-victim.aspx>

<http://cyberbullying.us/decoding-your-digital-footprint/> (foot image)



Chapter 2

Is my child being bullied?

Knowledge might be power – but knowledge can also be overwhelming and stressful – especially for parents trying to do the right thing for their children. As we discussed in Chapter 1, bullying is a real and present risk for children across many different platforms. They face the dangers of verbal, physical, social and emotional bullying, as well as cyberbullying. They can also be the bully, the victim, or the bystander – and none of these roles are immune to negative and long-lasting effects.

You can take this knowledge about the reality of bullying for today's youth and empower yourself. Now that you know and understand that these risks are real, the next step is to learn the warning signs that your child is being affected by bullying. Remember – your child could be in any of the three roles – and in all of these instances need help and guidance to improve their lives.

The Warning Signs

No matter which type of bullying your child might be experiencing, the outward signs can range from mild and almost imperceptible to significant and severe. The key thing to remember is that some of the most devastating effects are internal and might not be as obvious.



Physical Warning Signs

- Torn or ripped clothing
- Bruising, scratching, or other injuries
- Bed-wetting or other interruptions in typical sleep patterns and habits
- Changes in eating habits (overeating, refusing meals, signs of bulimia or other eating disorders)
- Poor physical health or complaints of headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, etc.
- Dramatic changes in the way he/she dresses
- Increasing lack of attention to personal hygiene

Social and Emotional Warning Signs

- Reluctance or refusal to go to school
- Withdrawing from extracurricular activities
- Spending less time with friends
- Spending increasing time in isolation (locking bedroom door, spending more time alone in evenings, etc.)
- Loss of interest in hobbies and other interests
- Significant changes in relationships
- Expressions of fear or anxiety when talking about certain situations such as school, friends, or activities

- Changes in behavior around technology (signs of tension when using the computer, anxiety when getting text messages, etc.)
- Increased negative self-perception
- Hiding technology (closing the screen when you walk into the room, refusing to give passwords, etc.)
- Demanding changes in routines (taking a new route to school, leaving earlier or later, etc.)
- Using inappropriate and uncharacteristic language
- Yelling, crying, and having more emotional outbursts

Bullying = Destruction

Bullying can cause

- Destruction of property
- Destruction of self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Destruction of futures

More Warning Signs

- Finding excuses at school to leave the classroom, such as going to the nurse's office often
- Declining performance in academics
- Requesting more money than usual, especially without legitimate reasons as to why they need it
- Breaking curfew, especially if this is out of character
- Stealing, lying, and other risky and/or illegal behaviors
- Using drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products

Getting Help for Your Child

If you suspect or know your child is the victim of bullying behavior, there are many steps for you as a parent to take. The first is just to accept this as a real situation that requires real and continuing steps toward a solution. Training in Jiu-Jitsu with Gracie Barra is one of these steps to take with your children. As the next chapters will show, the types of skills and personal development that children who are the victims of bullying need are the same skills and personal growth that children gain and experience when training at Gracie Barra.

REMEMBER: Most children do not tell their parents about the bullying behaviors, and may even deny that they are happening! Children may resist telling someone about the situation or admitting to it when questioned because the bully has threatened them, they fear the social repercussions of being seen as a "tattletale", they don't see themselves as worthy enough for better treatment, or they don't have a strong enough support system or communication skills.

As a parent it is imperative that you remember these essentials for helping your child:

Be the expert. Parents must become experts on bullying and how to both prevent it and help children not become involved as any of the three – victim, bully, or bystander. This guide is just one way you are doing that. Reach out and ask for help if you feel like you need more information about bullying and what to do to help your child. Our Gracie Barra instructors are always willing to work with parents, sharing their own experiences and expertise regarding positive changes through Jiu-Jitsu training.

Listen. It often takes children a long time to finally share the details of their experiences. Rarely will you just suddenly know everything – it will come out over time and you need to be patient with your child.

As much as you might want to share your own concerns – it is most important that you let your child express any of his/her own feelings.

Get the facts. It is important that you gently seek the details about the bullying so you can better understand the impact and any additional steps you need to take. If it is cyberbullying, try to document as much as possible, saving posts and pictures to a flash drive. If it is bullying on school grounds, find out when this is happening and who else might be around – who are those bystanders?

Contact the necessary parties. This might include the teacher, other parents, school officials, or coaches. This is a fact finding mission, not a blame game.

Give your child some tools. Ending bullying doesn't happen overnight. Be sure to give your child some coping skills in the immediacy. This might be walking away from the bully, identifying a role model and support person in the environment, and limiting technology access until the situation is safer.

Keep your emotions in check. Give yourself some time away from your child where you can work through your own emotions and not add those to the already painful mix. If your child has been bullied, he/she doesn't need any more guilt or anxiety. Sometimes if parents have their own memories from childhood of being bullied, this can compound the situation. Be careful not to put your own experiences onto the child, but use them to empathize.

Seek resources. Some children might require medical services such as counseling. Many children benefit from programs that work on those internal measures we spoke about in Chapter 1. Resources such as martial arts programs aim to teach children about the internal measures they can develop to combat negativity from bullies and to rebuild self-esteem, confidence, and strength – of mind, body, and soul. Remember, too, that at Gracie Barra we are dedicated to using Jiu-Jitsu to help all members of our communities – including children – to reach their fullest potential and make real, positive changes in their lives.

My Child is the Bully – What Do I Do?

Even though it can be very hard to wrap your brain around the idea that your child might be the offender – the one using bullying behaviors – it is extremely important to look for the following warning signs. Here again, knowledge is power, and if your child is the one wearing the bullying shoes, it is time to help them acknowledge their negative behaviors, get to the root of the real issues, and learn to make positive decisions and amends to the victims.



Parental Awareness

The American Osteopathic Association reports that 52% of parents are concerned with bullying on social media sites, but only 1 in 6 are familiar with how this relates to their own kids.

The Warning Signs

Many of the above signals and signs could indicate that your child is acting as the bully, but there are a few other additional warning signs which every parent should learn.

- Your child excludes others from play or social settings, either subtly or overtly
- Your child continues inappropriate or negative behavior, even after you have addressed the problems and made sure your child was aware of how that behavior makes others feel
- Your child lacks the ability to empathize
- Your child is extremely worried about being popular
- Your child is intolerant of others who are different in some way (race, gender, ability/disability, etc.)
- You have witnessed your child tease or taunt other children
- You have heard others complain about your child's behavior
- Your child is boastful about his/her own accomplishments and belittling towards those of others
- Your child is defiant towards teachers, coaches, and other figures of authority

Is Your Child the Bully?

1 out of 5 kids in grades 6-10 admits to **being the bully**.

53% of kids in grades 4-8 admit to saying something mean or hurtful online.

There is nothing that tears at the parental heart quite like finding out that your child is hurting others. It is natural to be angry, frustrated, sad, guilty, or even in denial. But it is this last emotion – denial – that is the most dangerous for your child and for the victim.

A child who resorts to bullying behaviors is often missing something – whether it is confidence, social skills, communication skills, or something else. Often these children are also in pain, and they are at risk for lifelong repercussions from their behaviors.

Remember these important points for helping a child who shows bullying behaviors:

- **Keep your own emotions in check.** All of those hard feelings parents can experience at this point only add to the negative situation.
- **Contact the necessary parties.** The victims of the bully might not have shared their experiences with their parents or other trusted individuals. As the responsible adult, you need to make sure that all other adult parties also have the information – and they will know you are in the loop as well.
- **Encourage your child to make it right.** This might mean writing a letter, demonstrating a true change of heart, providing a service, or another act that shows your child is acknowledging the situation.
- **Seek resources.** This could be a counselor or a program that encourages youth to have positive, respectful behavior.
- **Be diligent.** Bullying won't stop overnight, and just like with everything else in parenting, the efforts need to be consistent and persistent.

My Child is the Bystander – What Do I Do?

The bystander to bullying might be someone who lacks the confidence and courage to speak up, or someone who even “eggs on” the bully. Either way, the bystander who does nothing about the situation often suffers and contributes to suffering.

A child who is a bystander to bullying will often display some of the same warning signs as both the victim and the bully, depending upon the specific type of involvement in the situation. The most important thing to remember is that the bystander is affected by the situation – and has the power to influence the situation.

- Encourage your child to stand up for others in all situations
- Demonstrate compassion and empathy
- Talk about ways to help others – role play situations that your child might encounter
- Avoid the blame game – your child probably has enough personal guilt to go around
- Make sure that the adults in the situation are aware of the bullying – both on the side of the bully and the victim
- Find resources to help your child build the skills necessary to stop being a bystander and start having the courage to be a leader

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

– Edmund Burke

More Tools for Helping Youth

It is critical that we teach children that bullying is not acceptable, but we need to do more. We need to give them the skills they need to help prevent bullying as well as the skills they need to react in those seemingly inevitable situations – whether they are the targets or the bystanders.

So we’ve been looking at all of the risks associated with bullying, as well as the warning signs that your child might be a victim, a bystander, or a bully, and some of the things you can do to address these issues. At the heart of all of this is what we introduced in Chapter 1 – that the internal measures are significantly more important for long-lasting prevention and reactions to negative situations.

It is time we empower the children in our communities. This starts with parents just like you, who become aware of the real threats of bullying and accept the responsibility to do something more for their children. Efforts to stop bullying involve a constant process of awareness of your child’s activities, interests, friends, and experiences. Empowering families also requires building strong channels of

Power of Bystanders

Statistics show that bullying stops within **10 seconds** more than 55% of the time when a bystander intervenes on the victim’s behalf.



communication through which children feel they have support systems.

Try these 8 tips for protecting your kids against the dangers of bullying.

1. **Take time to talk every day.** If your kids are comfortable talking with you about life in general – from their favorite music to their least favorite subject, they are more likely to come to you for the bigger stuff as well.
2. **Be present.** We know you're busy, but try to take time to volunteer in the classroom, help chaperone for field trips, or just connect with your child's teachers on a regular basis.
3. **Start early.** Preschool and kindergarten are great times to talk about treating classmates well – and identifying bullying by its name. There are some great books available for kids these ages that introduce the topic in a non-threatening way.
4. **Establish expectations.** When you talk with your kids about bullying, be sure to be clear about expectations for behaviors and consequences for poor behaviors.
5. **Set a good example.** When you're at home talking about your coworkers your kids are listening.
6. **Teach your kids about cyberbullying.** This was likely not a large part of your own childhood, but it is important to let your kids know about the dangers.
7. **Teach your child how to be an action-taker, not a bystander.** Even if that action is just walking away and finding an adult to help, teaching your child to be empathetic and action-oriented is an essential life skill.
8. **Let us know how we can help.** We are dedicated to providing opportunities for not only Jiu-Jitsu training that will help kids succeed on the mats, but for experiences that will help them off the mats as well.

Not Normal

Bullying is not a "normal" part of childhood. While it is likely to happen, we need to teach kids that healthy, confident, and respectful youth is the new norm.

The Value of Martial Arts as a Tool for Youth

Some people might think that martial arts are pursued because kids need to learn how to physically defend themselves against physical bullying. While there are benefits from learning self-defense for anyone, the value of martial arts goes far beyond this surface benefit.

Martial arts can give children opportunities to:

- Build confidence and self-esteem
- Develop a deep sense of personal responsibility
- Experience personal growth
- Learn how to work well with others



- Develop leadership skills
- Accept failure as opportunities for learning
- Embrace challenges
- Learn how to set goals – and achieve them
- Develop a strong sense of respect for others
- Build a solid work ethic
- Develop strong communication skills
- Become service-oriented

If these are the kinds of skills and opportunities you believe can help your child – in combating bullying and in life – we agree. We take seriously our role in helping to develop strong, healthy, positive, service-oriented members of communities – and it all starts with the kids. In Chapters 3 and 4 we will take specific looks at how Jiu-Jitsu and Gracie Barra help to empower children – and in turn your families and communities.



Chapter 3

Empowering Children through Jiu-Jitsu

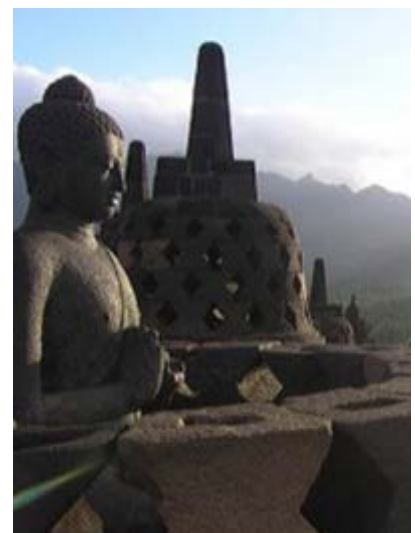
We've been talking in Chapters 1 and 2 about bullying and the dangers it threatens against the safety and well-being of children. It is clear that bullying in all its forms – verbal, physical, social, emotional, and cyberbullying – erodes at the confidence and personal growth of all involved. It is also clear that things need to be done through external and internal measures to stop this growing trend of bullying. This is where Jiu-Jitsu comes into the conversation. It is an extremely effective internal measure families and communities can use to build stronger, healthier, and happier children who are engaging members of their communities

What is Jiu-Jitsu?

The roots of Jiu-Jitsu are difficult to trace to their precise origins, but it is clear that this “gentle art” has influences from locations such as Greece, India, China, and Rome. Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, the art taught at more than 500 Gracie Barra schools around the world, is a combination of these influences from various cultures throughout many different periods in world history. It is more than just a prescribed technique for fighting – it is a philosophy that is rich with purpose and a moral code for those who participate.

Just a few examples of the influences throughout history include:

- India around 2,000 B.C., where the Buddhist value system included a deep respect for all forms of life and a self-defense system grew which centered around the idea of neutralizing the aggression without harming the aggressor.
- Japan in the 1700s, where the samurai developed a method for defeating an armed opponent without weapons. This method grew from the principle of using the attacker's energy against himself, rather than directly opposing it.
- Brazil in 1914 when Japanese fighter Mitsuyu Maeda traveled to South America to spread the principles of Jiu-Jitsu. It was here that Maeda (also known as Count Koma) met a young boy by the name of Carlos Gracie. This meeting was the spark that ignited the flame from which grew Gracie Barra and an international respect for the encompassing virtues and skillsets of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.



The Evolution of Gracie Barra

Carlos Gracie was amazed to see the control exercised by Maeda, and at the age of 14 Carlos became an avid student of the art. This training allowed Carlos to gain a new sense of self-control and confidence, and develop a deeper connection between his mind and body. Carlos used Jiu-Jitsu to in essence navigate the world with strength and determination. In 1925, at the age of 23, he founded the first Gracie school in Rio de Janeiro where he used the living room of a small house as a training area. From that small house he had big dreams, and he drew into those dreams his brothers Gastao, George, and Helio. This sense of family teamwork has persisted throughout the years. Despite his smaller stature, Helio – the youngest of the brothers – eventually grew into a national hero for his success in Jiu-Jitsu and then took over the family business.

Unparalleled Growth

From that tiny house in Brazil to 500+ schools worldwide, Gracie Barra has demonstrated unparalleled growth as a leader in Jiu-Jitsu.



Many family and friends continued in the footsteps of Carlos Gracie and Helio, including Rolls Gracie who contributed much to the further development of Jiu-Jitsu as an important sport in Brazil during the 1970s. Rolls impressed many with not only his strong Jiu-Jitsu techniques, but also with his strong character and commitment to personal growth.

In January of 1956 Carlos Gracie Jr. was born into a family of Jiu-Jitsu fighters, and the influence was evident from an early age. For much of his childhood he trained in a sprawling ranch with his family members in the mountains of Rio de Janeiro, and in 1986 he started his own school in the neighborhood of Barra – thus giving us the birthplace of Gracie Barra.

Characteristics of Jiu-Jitsu – Natural Enemies of Bullying

Over the years as Master Carlos Gracie Jr. has continued to develop Gracie Barra as the top organization for Jiu-Jitsu training in the world, he has remained committed to several core principles that guide the decisions of the organization – and underscore why Jiu-Jitsu is such an important internal measure to use in the fight against bullying. These core characteristics are the natural enemies of bullying, for they build within the child the tools necessary for dealing with bullying behaviors.





Jiu-Jitsu Defined

[joo-jit-soo]

the use of an opponent's strengths or one's own weaknesses to accomplish one's goals

(Dictionary.com)

Jiu-Jitsu – the Vehicle to Take Children to Stronger Futures

Bullying is a problem that reaches into the hearts of children. They desperately need something to help lead them to better futures -- free from the fear, anxiety, and stress of living in these situations day in and day out during their childhoods. Jiu-Jitsu is that vehicle that is built on the core characteristics that will help children – your children – to learn how to both prevent bullying and be able to respond to it appropriately if it does happen. Let's take a look at those natural enemies of bullying and see how Jiu-Jitsu uses them to build this vehicle.

Teamwork – While Jiu-Jitsu might appear to be a solitary sport, it is really in actuality an art form which relies on teamwork. At Gracie Barra we refer to this as brotherhood, where each member of the GB team is valuable, and must learn to work within the group setting of training and competing. In terms of bullying – bullies tend to look for the weak link – the child without a team. Jiu-jitsu not only teaches children the value of teamwork, but the value of each member of the team. It teaches kids how to have each other's backs so they are not passive bystanders. Kids who feel like they are a part of the team are also less likely to isolate themselves in the face of a bully. Children who understand the value of teamwork are also less likely to bully, as they understand the benefits of working together instead of dividing apart.

Pursuit of Excellence – At Gracie Barra we refer to this as Black Belt Excellence, but it is about more than just the color of the belt. A pursuit of excellence means always looking for ways to live a better life – be better, stronger, healthier, and more. While children are training in Jiu-Jitsu they learn to identify goals and then develop strategies to achieve those goals. Goal-setting is an extremely important component for children who are both strong of heart and mind. The more kids become



focused on the pursuit of excellence, the more they realize that there is no room in this pursuit for bullying behaviors.

Respect – How many times have you heard the following phrase? Kids these days just don't have any respect! Well – unfortunately that can feel very true at times. However, Jiu-Jitsu is built on the idea that respect must exist for self, for your community, for your leaders, and even for your opponent. Self respect helps children to stand up for themselves in the presence of bullies, and it also helps those who are inclined to bully to realize that they are better than this behavior. Respect for community – such as fellow classmates – is extraordinarily important in the battle against bullying. From the first bow children make as they enter the Jiu-Jitsu mat at a Gracie Barra school, to the respect they must show their training partners and instructors, children training in Jiu-Jitsu must develop a deep and profound sense of respect.

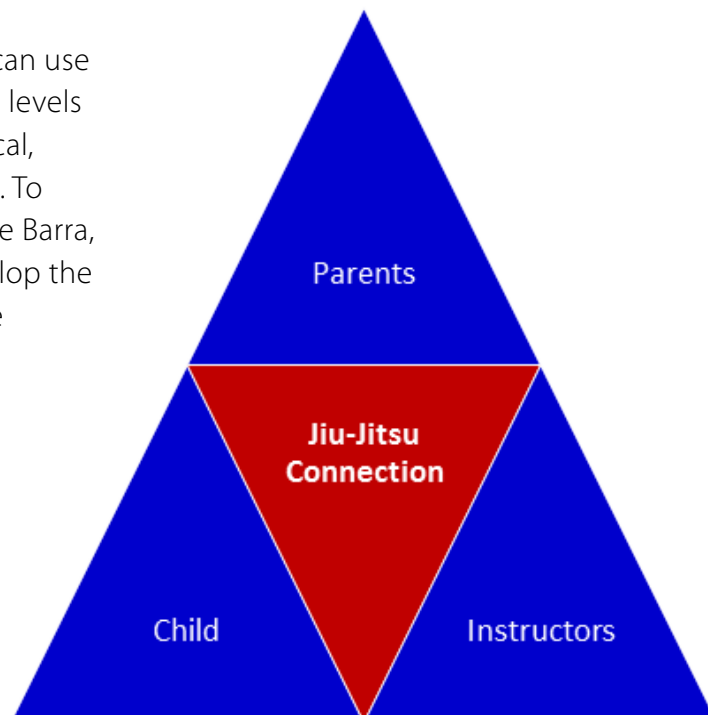
Growth – When children are facing bullying, or are even the bullies, no growth occurs. In fact, they are at risk for diminishing self-esteem, confidence, and ability to embrace adversity. Jiu-Jitsu focuses on helping the student develop the skills needed for personal growth so that they can grow as members of their communities. One of the ultimate goals of Jiu-Jitsu is to develop an attitude of service, and this only comes when the person is able to personally grow. Personal growth of confidence, self-esteem, respect, integrity, and leadership are all those natural enemies of bullying that will lead children to brighter futures.

Fight AND Flightt

The heart of a fighter is one that allows a person to embrace the mental strength needed to face challenges and still have enough fuel to soar to new heights.

The Jiu-Jitsu Connection

Jiu-Jitsu is clearly an internal measure we can use effectively to combat the almost epidemic levels of bullying facing children in verbal, physical, social, emotional, and cyber environments. To better understand how Jiu-Jitsu, and Gracie Barra, can positively influence your child to develop the skills necessary, let's take a look at how the Jiu-Jitsu connection is about three entities working together.



Parents – It is your role as the parents to learn as much as you can about bullying and the needs of your child. Once you do this, you can more easily see how Jiu-Jitsu can be a tremendous tool for their childhoods. As a Jiu-Jitsu parent, it is also necessary for you to fully support your child in his/her journey in the pursuit of excellence – which for practical purposes means things like making sure the child arrives to class, but also includes such things as reinforcing the lessons the child is learning and supporting the teamwork required. But we're not putting it only on your shoulders. We are in your corner.

Overcoming Adversity

Just as we develop our physical muscles through overcoming opposition - such as lifting weights - we develop our character muscles by overcoming challenges and adversity.

- Stephen Covey

Instructors Instructors – It is our goal to work with every child to develop these skills, and more, necessary to succeed both on and off the mats. We are your partners in your goals to provide children with the skills and character traits that will combat bullying and help lead them to brighter, stronger futures.

Child – This is where the journey for your child begins. He or she will have you as the supportive and engaged parent, and us as instructors who are dedicated to sharing the mission of Gracie Barra and the benefits of Jiu-Jitsu. There will also be expectations for your child, and this is where we build respect, integrity, confidence, and where we see personal growth flourish.

All of our efforts on the mats will support your child both on and off the mats – from academic to physical and social goals and skills. We are dedicated to helping children embark on the challenges of childhood, which unfortunately does include bullying, and helping them build a desire to work hard and achieve their dreams. In Chapter 4 we're going to share with you some of the details of how making a connection at a Gracie Barra school is your next step to empowering yourself as a parent, as well as your next step for providing your child with the opportunities for self-growth with almost limitless potential.



Chapter 4

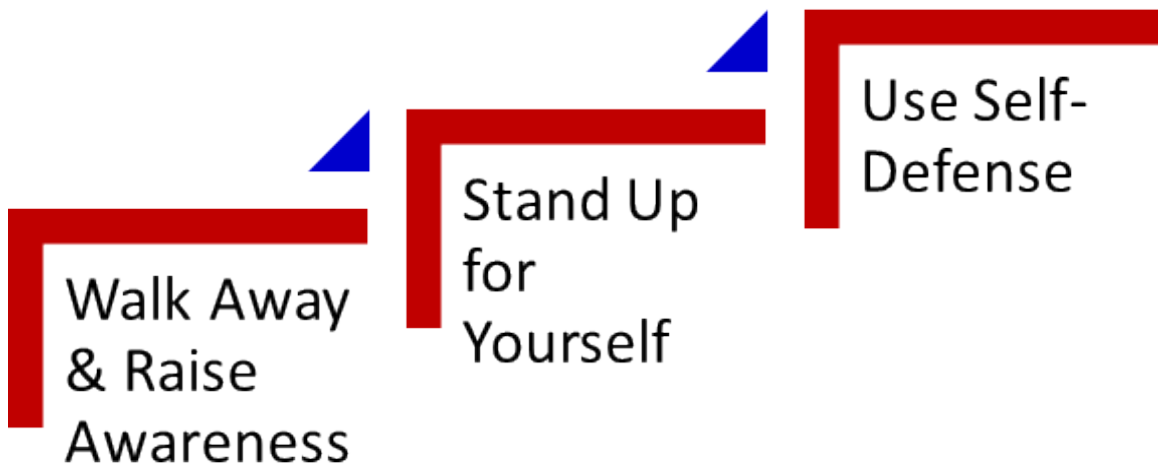
The Gracie Barra Bully Prevention Program

The mission of Gracie Barra is Jiu-Jitsu for Everyone. Decades ago Master Carlos Gracie envisioned the kinds of schools where everyone would be welcome and have the opportunities to learn the life lessons of Jiu-Jitsu. He knew what his father and uncles knew – that Jiu-Jitsu has the power to positively influence people and change their lives for the better.

If you're reading this you are probably searching for that something more for your child – that something better which can help him or her have a brighter future. Perhaps your child has been bullied at school, has been the bystander, or has been the bully. We are here to help you help your child. Jiu-Jitsu and Gracie Barra have that something more with our **Gracie Barra Bully Prevention Program**. At the end of this chapter we will give you three easy ways to get your child started today towards a brighter, safer, and better future.

What is the Gracie Barra Bully Prevention Program?

The Gracie Barra Bully Prevention Program is just one way we are dedicated to youth in our communities. It is a three-pronged approach we use in our schools to provide students with the tools needed to react to situations of bullying in appropriate ways. Our approaches are designed to address three different levels of reaction which can empower children to stand up for themselves in the face of a bully.



This program that we use includes special techniques that teach children how to react during situations of bullying. The goal of each step, and the program as a whole, is to provide children with positive alternatives and approaches when experiencing bullying. It is all about that internal approach which we have discussed in previous chapters.

In our first step – **Walk Away & Raise Awareness** – we teach children that when they are confronted by a bully the first response should be to ignore the bully and walk away, taking with him or her the power of the bully. We also give you the tools as a family to role play this at home to reinforce the lessons. The “awareness” component is about providing children with communication skills so that they can reach out to trusted adults who can help. We reinforce with children through specific techniques the skills for safe, effective communication, including more role playing situations which give real-world examples to kids.

Our second level of reaction – **Stand Up for Yourself** – is for those situations where the bullying is persistent and the first level of reaction was not effective. We teach children about strong body language and verbal skills which can help them appear confident, even if they aren’t feeling like it at the moment. When children are able to muster the courage to use these skills, the bully is less likely to see them as an easy target and more likely to stop or reduce the behaviors.



The third level of reaction – **Use Self-Defense** – is sometimes necessary. When we teach children about Jiu-Jitsu and self-defense, we do so not in the sense of “picking a fight”, but to empower your child to keep him or herself safe when a bully won’t relent. The goal of self-defense is to have the skills to help children escape physical bullying. Physical aggression poses real dangers to children, and self-defense skills are tools to minimize the dangers. We teach children how to appropriately use Jiu-Jitsu self-defense moves so that they can escape the situation and seek help from parents, teachers, or other adults.

Gracie Barra Weapons Against Bullying

Our program empowers youth with the weapons against bullying.

- Respect
- Character
- Courage
- Communication
- Self-Defense
- Teamwork
- Self-Confidence

“Life is 10% of what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it.” – John Maxwell

Who's Got Your Back?

As part of our approach to empowering children against bullying, we also focus on the anti-bullying concept of "Who's got your back?" where we teach children how to be a helpful witness instead of a passive (or even aggressive) bystander. Often when children are the victims of bullying they feel isolated – and studies clearly show that bystanders can play an important role in ending the bullying.

Growth from Pain

Those things that hurt, instruct. – Benjamin Franklin

We dedicate a portion of this program to lessons about not just why kids need to stand up for each other, but how they can do this. It takes courage to stop being a passive bystander because the child risks becoming the next target. Our focus on teamwork and brotherhood – across all age and ability levels – is a foundation for this principle.

Does the Program Work for Bullies?

The very short answer – Yes! The better answer is that kids who turn to bullying behaviors are often lacking much of the same character traits that Jiu-Jitsu teaches and consistently reinforces. Those weapons against bullying, such as communication, respect, and self-confidence, are also the same weapons that teach bullies why bullying actually makes you weaker – not stronger. The character traits of respect and integrity are interwoven into everything we do in our lessons, and these types of traits are precisely what children who bully need to embrace in their lives.

We are not in the business of labeling kids in our schools – and we don't separate out the "bullies" from the "victims" in our classes. Our lessons are appropriate for all children, and all children deserve to be empowered through the Gracie Barra Bully Prevention Program. There is no judgment from our instructors. In fact, we welcome the concerns and questions of parents who are seeking help for their kids through a program such as ours. Our instructors are always willing and able to form partnerships with parents as they strive for something better for their kids – no matter what their roles are in bullying situations.

Transforming Bullying into a Positive Experience

How can bullying be anything but negative? Every experience in our lives gives us the opportunity to learn. While we don't want children to experience bullying at any level, we want them to be equipped to turn the negative situation into a positive experience. Jiu-Jitsu training prepares children to deal with adversity while keeping their emotions in check, learning to respond appropriately to difficult situations. Life will not be a smooth ride. Jiu-Jitsu is a vehicle that can help children as they navigate negative situations such as bullying. These are life skills necessary from the playground to the boardroom. Through developing an attitude of and aptitude for embracing challenges, children learn to take those negative circumstances in life and find the positive experiences they provide for personal growth.

You don't overcome challenges by making them smaller but by making yourself bigger. – John Maxwell

Gracie Barra – Part of the Comprehensive Approach

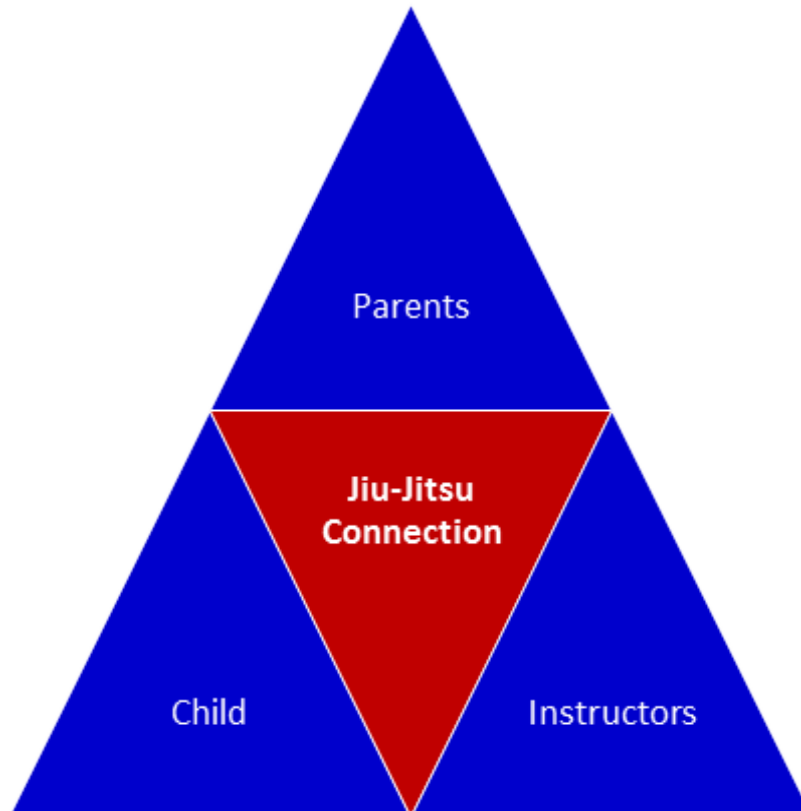
Every child is unique, but bullying is not unique. It is happening every day all around the world. Whether those children are the victim, the bully, or the bystander, they need help. This help needs to come in the form of both external and internal measures, a combination of rules and guidelines with consequences balanced with the kinds of lessons and opportunities that Jiu-Jitsu can provide.

With more than 500 schools around the world, Gracie Barra is a leader in professional Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu instruction, setting the standards of teaching children for the martial arts community. Our classes start with children as young as 3 years of age, and we strive to make positive impacts on the communities in which we exist. These positive impacts come from programs such as our anti-bullying approach that teaches children the tools they need to prevent and react to bullying in the most appropriate way they can.

Recall from Chapter 3 that we envision our approach as an effective relationship between you – the parent, our instructors, and your child.

Power of the Internal Measures

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us” –
Ralph Waldo Emerson



This Jiu-Jitsu Connection is part of a larger, necessary approach to combat bullying. When children have opportunities to participate in a program such as this, they begin the work on those internal measures that give them the personal and practical skills from which they can grow. Incorporating other measures, both internal and external, is needed for a truly comprehensive and effective solution for communities.

Opportunity Around Every Corner

The Chinese use two brushstrokes to write the word "crisis". One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger – but recognize the opportunity. –
John F Kennedy

Taking the Step to a Better Tomorrow

At Gracie Barra we are committed to our students and to helping families grow. We firmly believe that through Jiu-Jitsu children can become equipped to prevent and effectively deal with bullying situations. We are passionate about our instruction and opportunities, and want you to consider how Jiu-Jitsu training can help your child overcome challenges and build a better tomorrow.

There are many ways you can see if all these benefits will be right for your child and your family.



Meet with an instructor

Our instructors are passionate about their classes and would love to share more information with you about our curriculum specifically designed for kids.



Try a class - for free

You have nothing to lose, and your child has everything to gain. We want you to feel that Jiu-Jitsu is the right match for your family, so we offer you a free introductory class.



Watch for free anti-bullying classes

Many of our schools host special anti-bullying classes in their communities where we underscore the principles outlined in this guide.

If you as a parent are searching for something for your child, specifically designed to combat the effects of bullying, Jiu-Jitsu might just be the answer for which your family has been searching. Bullying isn't going away any time soon from our communities – so let's equip the children in these situations with the character traits, skills, and tools they need.