

[Supporting early childhood educators to address bullying in junior primary classes through the co-creation of anti-bullying interventions and resources: a proof of concept study](#)

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- **Keywords:** bullying prevention; anti-bullying interventions; anti-bullying resources; junior primary
- **Abstract:** Research indicates that bullying is evident in early childhood education settings (Helgeland & Lund, 2016; Ilola, Lempinen, Huttunen, Ristkari, & Sourander, 2016). There is however, limited research about children’s understanding of bullying in early childhood, particularly in Australia, and equally, there are few resources and programs for early childhood educators about the topic of bullying. In Australia formal education about bullying does not commence until Grades 3-4 (ages 8-10 years). This experimental study enlisted 99 children, aged 5-8 years, from six junior primary schools in metropolitan and rural South Australia who participated in single interviews, to access their understanding of bullying. Of the six schools who participated, four schools developed and implemented an anti-bullying program. These are referred to in the report as ‘experimental schools’. Two schools participated as the control group and are referred to as ‘control schools’. Eleven teachers from the four experimental schools participated in co-creating a ten lesson anti-bullying program tailored to their school context, based on needs arising from child interview data. Children were re-interviewed after the program intervention with findings demonstrating that children who received the bullying program had a better understanding of the three elements of bullying: repetition, intent to harm, and power differentials. Teachers reported that children were engaged and appeared to enjoy the program and had an improved understanding of bullying. They also reported that the program was easy to implement and aligned well with the National Health and Physical Education and the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum of South Australia. They conveyed enthusiasm in continuing to use the program with their future students. This study highlights that when teachers co-create unique and specific resources tailored to their children’s needs, and linked directly to existing curriculum, they can impact on learning about bullying and enhance understanding.
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