

# EVENT TO EDUCATE PARENTS, CHILDREN ABOUT BULLYING

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*By: Bonnie Butcher • Wednesday, February 2, 2011*

The Goddard School® will hold “Community Games” from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at 8542 Owenfield Drive.

The childcare company is holding the community play day “to educate parents and young children on ways to combat bullying from a young age,” a press release said.

Goddard is offering the free public event to help children develop friendship-building skills. A total of 275 Goddard schools are participating nationwide, said Sue Adair, director of education for the Goddard Systems Inc.

Adair said it’s important to teach children about appropriate responses from early ages. “Preschool children will often engage in unfriendly interactions with other children. It is the nature of growing up. In most cases, this type of behavior is normal and not necessarily malicious. These types of minor social spats are really learning opportunities and teachers can assist children in problem solving and talking about feelings,” Adair said.

During the event, Goddard School on Owenfield Drive will have a scavenger hunt and Lego fun, franchise owner Betty Simcox said.

Through activities like the scavenger hunt, children learn goal setting, time management, planning, patience and waiting in line, Simcox said.

“With Lego fun, we take all the Legos from all our classrooms and put them in one area and let the children make what they want,” Simcox said. “This is to teach the children to use their own free ideas and help them use their words to negotiate if someone has (what) they want.”

Parents and teachers can guide children in these types of play activities and help them to learn how not to bully or not to be bullied, Simcox said.

“The importance in the bullying — you want them to express themselves and not keep it bottled up. The biggest thing with bullying is that there’s a lack of communication and cooperation between the children,” Simcox said. “Children aren’t born knowing what is socially acceptable. It is our responsibility as adults to teach them, to help the children with a proper way of handling it. Kids don’t always understand what is hurtful to another child.”

Adair said Goddard School programs have always included “teaching children about friendship, compassion, cooperation and kindness.”

The company has a resource called “The Goddard Guide to Getting Along,” on which the program is based.

“We provide age-appropriate playful activities that inspire thoughtful discussion and develop children’s social and emotional skills. Our goal is to create confident children who are independent thinkers and who can solve problems on their own,” Adair said.

Simcox will hand out literature to parents about play, improving socialization and developing appropriate social skills.

“Our goal is to help children learn to play with one another, get along and be respectful of differences. We also want to prevent bullying by building children’s confidence and self esteem. Confident children tend to avoid being bullied and also avoid becoming bullies themselves,” Adair said.

For more information, visit [www.goddardschool.com](http://www.goddardschool.com).