

## Social and Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention

Bullying is now the most pervasive form of school violence, and surveys indicate that almost one-quarter of all students experience hurtful interactions with peers on a monthly or daily basis. Consequences for being bullied include emotional distress, such as loneliness, anxiety, and depression, as well as poor school performance and attendance, low self-confidence and self-concept, and social marginalization.<sup>21</sup> Those who demonstrate bullying behaviors sometimes appear to have high status but more often experience negative outcomes, including poor school adjustment, more peer rejection, conduct problems, delinquency, criminal activity, and depression.<sup>22</sup> Witnessing bullying incidents can produce feelings of anger, fear, guilt, and sadness in observers who sometimes experience negative effects similar to victimized children.<sup>23</sup>

Research shows that schools using a multifaceted approach to bullying with a social and emotional learning framework can foster an overall climate of inclusion, warmth, and respect, and promote the development of core social and emotional skills among both students and staff. This approach includes the following:

- a schoolwide effort centered on building awareness, establishing norms of respect and safety, and providing training to staff to address bullying situations;
- a classroom curriculum focused on offering an evidence-based SEL program that teaches skills such as communicating needs, managing stress, solving problems, resolving conflicts, and fostering empathy;
- family and community involvement that builds support among family and community members for helping young people deal effectively with bullying situations outside of school.<sup>24</sup>

Lions Quest programs take a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention through an array of school, classroom, and family and community elements that address bullying at these three levels. Lions Quest programs embed bullying prevention components for the school through schoolwide activities that address bullying and an overall climate of inclusion, warmth, and respect. In the classroom curriculum, skill-building lessons and opportunities for practice build skills specific to recognizing, handling, and stopping bullying. School communities that build bullying prevention into their overarching SEL efforts create environments that are not conducive to bullying and, therefore, the behaviors are less likely to occur or continue.