Resolving Incidents of Bullying Among High Functioning Adolescents with ASD: Parent Perspectives

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Resolving Incidents of Bullying Among High Functioning Adolescents with ASD: Parent Perspectives

Wan-Ting Chuang

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Educational Specialist in School Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Resolving Incidents of Bullying Among High Functioning Adolescents with ASD: Parent Perspectives

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A qualitative study was conducted investigating the perceptions of seven parents of high functioning adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) regarding incidents of bullying in which the child was involved. Results of the study indicated that all of the children had been bullied at one time or another, and that the majority had difficulty in demonstrating appropriate social skills. The parents viewed supportive peers to be a positive factor, fostering the children’s satisfactory social adjustment. Parent interventions for their child included social skills instruction and empathy training. Research implications for educators included the need to establish system organized school-wide support to benefit all students. Findings substantiated previous literature in regard to the importance of positive social skills, social support, and parent support for promoting children’s resiliency and social growth when faced with bullying. In the current study results were reflective of proactive parents’ involvement as advocates for their child. A high level of parental involvement paired with supportive school personnel created an ideal partnership between home and school in developing and implementing both proactive strategies and interventions that supported adolescents with ASD.

Keywords: Adolescents, Bullying, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger Syndrome, Social Skills, Parental Involvement
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Introduction

According to Garrett (2003), bullying among children includes a variety of negative behaviors acted out repeatedly over a period of time. It involves an imbalance of power with the more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful. Other experts have noted that bullying is one of the most common types of violence exhibited at school with 15% to 30% of students involved in bullying. It has been reported that about 3.7 million youth engage in bullying, and more than 3.2 million are victims of bullying annually (Pacer Center, 2006).

Children who are at risk of being bullied tend to exhibit the following characteristics: (1) they are socially isolated, (2) they frequently change schools, (3) they have poor social skills, (4) they want to fit in “at any cost,” (5) they have difficulty defending themselves, and (6) they are perceived as “different” by their peers (Roberts, 2006). Children with developmental disabilities and other special needs who meet these descriptions may be more vulnerable and more at risk for being bullied than they would be otherwise.

Statement of Purpose

A pilot study was conducted to gather information from parents and special education teachers concerning the effects of bullying on students with disabilities and to obtain recommendations for bullying interventions (Chuang, Villordo, & Anderson, 2009). The current study is a follow-up to the pilot study, extending the earlier research by targeting a specific disability category and age range. The current research also focuses on obtaining only the parents’ perspectives regarding the efficacy of the interventions used to prevent bullying behavior and to help mitigate potentially adverse effects. The specific purpose of the current research was to identify factors contributing to the successful resolution of incidents of bullying among high
functioning adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and to obtain parent recommendations regarding interventions to deal with bullying.

**Research Question**

In accordance with the statement of purpose, the following research question was investigated: What are the perceptions of parents of high functioning adolescents with ASD regarding the resolution of bullying incidents involving their child?
Review of Literature

Bullying has been a prevalent issue that has existed in schools for many years (Olweus, 1993). In this literature review I will first provide the definition of bullying and description of different types of bullying behavior and then discuss the impact that bullying has at the individual level. Bullying not only affects individual children; on a larger scale, bullying affects school climate. Potential factors underlying the likelihood of victimization of children with disabilities are also presented. In order to prevent and reduce bullying behaviors at school, school-wide interventions are highly recommended. The involvement of the entire school staff helps to reduce bullying behavior. One school-wide intervention, Positive Behavior Support (PBS), has been introduced to ameliorate the effects of bullying. In addition, the definition and characteristics of autism spectrum disorders will be discussed. Results of previous research will also be provided to promote understanding of the relationship between bullying and autism spectrum disorders. In conclusion, interventions for students with disabilities will be discussed in depth.

School bullying has been an issue as long as schools have existed and is an international phenomenon (Merrell, Guelders, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Olweus, 1993). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, approximately 28% of students reported being bullied during a six-month period in 2005. Currently bullying is a common and widespread concern. Moreover, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development reported that bullies and the victims of bullying are more likely to engage in violent acts than children who have never been involved in bullying. A description of risk factors associated with bullying behavior will be provided in a subsequent section of this review.
Definition of Bullying

Bullying has been defined as vicious, aggressive behavior that is distinguished by repeated acts against weaker victims who do not typically defend themselves (Smith, Schneider, Smith & Ananiadou, 2004). There are at least three different types of bullying behaviors described in the literature: physical bullying, verbal bullying, and relationship bullying (Wiener, 2004). Physical bullying involves the physical act of violence or aggression. Verbal bullying can be in the form of teasing, name-calling, and other verbal harassment; relationship bullying can include excluding an individual from a group or the threat to withdraw friendship. Moreover, a new type of bullying has emerged with the development of technology. Cyberbullying is the repeated behavioral intent to harm others through the use of a mobile phone or use of the Internet (Smith et al., 2008).

Effects of Bullying

Bullying not only impacts children in a physical way but also affects their emotional and social well-being. Children who are bullied tend to report sleep disturbances, enuresis, headaches, and feeling sad more often than children who are not bullied. They are also more likely to feel socially isolated or rejected and have lower social status (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Smith et al. (2004) reported, “Both bullies and victims evidence poorer psychological adjustment than individuals not involved in bullying” (p.1). The influence of bullying on children's mental health can last for a long time. One study indicated that middle school children who were bullied repeatedly were more likely to have low self-esteem and be depressed in adulthood than individuals who weren't bullied as children (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).
Bullying and Children with Disabilities

Although children with disabilities are often educated in settings considered to be somewhat restrictive (e.g., special schools, self-contained classrooms and resource classrooms in public schools), special education placement does not guarantee these children will be protected from verbal, physical, or relational bullying. This is particularly true with respect to non-classroom settings in which adult supervision may be limited, such as the playground, hallway, lunchroom, or bus line. The following sections summarize research findings describing the occurrence of bullying among children with disabilities in school settings.

Children with cognitive disabilities. Research indicates that children with disabilities or special needs may be at higher risk for being bullied than other children. Judith Rusk noted that children at risk for becoming the victims of bullying behavior tend to differ from the group norm with respect to their physical appearance, personality, behavior, and social characteristics (DuRoss, Chan, & Turner, 2007). Specific factors underlying the victimization of students with learning disabilities are highlighted in the following examples: (a) the student with a learning disability may behave aggressively toward a potential bully, which can lead to acts of revenge; (b) the appearance of “excessive passivity” on the part of the child with a disability can cause peers to take advantage (Sabornie, 1994). Studies have additionally found that children and adolescents with learning disabilities are more likely to be victimized by peers (Wiener, 2004). However, Spinelli-Casale (2008) found no significant differences in the prevalence of bullying among students with and without learning disabilities in middle school. One possible explanation for the study’s unexpected result is that students with learning disabilities might not all have social problems associated with the risk of being victimized.
Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power in the relationship. Bullies tend to see their targets as being weaker and take advantage of the situation. Children with physical impairments may move at a slower and unsteadied pace, act less assertive, and, in severe cases, may even be restricted in their movement. It is suspected that these conditions might cause them to be perceived as being weaker than their normally functioning peers (Flynt & Morton, 2004).

**Children with autism spectrum disorders.** Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) often lack the ability to start or join in social activities, to understand other people's points of view, and to adequately express their own feelings. They also tend to engage in annoying behaviors that hinder positive interaction with others, such as “making inappropriate comments or dominating [conversations] with topics of personal interest” (Bellini & Hopf, 2007, p. 80). If left untreated, the social skill deficits have “the capacity to set [the children] on harmful developmental trajectories leading to eventual social anxiety, depression, isolation, and other unfavorable outcomes” (Bellini & Hopf, p. 80).

ASD includes these subtypes: autistic disorder, Asperger disorder, and Pervasive Development Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Children with autistic disorder tend to experience significant challenges in the areas of communication and social interaction and are more prone to manifest restricted, repetitive behavior than children with Asperger syndrome. Children with Asperger syndrome typically have higher IQs than children with autistic disorder and no language delay (Kelly, Garnett, Attwood, & Peterson, 2008). The term Asperger syndrome is often referred to as “high functioning” autism (Baird, Cass, & Slonims, 2003; Wainscot, Naylor, Sutcliffe, Tantum, & William, 2008). According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2008), a child who has
symptoms of either autistic disorder or Asperger syndrome but does not fully meet the specific criteria for these disorders would be diagnosed with PDD-NOS.

In a recent study conducted in the United Kingdom, Wainscot et al. (2008) noted that compared to typically functioning peers, adolescents with Asperger syndrome and high-functioning autism were more likely to report being disliked by peers and frequently bullied verbally, physically, and socially. However, this finding may warrant further consideration, since it is not uncommon for children with autism to perceive social situations incorrectly (M. Thompson, personal communication, July 9, 2009). For example, the child with autism might perceive a harmless attempt to interact socially or another child’s mild teasing as bullying, since children’s perceptions of social situations often determine how they react. Children with autism sometimes act aggressively toward others because they inaccurately perceive that they are being bullied or physically threatened. Unfortunately, this aggressive action toward others can trigger bullying behavior.

According to Baron, Groden, Goden, and Lipsitt (2006), adolescents with Asperger syndrome may have the desire to interact socially with their peers, but because they lack the necessary skills acquired through previous social experience, they have “difficulty interpreting and responding appropriately to...complex social cues and rules” (p. 352). The teens’ recognition of their social skill deficits can result in frustration and inhibit their ability to interact positively and spontaneously with peers.

Wainscot et al. (2008) additionally found that adolescents with Asperger syndrome and high-functioning autism were able to cope with the academic demands of the mainstream environment when extra academic support was provided. However, the students were particularly challenged with “the social demands of school,” i.e., “interactions with peers,
understanding rules and codes of conduct, and what to do at break and lunch times”; in other words, the students with Asperger syndrome were stressed and anxious in social situations in which less structure was provided (Wainscot et al., 2008, p. 26).

According to Baron et al. (2006), research on social cognition and theory of mind suggests that children with Asperger syndrome have substantial difficulty recognizing and understanding their own thoughts and feelings as well as the emotions of others; these impairments in social cognition can have serious implications. For example, if these social impairments are not understood or recognized by adults and peers, children with Asperger syndrome may be seen as rude, disrespectful, and refractory. Baron et al. (2006, p. 354) additionally noted that these children may have challenges in the following areas: (a) distinguishing between deliberate and accidental intentions; (b) reading the social/emotional messages in eye movements, facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language; (c) recognizing that they hurt someone’s feelings, or knowing how to repair their feelings; and (d) recognizing cues, such as when it is appropriate to interrupt or not, signs of boredom, or embarrassment.

Even though children with ASD have shown strong stability in meeting the diagnostic criteria over time, results of a longitudinal study suggested that improvements in the social functioning of children with ASD may occur as the children develop (McGovern & Sigman, 2005). Parents specifically reported positive changes in the adaptive behavior, empathic responsiveness, and repetitive behavior of their children when they became adolescents. The researchers also noted that these improvements in symptoms, adaptive behavior, and responsiveness were mostly manifested by children with high functioning autism as opposed to children with lower cognitive ability. Findings likewise suggested that engagement
with peers seemed to improve the social skills of children with autism in the same way that peer engagement supports the social growth of typically developing children. The authors predicted that increased peer engagement among young children with ASD would likely lead to improved adaptive behavior and social skills over time (McGovern & Sigman, p. 407).

**Bullying in Adolescence**

Although bullying happens at all ages, it tends to occur at a relatively high rate in late childhood and early adolescence. This is also a time when students tend to experience great biological, social, and emotional change. Differences in biological maturation appear to be a related factor in the increased occurrence of bullying during these years. Generally speaking, older students victimize younger students, and slower developers tend to be bullied by their peers. A significant relationship has been found between bullying and physical strength in males in that stronger boys tend to be bullies and weaker boys tend to become the victims (Carney & Merrell, 2001).

Acceptance from their peers and fitting in are vital for children during the transitional, adolescent years. The desire to fit in and to be accepted might make belittling others an attractive option if the outcome of the behavior is perceived as having greater popularity or social status (Carney & Merrell, 2001). Additionally, students’ attitudes toward authority figures seem to become more negative as they grow into adolescence. It is a time when these youth are inclined to resist and become less trusting of adult authority. Instead of sharing their experiences at school with teachers, the victims tend to either keep it to themselves or share the events with their peers. Unfortunately, secondary schools generally are less supportive with respect to providing emotional and social support to students who have personal problems than are elementary schools (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003).
Factors that Influence Bullying within the School Environment

A number of factors precede the establishment of a safe and predictable school environment. Experts have suggested improving the quality of the learning environment by promoting the adoption of common expectations, a common language and a common set of experiences in relation to teaching behavior among all school staff and students (Horner, 2004). Such efforts should be directed toward enhancing the social adjustment of all, and may involve teaching specific behaviors to at risk students (Scott, 2011). Attempts to create successful school experiences for a broader array of children may be benefited by considering the school climate, developing school-wide interventions, and implementing programs of positive behavior support/bully prevention programs, as well as attending to the essential role of the classroom teacher.

School climate. School climate is explained as “the feelings that students and staff have about the school environment over a period of time” (McKay, 2007). Golembiewski (2006, p. 3) stated, “Bullying not only affects the individuals who are involved but also the climate at school.” Schools should provide a safe, secure, and caring learning environment for children. A safe learning environment will help children acquire important knowledge and skills and allow them to focus on academic performance and achievement (Christie & Christie, 1999). On the other hand, bullying can negatively impact the victim's desire to do well at school (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). It is no surprise that children tend to have difficulty learning when they feel threatened at school. Moreover, feelings of being socially isolated or rejected prevent children from adjusting well and bonding to the school environment. As Merrell et al. (2008, p.2) pointed out, “A high percentage of victims tend to engage in school avoidance behaviors, and many repeated victims of bullying at school end up dropping out of the school system.” Thus the effects of bullying on school climate cannot be ignored.
School-wide intervention. In order to implement an effective bullying intervention, bullying has to be understood in its social context. Vreeman and Carroll (2007) stated that bullying is a systemic problem that merits a systemic solution. Interventions that focus only on the classroom level or the individual student may not be as effective as school-wide interventions involving multiple disciplines. Moreover, bullying interventions that encourage only curricular changes often have limited influence on bullying behavior (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

School-wide intervention is an approach to improving the entire school environment involving individuals, peer groups, classrooms, teachers, and administration. As stated earlier, interventions that involve multiple disciplines seem to be most effective in reducing bullying behavior (DuRoss et al., 2007). According to Vreeman and Carrol (2007), the positive results achieved through whole-school interventions suggest that bullying stems not only from individual factors but also from external factors that include “a complex process of social interactions.” It is important that children connect positively to the school and acquire a sense of belonging. Schools can provide a positive atmosphere that fosters acceptance. When teenagers feel as though they belong, they will be less likely to engage in violent behaviors (Stancato, 2003).

School-wide positive behavior support. School-wide interventions must have the capacity to change the overall school culture and climate. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) aligns with the idea of providing a positive environment, both academically and socially. It is a school-wide intervention that places emphasis on developing systems of support to improve lifestyle outcomes for all children and youth by teaching new skills and increasing desired behavior. Stated otherwise, PBS is a systemic approach to increasing the capacity of schools, families, and communities in relation to resolving contextual issues and creating effective
learning environments in which students feel safe and unthreatened (Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2009). The focus in PBS is on changing the environmental context rather than on merely reducing instances of problem behavior (e.g., acts of physical or verbal aggression). Carr et al. (2002) pointed out that behavior change is not achieved by simply applying specific techniques to specific problems and noted that meaningful change will take place only if “systems are restructured in a manner that enables change to occur and be sustained” (p. 9).

As a school-wide intervention, PBS is implemented at three levels to meet the needs of schools. First, universal school-wide strategies are developed by school teams to address the needs of all learners, and common goals and foci are shared across school settings, school staff, and students. Second, interventions that focus on specialized group instruction are implemented for individuals who are at risk and who need repeated practice and environmental modifications to enhance their opportunities to achieve academic and social success. Third, interventions are provided to students who engage in chronic challenging behavior and who are unresponsive to universal and group based interventions (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

PBS programs are expressly designed in accordance with a school’s identified needs (Marchant et al., 2009). Interventions are developed by school teams following an examination of data collected within the school environment. Data sources have included focus groups, interviews, office disciplinary referrals, and systematic screenings. Although these data sources can “help school personnel develop universal supports” (Marchant, p. 134), it may be appropriate to provide students with disabilities and other students at risk for being bullied or engaging in aggressive acts intervention at all three levels of the PBS continuum. For example, social skills
can be taught at the school-wide or universal level, as well as in small groups or in one-on-one instructional sessions.

**Whole school bully prevention programs.** Interventions designed to prevent bullying behavior include curricula targeting the whole school, small groups of students, individual classrooms, and clusters of selected classrooms (Merrell et al., 2008). Although school-wide interventions are frequently recommended in the literature, investigations disclose no major effect of bullying intervention programs in the long run (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2006). Merrell (2008) found that 56% of the bullying intervention programs reviewed showed no change in bullying behavior. Nevertheless, Smith et al. (2004) conceded that the whole school approach may have more potential than their data suggest, recommending a “rigorous monitoring of program implementation” to ensure that whole school interventions are applied with fidelity. The researchers also placed emphasis on comparing the whole school approach with other “potentially useful interventions” (p. 556) in future research attempts.

**Classroom teacher’s role.** In addition to treatment fidelity, and the careful monitoring of procedural implementation, another potential factor related to the success of school-wide bullying interventions is the involvement of teachers and school personnel. Studies indicate the teacher's response to bullying makes an important difference (Yoon, 2004). Teachers must develop an atmosphere of trust in order to help students gain the courage to report bullying. Even though teachers might verbally instruct students to talk about the incidents, if school personnel are not prepared and trained to respond to bullying appropriately and effectively, the act of reporting will be in vain (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Studies suggest that teachers' self-efficacy, beliefs, expectancy of the students, and empathy have a significant influence on
teacher behavior (Yoon, 2004). In other words, teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and values can influence their interactions with students, their perceptions about bullying, and their responses to situations in which bullying occurs. In Yoon's (2004) study, the three teacher variables, (attitudes, beliefs and values) were important predictors of whether the teachers would actually intervene when bullying occurred. Teachers who perceived bullying as being a serious problem also reported higher self-efficacy and greater empathy, and stated that they would intervene. Yoon's research suggests that increasing teachers' awareness of the negative effects of bullying could help teachers become more involved in the prevention of bullying behavior. Scott (2011) additionally stressed the importance of providing teachers with opportunities to learn important skills in relation to bully prevention to support their professional growth.

**Interventions for Students with Disabilities**

As mentioned earlier, studies have suggested that students with disabilities, including those with autism, are more likely than those without disabilities to become the targets of bullying behavior. Thus it is important for school personnel to recognize the needs of students with disabilities and to make necessary accommodations when designing bully prevention programs. According to Flynt and Morton (2004), children with cognitive deficits tend to have low self-esteem, are easily led by others, and lack the knowledge to recognize potential dangers. These factors make them vulnerable to becoming primary candidates for being bullied. Research has additionally indicated that students with disabilities tend to be more concerned about school safety and are more anxious at the prospect of being injured and harassed compared to peers (Saylor & Leach, 2009). Effective implementation implies that bullying interventions are tailored to meet the needs of all students in the school, including those with social-emotional and other
types of impairment. Students with disabilities are apt to face significant challenges in their social interactions with others; thus it is imperative that school personnel take the needs of these children into account when designing and administering bullying intervention (Heinerichs, 2003).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, U.S. Department of Education, 2004) requires that students with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent possible within the general education environment and that necessary accommodations be provided. Studies have suggested a number of ways in which students with disabilities benefit when they are placed in inclusive settings; for example, gains have been observed in the areas of social and communication skills. Self-confidence, and self-esteem can also be positively impacted (Saylor & Leach, 2009). Nevertheless, research also indicates that one of the disadvantages of full inclusion is an increased risk of being bullied. One suggestion for reducing bullying among students with disabilities is to establish more effective programs of inclusion (Saylor & Leach, 2009). This could involve the provision of increased structure and support such as that made available to students within school-wide systems of positive behavior support.

Students with disabilities may feel isolated because of their difficulties in acquiring important social skills and in reading social cues. Yet it has been shown that establishing a social support network for students with disabilities is important and can lead to improved quality of life (Saylor & Leach, 2009). In some situations students with disabilities are likely to be seen as “a source of irritation” to their peers, sometimes even to their teachers. According to Heinerichs (2003), students with disabilities might be tricked into fulfilling ridiculous requests because of their social naiveté and social-communication deficits. Many students are likely to feel that telling an adult about bullying will not help; this is especially true for students with disabilities.
Many children and youth adjust to this challenging world by obtaining the necessary skills to make positive connections with family, peers, school, and community. These successes are often achieved by “having the appropriate models available, having their actions monitored regularly, having regular opportunities for academic and social success, and having access to meaningful feedback that guides their behavior” (Lewis & Sugai, 1999, p. 2). These principles can also apply to children and youth with autism as they seek to obtain the skills necessary to function in society.

Social skills deficits are common across a number of disability categories, including learning disabilities, autism, language delays, and emotional disturbance (More, 2008). Students with these disabilities need to be taught by specific examples how to recognize social cues and improve their social skills. Heinerichs (2003) indicated that the imbalance of power could be extreme when children with disabilities are the targets of bullying. Such students are likely to have difficulty expressing their feelings and protecting themselves when bullying occurs. They may not be able to recognize incidents of bullying because of their disability. It is important to teach them how to cope with bullying situations by enlisting adult support and applying specific strategies.

In a parent training manual published in 1984, Young and West defined social skills as “Specific positive interpersonal behaviors that lead to desirable social outcomes” (as cited in Merrell & Gimpel, 1998, p.4). Most people obtain an understanding of socially appropriate behavior in a certain situation by evaluating the social cues that occur through their interactions with others. Children learn through observing and imitating others. However, students with disabilities who are unable to acknowledge and interpret social cues are at a grave disadvantage in social situations (Heinerichs, 2003). The lack of social skills makes it harder for them to
engage in positive interactions with their peers. They often need to learn socially appropriate behavior through intensive intervention. Thus it is important to take into consideration the social impact of having a disability when designing bullying intervention curriculum.

**Introduce systems of social support.** High quality social support is necessary to the well-being of all people. Social support is defined as “the provision of emotional and material resources by family, friends, and other significant individuals in one's life” (Westerman, 2008, p. 2). People with adequate levels of social support tend to feel more optimistic about their lives, adjust better to their environments, and have lower levels of stress and depression (Westerman, 2008). Victims of bullying may feel that school is an unsafe and unfriendly place and thus feel reluctant to seek support from other students because of the fear of being rejected and experiencing future victimization. Social support can play a significant role as a protective factor for victims of bullying. Westerman (2008) stated that “those who have supportive individuals in their lives are able to maintain a healthy sense of self-esteem despite being bullied” (p. 3).

How can schools establish systems of social support? According to Meadan and Monda-Amaya (2008), creating a positive school culture that enhances opportunities for social interaction and assures each student of having a place and a voice in the classroom is beneficial to the academic and social needs of students. Students with disabilities need to acquire a sense of belonging at school. Moreover, they need to feel confident in making contributions to the classroom community. All students, including those with disabilities, can acquire a sense of belonging by becoming involved in making class decisions, having opportunities to hold class jobs and participating in various activities.

Teachers also play an important role in helping students with disabilities connect with their peers and in cultivating an atmosphere of acceptance in classrooms. It is important for
teachers to establish clear classroom rules, which are displayed and discussed so that students have a clear understanding of appropriate behavior (Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008). Another way to provide support is through the pairing of victims with positive role models. The purpose of pairing of victims with other students is to build a support network for them (Roberts, 2006). Students who are bullied need to know where to turn for assistance. Research also suggests that friendship plays an important role in protecting students against victimization (Mouttapa, Valente, Gallaher, Rohrbach & Unger, 2004).

**Implement social skills training.** Social skills training needs to be provided to both students who are targets and those who are bullies. For the student who bullies, the goal of social skills training is to “redirect their desire for power and dominance toward more positive endeavors” (Heinrichs, 2003). As mentioned earlier, students with disabilities tend to have difficulties reading social cues and may have an increased likelihood of becoming victims of bullying. Thus the goal for those who are targets is to empower them with the social skills necessary to overcome difficult situations.

There are several important techniques to consider when teaching social skills. For example, social interactions and socially appropriate responses need to be taught explicitly (Heinrichs, 2003). According to Smith & Gilles (2003), Social Skills instruction is most efficient when it is conducted in the environments in which the target behaviors or skills are expected to happen. In other words, social skills need to be taught in the natural setting “where appropriate social skills are expected and where skills can be modeled by socially competent peers” (Smith & Gilles, 2003).

**Explain role-playing.** Students need to practice the techniques and social skills they have learned in order to increase the likelihood that they will be succeed in applying those skills
in real-life situations. Effective role-playing works best when the participants are willing to engage in the role-playing activity and when they feel safe practicing the newly learned social skills in the natural environment (Roberts, 2006). Role playing also provides an opportunity for teachers to give feedback to students.

**Enable embedded instruction.** Another important instructional technique to consider is embedded instruction involving the integration of instructional content within the context of an activity (Smith & Gilles, 2003). Embedding instruction in an activity provides opportunities for students to practice simple yet important skills. In order to generalize the learned social skills and to replace the challenging behavior, it is important to provide ample opportunities for students to practice target skills (Smith & Gilles, 2003). For example, when teaching children how to establish positive interactions with others, the desired behaviors can be prompted and reinforced by teachers during class activities.

**Define social stories.** The question has been posed, “How can bullying interventions better meet the needs of students with disabilities through teaching them proper social skills”? A way to help students with disabilities acquire these skills is through social stories; thus including social stories in bullying interventions would be a way to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.

A social story is simply a short story that teaches social skills. According to More (2008), the use of social stories has been successfully utilized for improving a variety of social skills, such as playing independently, gaining positive peer attention, increasing peer interaction, and decreasing socially inappropriate behavior. A study conducted by Kalybe and Agaliotis (2009) demonstrated that social stories can effectively increase the social competence of children with learning disabilities (LD). In addition, social stories help to improve LD students' social
integration, and decrease their inappropriate social behaviors. Social stories meet an individual child's needs because they are written from the perspective of the student. The story is personalized to help the student practice specific skills and behaviors, suggesting appropriate responses in a particular situation. Through the use of social stories, communication between parents, teachers, and children increases, as does the time to practice important social skills. Moreover, social stories engage children by relating the story to their actual experience (More, 2008). The same author indicated that it is not enough to fix the behavior by simply presenting the stories to children. An important element of social stories is the teacher prompting the children to access, read, and review the stories so they can become valuable learning tools.

**Teach positive replacement behavior.** Gresham, Van, and Cook (2006) pointed out that teaching replacement behavior to counteract competing behavior is a frequently overlooked benefit of social skills instruction. Replacement behavior training is recommended as a way to overcome many different problems described in the social skills training literature, including generalization and maintenance of target behaviors. Gresham, Van, and Cook (2006) also mentioned that the purpose of replacement behavior training is to “identify a prosocial behavior that serves the same function as the inappropriate behavior” (p.364). One way to motivate positive replacement behaviors is proposed by Heinrichs (2003):

Adults may choose to take a developmental approach when determining what will motivate students to change their behaviors. Intervention strategies that focus on empathy, self-regulation, anger management and awareness, as well as tolerance and respect for others, are likely to have an important and long-lasting impact. Punitive measures alone will not be effective in changing attitudes or beliefs and could create more problem behaviors (p. 203).
Many educators believe that in order to implement social skills training effectively, the function of the behavior needs to be understood and that the problem behaviors should be replaced by appropriate behaviors.

In using a behavioral approach, functional behavior assessment involves three steps: (1) individual functional behavior assessment is conducted to determine the context in which the behavior occurs, (2) hypothesis statements are generated with information about antecedent events, problem behavior, and consequence events, (3) a behavior support plan is developed (Anderson, Fisher, Marchant, Young & Smith, 2006). The purpose of functional behavior assessment is to obtain a better understanding of the problem behavior, identify a replacement behavior that serves the same function, and select an intervention relating to the behavioral function. The purpose of the intervention is to teach the replacement behavior identified in the functional assessment.

**Rationale for Future Study**

Although school-wide bullying interventions are a widely recommended strategy, there is limited evidence documenting the positive effects of this approach (Smith et al., 2004). Smith and colleagues (2004) indicated that it is often a challenge to apply school-wide intervention to the more general aspects of school climate. In addition, Merrell and colleagues (2008) noted that the use of certain methodologies might limit the results of formal investigations.

The most common method of evaluating bullying interventions is through self-reports of victimization and bullying (Smith et al., 2004). However “recent research has illustrated that self-reports of bullying and victimization, although not necessarily inaccurate, do not correspond to information about bullying and victimization obtained from peers or teachers or from observations” (Smith et al., 2004, p. 554). To counteract this shortcoming, researchers have
recommended that data be collected from various sources such as teacher observations, classmate reports, administrator questionnaires, and parent surveys (Smith et al., 2004).

**Understand the needs of all students.** Questions have been raised regarding how applicable bullying interventions are to the needs of students with disabilities (Flynt & Morton, 2007). Students with disabilities are among the 1-7% of students at the top of the PBS triangle deemed most at-risk. They often benefit from intensive and long-term intervention. Future research is needed to investigate the outcomes of school-based bullying intervention for students with disabilities.

Research in the area of PBS suggests that students with disabilities are likely to benefit from interventions not only at the school-wide level, but also at the secondary and tertiary levels of the PBS triangle. In other words, although students with disabilities may benefit to some extent from intervention at any level, they will likely need intensive instruction at the small group or individual level. Implementing interventions across multiple environments, including the home and community is likewise consistent with the PBS approach.

**Meet the needs of all students.** An important reason to study bullying is that the effects of bullying on children can be harmful physically, academically and socially. Research is needed to identify interventions that have been used successfully or that might be implemented to prevent bullying behavior among students with ASD. Data collected through interviews conducted with the parents of students diagnosed with ASD are likely to provide meaningful and accurate information for the following reasons: (1) The parents have an interest in providing accurate information that will improve the social interactions, overall adjustment and learning environment for the students in question. They know the children well and have frequently seen them interact with others in school and in other settings. (2) The semi structured interview format
allows the interviewers the freedom to ask unplanned questions when appropriate. This methodology allows the researcher to develop new theoretical perspectives and gain important insights as the information is gathered.
Method

A qualitative investigation was conducted to investigate the perceptions of parents of high functioning adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) regarding incidents of bullying in which the child was involved. The research objective was to acquire information that could potentially be used to prevent the occurrence of bullying behavior, mediate the adverse effects of bullying, and help children with ASD engage more fully in positive interactions with peers. Major themes were identified and analyzed.

Participants and Settings

The study consisted of seven participants who were assigned the following pseudonyms: Brenda, Camille, Kelly, Kevin, Sara, Helen, and Pauline. All of the participants were parents of high functioning children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder or Asperger’s syndrome. The children ranged in age from 11 to 24. Six of the participants were members of a parent support group and one of the participants was a faculty member working part-time at a local university. The parents were recruited through personal contact with members of a parent support group living in a community in the western United States. Parents were between 36 and 55 years old; six were married and one was widowed. The parents’ ethnicity was Caucasian, and the sample was comprised of six females and one male. The parents’ socio-economic status was primarily middle class, with annual incomes ranging from $35,000 to $55,000 except for one participant whose annual income was above $65,000. The participants’ demographic information is displayed in Table 1.

Following her explanation of the proposed project at one of the support group’s regularly scheduled meetings, the researcher asked interested parents to sign a consent to participate form.
Table 1

*Participant and Family Descriptors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000- 45,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$45,000- 55,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$55,000- 65,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $65,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher followed up with phone calls to schedule the 30 to 60 minute interviews. Six of the interviews were conducted in the participants’ homes. One of the interviews was conducted in the participant’s office at a local university. An undergraduate majoring in special education accompanied the researcher to the interview sites, acting as voice.

Although children with autism tend to manifest a variety of characteristics and symptoms, students whose parents were selected for participation in this study were those considered to be relatively “high-functioning” (McGovern & Sigman, 2005), suggesting the child's cognitive ability was well within the normal range of intelligence. (See child characteristics in Table 2.)

**Materials.** During the interview, an iPod was used as the audio recorder. The data from the audiotapes were stored in files played in *itunes* and were transcribed using a word processor and Microsoft Word software.

**Sampling method.** Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. Purposeful sampling has been described as “the practice of selecting cases that are likely to be information-rich with respect to the purpose of a qualitative study” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 178). Participants were selected based on evidence suggesting that the children’s characteristics were consistent with the definition provided by the Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules:

> Autism is a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3 that adversely affects a student’s educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. (Utah State Office of Education, 2007, pp. 28-29)
The Rules additionally state that the definition doesn’t apply if a child’s educational performance is adversely affected because the child has an emotional disturbance or an intellectual disability; however, a child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age 3 may be identified, if the team determines that the child meets the definition of autism. A description of the participants’ children is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

*Information About the Participants’ Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th><em>Age</em></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Primary diagnosis</th>
<th>Mainstream</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camille</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>IEP, 504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Asperger’s</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>Asperger’s</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>IEP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Child’s age at time of interview*

**Procedures**

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained prior to beginning the study. Once the participants had agreed to participate, the interviews were scheduled. The adult participants were given example interview questions prior to signing the consent form. They were told that questions such as the following might be included: “Does your child like school?” “Can you describe your child’s social interactions with others?” “Have there been any challenges?”
Permission to audiotape the interviews was obtained prior to data collection. The semi-structured interviews were conducted individually and lasted approximately 30-60 minutes.

Each participant chose the meeting time and place for the interview. Prior to beginning the interview, rapport was established by allowing time for the interviewers to introduce themselves and to explain the potential benefits of the study to the interviewee. A brochure about bullying created by the researchers was mailed to each participant when the interviews were completed.

**Data Collection Instrument**

The questions asked of the participants were adapted from a semi-structured interview guide. Follow-up questions were asked as needed to gain clarification and understanding. Interviews with the parents began with general questions about the child’s school experience. The interviewer subsequently asked the parents a series of questions, rewording the questions as needed to clarify their meaning. The semi-structured interview guide was comprised of the following questions:

1. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved. Where did the event(s) take place? Can you describe what happened?
2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?
3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?
4. Were you satisfied? What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

**Data Analysis**

The data from the audiotapes were transcribed. Seven summaries of the transcriptions of the seven interviews were then created. The qualitative data, consisting of the participants’ responses to the open-ended questions on the semi-structured interview guide were sequenced.
and organized into logical groups. Words and phrases that expressed similar ideas were placed into a particular category. Major themes were then identified. Each transcript was coded by the primary investigator and a second coder and checked independently by a third reviewer. After coding the responses independently, the coders met to review and discuss the interpretation of the data. The next step was quantifying the responses to determine strength of pattern. Lastly, the researcher identified and summarized the patterns and themes derived from data. The process used to select the content for the seven case summaries, the final coding categories, and to obtain inter rater reliability is detailed in the following paragraphs.

Writing the case summaries. Criteria for selecting the content for the seven case summaries were based on the four areas addressed on the semi-structured interview guide: (1) Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved; (2) Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?; (3) Was the bullying incident resolved? How?; (4) Were you satisfied?; (5) What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation? (See selection criteria, Appendix B.)

The researchers used the selection criteria as the basis for making decisions about which phrases and words to include in the case summaries. The first and second coders created the case summaries independently and then met together to discuss differences in the content selected. Differences in the coders’ decisions were resolved with the help of a third reviewer prior to creating the final case summaries. (See the seven case summaries, Appendix C.)

The three coding categories were developed subsequent to reading all of the transcripts, writing the case summaries, and making adjustments to the summaries following the coders’ discussion. Although the four main areas of the structured interview guide formed the basis for selecting the content of the seven case summaries, these four areas were eventually narrowed
down to three final coding categories: (1) Specific Instances of Bullying, (2) Interventions Implemented at School, and (3) Interventions Implemented Outside of School. Inter rater agreement was calculated on the basis of the three final coding categories.

Coding the summaries. The primary and second coders initially coded four of the transcripts together (Helen, Kelly, Kevin and Sarah). The three remaining (randomly selected) transcripts representing at least 20% of the data, were those of Camille, Pauline, and Brenda, and were used as the reliability check. During attempts to achieve inter rater agreement across the three coding categories, the coders met together after independently coding a particular transcript, clarifying definitions and resolving differences, prior to coding the next transcript. Reliability coefficients for the three categories were as follows: category one, “Incidents of Specific Bullying,” = 83%; category two, “Interventions Implemented at School,” = 100%; category three, “Interventions Implemented at Home;” = 100%. One disagreement occurred in category one, “Incidents of Specific Bullying,” during the coding of Brenda’s transcript. Although the original definition of specific bullying did not include sexual abuse, the primary coder defined it in this manner, resulting in an average percentage agreement across the three case summaries of 94%.

The specific coding procedure is described as follows: (1) referring to the transcript’s case summary, the primary coder identified the words and phrases to be included in the coding category; (2) referring to the same case summary, the second coder independently checked “yes” if she agreed with the primary coder’s selection of a particular item and “no” if she disagreed with the item’s selection. If the second coder believed the first coder had omitted certain items, these items were noted as comments, but were not counted as disagreements. Information from the coding charts indicated that although the second coder made no comments regarding selected items for
Brenda and Pauline, in Camille’s case, one comment was made in category three, “Interventions Implemented at Home.” (See verification charts in Appendix G.)
Results

In this study, a qualitative evaluation approach provided the framework for data analysis and interpretation. Construction of the seven case summaries and their subsequent analysis allowed the researcher the opportunity to examine critical information relating to the occurrence of bullying among children with ASD and to discover ways in which the problems were resolved from the parents’ perspective.

Through use of the qualitative method, new understandings of the issue were inductively derived, and were assumed to come from the experiences and information gathered from the participants. The open form question format allowed the interviewer to probe beyond a participant’s expected responses and potentially obtain a new perspective. Parent and school interventions were two major themes or subcategories.

In addressing the research question, “What are the perceptions of parents of high functioning adolescents with ASD regarding the resolution of bullying incidents in which the child was involved?” participant responses were placed in four categories aligning with the questions written on the semi-structured interview guide: (1) Can you describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved? Where did the event(s) take place? Can you describe what happened? (2) Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else? (3) Was the bullying incident resolved? How? (4) Were you satisfied? What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation?
Incidents of Being Bullied

The participants were asked to describe a bullying incident in which their child was involved. Although all respondents reported that their children had encountered incidents of bullying, the frequency and the intensity of the bullying varied. For example, Helen indicated that her son had been continually picked on at school and provided specific examples suggesting that he had been maliciously bullied (e.g., physically and verbally) by boys—but not by girls. Despite her concerns, Helen acknowledged that she had only been to the school to address the problems two or three times. Kelly likewise indicated that her son has been bullied at school from time to time, implying that this occurrence was not unusual.

Parent awareness of bullying. Parents found out about the incidents of bullying in different ways and to different degrees. For example, Brenda reported that she didn’t learn about the events at the time they occurred because her son would tell only his sister, and he would ask her to keep it a secret. When Brenda saw the evidence of her son’s abusive treatment (e.g., his “muddy books,”) she would confront him, and it was then that she would learn of the incident. Although Helen was able to find out about her son’s being bullied by his own reporting, she learned that she had to wait to talk to him until he was calm enough to describe what happened. Kelly, on the other hand, noted that as her child grew older, he kept information from her, not telling her the whole story. Kelly also believed that she was able to sense that something was wrong, despite her son’s reluctance to talk about the incident.

Location of bullying. The incidents at school occurred in the hallways lunchroom, on the playground, and in the bathroom. For example, Helen specifically described an incident that happened repeatedly in the lunchroom. In all, three of the seven respondents gave accounts of incidents of bullying occurring in the lunchroom. Alternatively, Boy Scout Camp and areas between the home and the school were noted as locations in which bullying occurred outside the
school environment. Brenda specifically mentioned that bullies seemed to wait until her son was off the school grounds and on his way home before they confronted him.

**Type of bullying.** The types of reported bullying fell into three main categories. Three respondents described incidents of physical bullying. Five respondents gave examples of verbal bullying and four respondents spoke of relationship bullying. Some examples of physical bullying were pushing, shoving, tripping, and slamming the individual’s hand in a locker door. Verbal bullying included behaviors such as name-calling, teasing, imitating the victim, engaging in irritating behavior, and verbal harassment. Relationship bullying involved daring the victim to perform a socially inappropriate act or excluding the victim by not allowing him to play in certain area. (See Table 3.)

Table 3

*Instances of Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullying type</th>
<th>Number of parents reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Incidents of Bullying Others**

The participants were asked if there had ever been a time when their child bullied someone else. In response to the question, Kevin commented, “These kids don’t know how to act in social situations and they tend to lose friends real quick.” Kevin didn’t believe the aggressive acts were intended to offend others. According to his account, the tendency on the part of children
with autism to lose friends appeared to be due to a lack of social awareness rather than to the desire to hurt others.

Pauline spoke of a time when her son had been getting into fights with a few boys at school because of the things they said to him. She noted that her son would not tell her what the other students had said when she inquired. It wasn’t until two weeks after the fighting occurred that Pauline learned from the teacher that one of the other students had remarked, “I am smart and you are dumb.” Like Kevin, Pauline seemed to attribute the problems her son encountered with peers to a lack of social awareness. She believed that her son’s “irritating” comments precipitated a negative reaction from peers, and if he thought he was being teased, he fought back by hitting and kicking.

Interventions

The interviewer asked the participants to describe intervention(s) that had been used to support the child subsequent to being bullied. In response to this question, parents explained how incidents of bullying were resolved. Although parents reported procedures that were implemented after the bullying occurred, they also described interventions implemented proactively, prior to having to deal with a difficult situation, intended to foster social interaction with peers. (See Table 4.)

Social support. The information gathered suggested that social support was an important strategy, implemented proactively, and one that had helped children deal effectively with bullying behavior. In fact, four of the seven parents interviewed cited social support as a useful resource. Camille stated that her son’s membership in the high school band provided him with a circle of supportive peers; Kelly indicated that one of the things that seemed to help her son the most in terms of social interaction, was having peers who accepted and supported him at school. Sara, on
the other hand, credited her son’s involvement in a religious organization with increased levels of social support, noting that his affiliation with the youth organization provided him with a group of friends outside the church environment. Kevin spoke of the need to have a group of peer advocates at school, friends who are aware of the student’s strengths and limitations.

Table 4

*Implemented Interventions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Number of parents reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social stories</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal from the environment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role playing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech therapy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills training</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction in problem solving</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult supervision</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling (outside of school)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Role-play.** Two parents described role-play as an intervention contributing to the resolution of incidents of bullying. Helen and Kelly reported role-playing with their children at home to help them acquire skills that would help them deal with difficult situations at school. Helen recommended role-play as a means of building children’s self-confidence, implying that it served as an important teaching tool.

**Social skills training.** Camille described the social skills training program,
“Skillstreaming,” noting that the program was used by professional staff to help her son and other children develop prosocial behavior at school. She explained that the curriculum was taught in the general education classroom to socially well-adjusted children and children experiencing significant social challenges. Helpful features of the curriculum included a ring of social skill cue cards listing the steps to follow in practicing social skills such as “How to Join a Group,” and “How to Stand in Line.” Camille indicated that the cards provided her son with “a way to decode the world,” and “gave him some steps for (successful) access.” Camille also reported that the social skills training program also helped her son acquire important self-regulation skills. For example, when an expected situation would arise, instead of screaming and running out of the room, he learned to take deep breaths and count to ten before reacting.

Camille additionally worked with the school counselor, stating that the objective of much of their training was to help the child discriminate between bullying and non-bullying behavior by showing him “what bullying looks like and (to recognize) the difference between a mean dare and a nice dare.” Camille explained that the trainings involved the use of concrete examples and a lot of repetition. In teaching socially appropriate playground behavior, in one instance, the child was asked, “Do you normally see sixth graders going over to the kindergarten playground and swinging on the swings?” Despite the direct instruction “when things varied (even) a little bit, he would have a hard time (understanding the social expectation) and that is where the circle of friends - and training of friends helped.”

**Explicit instruction.** Six of the seven parents reported teaching their children how to resolve bullying incidents by using explicit instruction. Kevin stated that his son worked with a therapist who helped him memorize how to act in specific social situations. When one of the children experienced an unpleasant incident at school, the parents encouraged the child to talk
about it at home and attempted to help the child work through the situation by asking questions and offering suggestions.

**Social stories.** Three of the parents provided an account of their use of social stories. Camille explained, “We did a lot of social stories to help create more predictability in his life and help him script his life and understand certain social situations that created anxiety (and we tried) to decrease anxiety.” The three parents agreed that social stories had proved beneficial in teaching appropriate social behavior to their children.

**Alternative Responses**

**Adult supervision.** One participant mentioned the importance of adult supervision. Kelly viewed the role of the teacher to be helpful in this regard, noting that most of the time parents do not get the whole story, based on the child’s account. Kelly further implied that since school personnel are the ones who spend the most time with students (when school is in session) the impact of teacher and administrator supervision is potentially significant.

**Building self-confidence.** Parents described yet another aspect in relation to interventions implemented at home to prevent bullying. The following two examples underscore the perceived importance of parents taking an active role in building a child’s self-esteem and sense of security. Helen stated that she always tried to be positive with her son and to continually build his self-confidence so that he would be able to solve his own problems. Kelly pointed out the beneficial effects of letting children know they are valued and helping them avoid self-blame.

**Empathy training.** Some parents reported using empathy training to resolve incidents of bullying. For example, Camille found it useful to explain the “theory of mind” perspective to her son. She implied that once her son was able to understand a situation from another’s viewpoint, he was able to correct his own socially inappropriate behavior. However, Camille acknowledged that
figuring out where the other person is coming from continues to be a challenge for her son. Kelly also described helping her son comprehend others’ views and to better appreciate outside perspectives.

**Removal from school.** Three of the parents removed their children from the environment to resolve incidents of bullying. Brenda pulled her son out of preschool because he appeared to be unable to learn in that setting. She said that she homeschooled the child for several years prior to enrolling him in a general education classroom.

Camille spoke of the difficulties accompanying the transition from elementary to middle school, noting that these changes can be particularly challenging for children with autism spectrum disorder. She indicated that when her son started middle school he lost the cohesiveness and positive climate enjoyed at the elementary level. She explained, “It was difficult to provide him with the structure that he needed to feel safe and (to create a predictable environment) because the classes change so often.” So at the end of eighth grade, the child was subsequently homeschooled for the first half of the year, and he attended a private school part of the day during the second half.

Helen also decided to remove her son from the environment when the conditions became severe. She expressed concern about having her child remain in a situation in which he would be continually exposed to other boys’ aggressive behaviors.

**Developing hobbies and interests.** Three of the respondents considered the development of hobbies and interests to be a useful intervention. This was certainly the case from a preventative standpoint, although the benefits could be viewed as being somewhat broader in scope. For example, Brenda believed that learning karate had helped her son gain self-confidence and that the setting in which the lessons were taught had created a safe social environment for interacting with others in a physical way.
Helen recounted ways in which her son had benefited from developing his personal interests. She believed that his artistic talent had not only contributed to increased levels of self-confidence, but had also provided a creative outlet, resulting in the release of stress and frustration. She stated that drawing had been “a real calming influence in his life.” Helen likewise mentioned that her son was able to gain “some recognition in an area (in which) he excelled a little bit,” and to obtain “some acceptance from his peers.”

Kelly reported that her son especially enjoyed reading and planning events; “He gets (the students in his class) excited about something (related to) his current project, something he has read about or something he wants to do, a food drive or a surprise party for the teacher’s birthday…by doing that he endears himself to the other students and they end up liking him.”

**Recommendations for Interventions**

The participants were asked if they were satisfied with the interventions implemented to resolve incidents of bullying and to suggest alternative responses. Parents’ recommendations are summarized in the following paragraphs. (See Table 5.)

Table 5

*Recommended Interventions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Number of parents reporting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching social skills as an early intervention</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Providing adult supervision/monitoring</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Providing support system at school</td>
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<td>Peer modeling</td>
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<td>Developing hobbies and interests</td>
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<td>Parent involvement/school-parent connection</td>
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<td>Providing a structured environment</td>
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<td>Improving language processing/comprehension</td>
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<td>Professional development for teachers</td>
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**Teach early intervention and social skills.** Helen recommended teaching children exactly what to expect to help them predict the environment and to learn how to react in specific social contexts. She expressed some regret at not having recognized at an earlier time the importance of teaching children with autism spectrum disorders in this manner. On the other hand, Kelly noted that early diagnosis and early intervention had made a positive difference in the outcomes her son had achieved, stating “What I found out, as soon as I recognized and accepted that there was a problem . . . (is) we could get him the help (he needed) and he progressed so much better.” Kelly viewed early intervention to be the essential key allowing her son to be mainstreamed most of his school years. Sara likewise noted the importance of starting intervention early, and regretted not having had access to more services and additional information at an earlier point in time. Camille praised the excellent early intervention services provided to her son through the public school system when the family was living in a mid-western state, while Pauline lamented not having social skills training available at the school her son attended during his first years.

**Implement a support system at school.** Pauline viewed her son’s educational environment to be lacking needed levels of support, stating that he didn’t have anyone, “like a school counselor or therapist,” to go to. Camille, on the other hand, reported having had a good experience working with the guidance counselor at her son’s school. She said the counselor was aware that her son was being bullied and that he intervened proactively. Kevin likewise expressed appreciation for the support the school provided his son, stating, “The best security blanket a parent can have is a good support system.” He specifically mentioned the school offering excellent resources, good people to work with, and providing high quality parenting classes.
Engage in peer modeling. Pauline and Sara both listed peer role models as a potential source of support for students with autism spectrum disorders. Peer modeling is more likely to be of benefit if the student has a friend or group of friends with whom he or she associates with on a regular basis.

Encourage adult supervision. Kevin and Sara expressed dissatisfaction with the adult supervision provided in the non-classroom areas of the schools their children attended (e.g., lunchroom, hallway, on the bus) implying that problem behavior is more likely to occur under less structured conditions. Helen recommended that children with disabilities be monitored more closely than she had observed to be the case. Helen additionally remarked that although segregation from other students is not the best option, increased amounts of adult supervision are likely necessary when students with disabilities are present.

Participate in hobbies and interests. Helen suggested getting children with autism spectrum disorders involved in exercise and teaching them activities they can perform independently. Helen believed that hobbies and interests can create increased opportunity for socialization.

Create a parent-school connection. Because children with autism are not likely to convey needed information to parents, Helen recommended frequent communication between the home and the school stating, “Parents of children with special needs better be involved and know what’s going on in their school.” She said that she volunteered for “everything,” made an effort to attend all school events, and participated in filling out “back and forth” books.

Commit to a structured environment. Camille observed that her son performed better in structured social situations than in situations that were less structured. She described the challenges her son had in reading nonverbal cues and in trying to make sense of the environment
when verbal or more explicit cues were lacking. This was the reason she and her husband decided not to require their son to attend Boy Scout camp. She believed that flexibility in not forcing him to take part in some non-preferred events seemed to increase his compliance when he was required to participate in others.

**Teach language skills.** Camille believed that children with autism spectrum disorders tend to benefit from a continued emphasis on the development of language processing and comprehension skill. She speculated that growth in these areas might have a carry-over effect, improving the child’s social interactions, as well.

**Enhance professional development.** Camille described the difficulties her son faced at school in attempting to transfer acquired skills to different settings and circumstances. Even though her son learned specific social skills and could tell the difference between bullying and non-bullying behavior in the presence of the school counselor, it was difficult for him to apply the same principles in the classroom and other settings. Camille perceived a need for school personnel to teach socialization skills in a variety of situations to promote skill generalization. She implied that training would be needed and that professional development could be helpful in changing attitudes toward bullying. Kevin likewise expressed concern regarding the attitude of school personnel toward bullying, noting that some educators seemed to believe the best way to deal with the issue is to help children accept the reality that “life is rough.” It was Kevin’s view that this approach generally does not work well for children with autism spectrum disorders.
Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to identify factors contributing to the successful resolution of incidents of bullying among high functioning adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and to obtain parent recommendations. The parents’ responses were placed in four categories relating to (a) incidents of bullying in which their child was the victim, (b) incidents of bullying in which their child was the bully, (c) interventions used to resolve incidents of bullying, and (d) the degree to which parents were satisfied with the way in which incidents of bullying were resolved, and follow-up recommendations.

Summary of Key Findings

Key findings of the study align with the four questions contained on the semi-structured interview guide. Since a primary focus of the study was to identify interventions found to be helpful in preventing or resolving incidents of bullying, this topic was an important general theme and contained the bulk of the information gathered. Second in importance were the parents’ recommendations. Key findings across all four categories are described in the paragraphs below.

**Incidents of bullying.** Parent responses indicated that all of the children had been bullied at one time or another and that the majority had difficulty in developing social skills. These findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that bullying tends to occur frequently among youth with Asperger’s syndrome enrolled in inclusive settings (Little, 2001) and that social skill deficits can give rise to significant social challenges at school (Baron et al. 2006; Wainscot et al. 2008). The present results are therefore similar to earlier findings suggesting that behaviors and characteristics of high functioning children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders can be obstacles to establishing positive social relationships with peers and this may put them at increased risk for being bullied.
Victims’ responses to bullying. Factors that seemed to counteract the risk factors noted above included academic skill, development of areas of interest (e.g., talents and skills) and opportunities outside the school environment for increased social interaction.

While all parents reported that their children had been involved in incidents of bullying, parental input also suggested that the victims’ responses to the bullying behavior varied. For example, children who had higher academic skills, hobbies, and other personal strengths appeared to be more capable of resolving their own social conflicts during childhood and adolescence compared to children without these assets. This assumption is based on the outcomes described.

Resolution of bullying incidents. In the current study, parents viewed supportive peers to be positively related to their children’s satisfactory social adjustment. Pauline, Kevin and Camille specifically recommended social support as an intervention that might be effectively used to resolve incidents of bullying.

Social support has been defined as “the provision of emotional and material resources by family, friends, and other significant individuals in one's life” (Westerman, p. 2, 2008). Previous research indicates that peers can play a critical role in terms of social support (Cowie & Olafsson, 2000; Scott, 2011). According to Cowie and Olafsson (2000), three types of peer support have been shown to mediate the effects of bullying or limit its occurrence: befriending, conflict resolution, and a counseling based approach. The authors likewise stated that common elements of these interventions include instruction in active listening, empathy, problem solving, and supportiveness.

Camille and her husband helped their son develop friendships with peers by arranging “play dates” at their home while he was still in preschool. The pre-planned activities were structured and fun for everyone. Camille noted, “By the time he was in high school, he had a good
group of friends; they were all a year younger, but the leader of this group of friends had a younger brother with a disability, so he was sensitive and always included my son in his group.” She further stated, “so I think the key was when he was accepted, there was structure and sensitivity by one or more members of the group.”

Helen recommended that parents of children with autism spectrum disorders engage in frequent communication with administrators and teachers. Not only do peers provide needed social support, but family members can also play a significant role (Bowes, Maughn, Caspi, Moffitt, Arseneault, 2010). Supportive families act as a protective factor, promoting resiliency following the occurrence of bullying or other stressful life events. For this reason, families should be included as part of school-based interventions designed to mediate the adverse effects of bullying or to prevent its occurrence. It has been shown that a calm, structured, and positive home environment can be beneficial for children who face emotional and behavioral challenges (Bowes et al., 2010). Thus, the parents’ contribution in assisting children with autism spectrum disorders to effectively deal with bullying behavior should not be underestimated.

**Research Implications for Parents and School Professionals**

An important aim of the study was to provide input to parents and educators regarding the strategies viewed as being most helpful in preventing or mediating the effects of bullying. Parent intervention, school intervention and instruction in social skills (implemented both at home and at school) were primary points of emphasis. These findings are summarized below.

**Parent intervention.** The importance of the parents’ role in mediating the effects of bullying was a major theme identified in the current research. Participants did this in a number of ways; for example, by fostering the child’s social development and enhancing his self-confidence through the establishment of friendships, providing the child opportunities to develop important
skills and talents outside the home environment, teaching the child social skills at home, personally connecting with school staff, and removing the child from a harmful situation. By these means, the parents in the study demonstrated active involvement in helping their children deal with bullying.

**School intervention.** A second major theme was derived from parents’ views of interventions that ought to be implemented at school to prevent incidents of bullying or in response to bullying behavior. Professional development opportunities for school personnel and organized support systems such as those provided through programs of PBS were points of emphasis.

Participants in the current study perceived a need for the additional training of educators to improve their awareness of the potential effects of bullying, their knowledge of preventative measures, and to help them better understand the needs and social challenges of children with autism spectrum disorders. Previous research suggests that increasing teachers’ awareness of the negative effects of bullying can help them become more involved in preventing bullying at school (Yoon, 2004). Experts have likewise advocated actively involving teachers in bully prevention efforts, noting the importance of training all school staff in the use of effective strategies to lessen the occurrence of bullying school-wide (Scott, 2011).

Pauline, Camille, and Kevin mentioned the importance of students feeling supported at school. Related findings suggest that students who are not engaged in bullying report feeling more supported by their teachers and peers than students who bully and/or are bullied. In contrast, victims of bullying tend to feel less supported in the school environment than the students who bully them (Flaspghler, Elfstrom, Banderzee, and Sink, 2009).

School interventions deemed to be most effective in the prevention of bullying may be conceptualized within the framework of an organized support system, consisting of trained
specialists, interested teachers, therapists, and ancillary personnel. Systemic support at the school-wide and classroom level such as that offered through programs of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is likewise recommended in the literature (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Because PBS is implemented at multiple tiers, interventions are provided at three different levels of intensity, and as noted earlier, the programs are specifically designed to align with a school’s identified needs (Marchant et al., 2009). It is, therefore, possible to provide students with disabilities and other students at risk for being bullied, intervention at all three levels of the PBS continuum. It has also been noted that social skills can be taught at the school-wide or universal level, as well as in small groups and/or in one-on-one instructional sessions.

**Social skills instruction.** Current findings clearly indicated that parents viewed social skills instruction to be an important intervention in the prevention and resolution of incidents of bullying. The need for instruction was mentioned in relation to parent, school, and early intervention. Social skills training additionally intersected with a number of other intervention topics including social stories, explicit instruction, language development, and role-play. It may therefore be concluded that participants in the current study viewed social skill instruction to be an essential intervention for high functioning children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders.

Previous research suggests victims of bullying tend to lack critical social skills. For example, Fox and Boulton (2005) identified a number of characteristics linked to social skill deficits, including socially withdrawn behavior, demonstrations of anxiety or sorrow, and engagement in irritating or annoying actions that place children at increased risk for victimization. Researchers have recommended teaching social skills via social stories, written text cues, and video feedback (Thiemann & Goldstein, 2001).
Limitations

The interview method is an indirect measure of behavior, assessing participants’ perceptions; thus information is considered from parents’ perspectives, and is not necessarily factual, but impacted by emotional response. Interview data are therefore interpreted from this stance. Additionally, the participants in this study were recruited from a parent support group in the same community. As a result, the perceptions of this sample may not represent the perspectives of the larger population. The parents’ involvement in a support group implies that they likely possess a strong interest in their children’s welfare. Thus it is also possible that the level of advocacy demonstrated in this sample may not be representative of the population as a whole. The small sample size is another factor potentially limiting generalizability of the findings.

Finally, schools may have difficulty implementing parents’ desired interventions. For example, schools may have difficulty providing students with optimal levels of supervision in non-classroom areas, more specifically, when walking or being transported to and from school.

Suggestions for Future Research

School-wide interventions to prevent bullying are intended to benefit all students (Scott, 2011). However, additional research is needed to evaluate the impact of school-wide interventions on the performance of students with disabilities to determine whether the students have acquired essential replacement behaviors. Given the diverse learning needs of high functioning students with ASD, additional research is likewise needed to identify and evaluate accommodations and modifications that would allow the students to fully access bullying curriculum and activities implemented in the school environment.

Although the current study examined the perspectives of parents regarding the resolution of incidents of bullying among high functioning youth with autism spectrum disorders, future
research would do well to examine similar issues from the perspective of teachers as well as students.

Finally, even though the important role of parents in helping children with ASD acquire skills and develop strengths is without question, it would be useful to investigate the resources available to parents at local, state, and national levels and to determine the sources of support that have proved to be most beneficial. This information could be of value to other parents as they attempt to foster the social development of children with ASD.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Semi Structured Interview Guide

(1) Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved within the past year. (Where did the event(s) take place? Can you describe what happened?)

(2) Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?

(3) Was it resolved? (How did it change? Can you describe the changes? Were the changes permanent?)

(4) How was it resolved? (What was the intervention? How soon after the event did the intervention occur? Was the intervention effective?)

(5) Were you satisfied?

(6) What would you like to have seen happen or done differently in this particular situation? (Why? Do you have any other information you would like to share?)

General Questions to be Read by Participants Prior to Signing the Consent Form

(a) Can you tell me about your child’s experiences in social situations?

(b) How does he/she get along with others?

(c) Have there been any challenges?

(d) How were the challenges resolved?
APPENDIX B

Criteria for summarizing data

** Not every criterion needs to be met to fit under that category
** Number each incident and have that number correspond to that incident in each category.
** If an answer to a later question does not directly correspond to a specific or general incidence, include it at the end of the question.
** Therefore information from each incident should be included in every relevant category.
** Non-examples may be included in every category.

1. A. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved.
   1. The incident described has
      1. An intent to harm
      2. Physical act of violence/or aggression
      3. Teasing, name calling and other verbal harassment
      4. Excluding individual from a group or threatening to withdraw friendship
      5. Using technology with their intent of victimizing or harming an individual (cyber-bullying)
   2. Parent said it was bullying
   3. Specific incidences - the bullying description is detailed
   4. A specific bully is mentioned

1. B. General descriptions of bullying
   4. If the word bully/tease/pick on/make fun/mean of is mentioned
   5. Not a specific incident

2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?
   1. Direct answer to question
   2. Every incident mentioned where child bullies another
   3. General and broad incidences

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?
   1. Right after description of incident
   2. Resolutions of conflict
   3. Strategies taught in reaction to bullying
   4. Strategies taught in order to prevent further bullying
   5. School involvement (or other agency involvement)

4. Were you satisfied with outside interventions? What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation?
   1. Direct answer to question
   2. Suggestions made for future resolution
   3. Challenges or frustrations they experienced in the process of resolving the issue
   4. Direct answer to: “what would you do differently next time?”
   5. Parents’ opinion or reaction to resolution.
APPENDIX C

SUMMARY

Brenda’s Interview

1. A. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved.

(1) P: 1:36 Yes R: Um and then tell us a little bit about that and I can ask you some more questions. P: Okay. One moment (brief interruption). 2:00 Um my son did experience a lot of bullying. Where he was a victim of you know, just he was more timid, he would get upset when I would offer to intervene because he said I’d make it worse. And so for a long time, in fact most of the school year I never knew it was happening because he’d just go cry to his big sister and she’d promise not to tell. You know kind of thing. And so finally like, late home again? And these books are muddy and he just doesn’t take care of things and she’s like “mom, it’s not that” you know. R: I see, what kind of bullying was happening? P: 2:39 Um he was in third grade so usually it was a couple grades ahead you know, 6th graders would wait until he was off the school ground because they knew the rules about bullying and they were clear. And so they would wait until he was on his way home and then they would do things like take away his backpack or throw his books and homework in in you know mud puddles. (R: mhmm) A lot of pushing, shoving, name-calling, that sort of thing.

(3) then he went through a time when he became a follower. (R: okay, when was this?) Um probably towards fifth, sixth grade (R: mhmm). And that was really alarming because kids would find him that were troublemakers and get him to do it for them. (R: I see) Get him to follow along. You know, let’s get in to the neighbor’s haystack, let’s let out their rabbits, let’s you know just. (R: right) “What are you doing?” “Well they said I could.” And he didn’t have the connection to know, I mean you know they said he could, and he could do it, you know. (R: right) there wasn’t.

B. General bullying

(2) But actually bullying happened from very early on. Children much younger than him would push him or bite him (R: really?) and he would withdraw. (R: that’s how he reacted to it) Yeah. R: That’s interesting. Did this every happen at school too? Would that thing, those kinds of things happen at school or were they primarily after school? P: 5:17 um. This was before school, before he started kindergarten.

(2) R: Interesting, so did the bullying continue after this? P: Apparently. R: But you didn’t know about it at the time? P: No. R: How long after did you find out? P: Um I guess it went on for about a year and a half (R: really) during that time that he was in the school, in that school. (R: mhmm) Uh we moved um and he was just a shy kid after that. He just basically chose not to make friends.
2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?

*** [daughter] P: I don’t know. I still don’t think I have it. She’s really neat really neat, and really cool and really sensitive one day. And the next day I’m like “ah, you can’t do that with the cat” and “no, you can’t hit people” and “no, no, no” and then she gets to a place where she’s bullying. R: Interesting, so she’s taking on more of the bullying (P: yeah) because she doesn’t know how to interact appropriately? P: Yes R: Interesting, what does that look like? P: Um, she does things out of curiosity. Like how long can the cat hang by one leg. Or how long can. You know. And you think “can’t you tell?” you know but she doesn’t again relate to anything outside of herself. (R: mhmm) Um she’ll hurt people for no reason and so I did the very unusual, untypical thing last week. Because we spent all these years saying, “okay, no you hurt somebody” “well, it was an accident” “no it was not an accident when you hit them on purpose,

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?

R: So you knew about that it was happening after a little bit? Or what did you do? P: Almost, I would have to say, 6 months after it began, it was a long time afterward. (R: right) And when I found out of course I went to the principal and of course there was notices and of course it was please but he didn’t know the names of these kids, he didn’t dare find out the names of these kids, (R: mhmm) he was threatened you know not to, that sort of thing. So the basically the best we could do was that. Which really didn’t protect him (R: mhmm).

R: Interesting. So what did, did you talk to him about that at all? Or did you just mostly go to the school, officially? P: I did talk to him and he would just say “nope, you’re making it worse you’re making it worse, (R: really) just don’t don’t don’t you know when they find out they’ll think I told and then they beat me up worse.” You know. “Just leave me alone” R: um he, you said that he confided in his older, his older sister (P: mhmm). Do you think 4:17 that she could have talked to him about any of that or did she talk to him about it at all? P: Yes R: What did she talk to him about, what did she say? P: Um I I actually don’t know what she said I just know that he was you know, she was the confidante, that you know that that he could go to her and she was reassuring and we you know of course talked about that he could go to an older person that it was not okay for that to happen. That if needed I could walk him home from school, I would do whatever and you know, he felt that was humiliating to have his mom walk him home from school, he was a big kid.

P: 5:17 um. This was before school, before he started kindergarten. I finally pulled him out of school because he seemed unable to learn in a school setting. I taught him at home for several years and then tried again where he did well with remedial classes in addition to the regular class.

R: Interesting, so did the bullying continue after this? P: Apparently. R: But you didn’t
know about it at the time? P: No. R: How long after did you find out? P: Um I guess it went on for about a year and a half (R: really) during that time that he was in the school, in that school. (R: mhmm) Uh we moved um and he was just a shy kid after that. He just basically chose not to make friends.

(3) P: We just you know I’d I you know we talked about following, we talked about leading. We you know basically he had to take the responsibility for what he had done, make amends. You know, go to the people and talk about his part in it. (R: right) That you know, basically teach him moral character and I think um he went through a really really hard time at that point because he would focus on one thing 13:21 and then he couldn’t shift the focus. So he just I think in. I don’t know, kids do this you know, you break the glass and see what happens, whatever that kind of thing (R: right).

(4) Because we spent all these years saying, “okay, no you hurt somebody” “well, it was an accident” “no it was not an accident when you hit them on purpose, (R: mhmm) you have to say I’m sorry, you have to work it out, you have to help them feel better.” And so she would. She understood that she could hit people as long as she said I’m sorry and made them feel better. (R: interesting). So huh kay, great. So I finally said. Alright, you think it’s okay to hit people as long as you say you’re sorry. Alright, now I’m going to allow the person that you hit to hit you back and they’ll tell you that they’re sorry. (R: interesting) And she seemed to get that. R: Yeah, and you know and sometimes that’s what has to be done. You never want to resort to that but. (P: so) But she seemed to get it, has it been better since then? P: Yeah it has. (R: interesting) But I had just about given up on that one. I I was. I thought “well I remember my mom” you bite the little sister and she’s got little teeth marks and you remember biting her thinking wonder“what will happen?” and I bite her and you know you’re very small. And you know, she’d say “can’t you see it hurts, look she’s crying, with the mark.” ya ya ya she goes, “no I don’t think you get it.”

So then she bit my finger and I thought you know “okay, you wouldn’t usually recommend that you do that but” sometimes (R: sometimes you have to, to make it personal). They need to get it. (R: mhmm) So I thought, well okay, in parenting you’re not ever allowed to resort to something that would really hurt the child. So I resorted to telling the child oh, you bit them. Alright, put your finger in your mouth so you bite yourself as hard as you bit them. And they would (R: mhmm). Okay, but they have to mind their mom so they did and then they got it (R: right) so.

• And we talked about this in the counseling that we both had as I was doing intervention and at one time the counselor scolded me severely because uh a small, or a young child, not small, about his size, but much younger had bitten him through the skin and the back. (R: really) And he you know I was comforting and trying to reassure and it was you know they spoke a different language there was a communication barrier and so I brought him home and I explained that it was a little kid. And the little kid didn’t know better and you know they just wanted what he had (R: mhmm) so that was their way of doing, anyway just kind of. And the counselor said, “No. You let this child know in particular he has the right to defend himself, that he has the right to say no. This is mine, (R: mhmm) you can’t have it. You know, help him establish those protective barriers.”

• R: I see, that’s interesting. Um as he grew up did you, was there continued bullying as he grew up too? Or was it primarily elementary school? P: Elementary school because we
uh enrolled him in karate classes we began to really assert, once we found out (R: right) that this was still going on. Then we were like okay this is (R: you’re done) yeah, we’re done. We’re done. R: Okay so okay you found that to be effective? Like, karate classes? P: Yes I think it helped him again, much as physical therapy had just to, you know there was a lot of body movement and it was okay it was, (R: mhhm) nobody’s getting hurt. (R: right) Nobody’s you know. And and uh you know there was contact with people in sparring, it was okay, it was safe um. So I think he gained confidence and a lot of self-confidence 11:46 at that point which he didn’t have before.

4. Were you satisfied? What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

(1) So the basically the best we could do was that. Which really didn’t protect him (R: mhhm). R: Did you see that these things kept on happening afterwards? P: Yes.

- And the counselor said, “No. You let this child know in particular he has the right to defend himself, that he has the right to say no. This is mine, (R: mhhm) you can’t have it. You know, help him establish those protective barriers.” R: Specifically because of his nature? P: Yes. R: I mean, you don’t think the counselor would suggest that to everyone or? P: I don’t know. R: You don’t know I mean, how could you know, I guess that was a stupid question. P: No, no question’s a stupid question. But um, those are good questions and I wish I knew that. I don’t um as I began to study why things happened that was just what I learned. Was that parents of children who get you know abused in one way or another haven’t taught them that assertion or the aura of assertion and that leaves other people protected.

- P: Elementary school because we uh enrolled him in karate classes we began to really assert, once we found out (R: right) that this was still going on. Then we were like okay this is (R: you’re done) yeah, we’re done. We’re done . . . R: Yeah, so were you happy with his social interactions? P: At that time, (R: middle school) yes he began to make friends

- Um 15:20 so we still have a lot of really difficult social situations that he still makes friends easily but he doesn’t keep friends. (R: mhhm) He really doesn’t have close friends, no confidence, at all. So basically I’ve become his best friend (R: mhhm) and when a situation comes up in the family he doesn’t “why do they think? Why do they do that?” He doesn’t translate why. He sees that people do things (R: mhhm) but he doesn’t know why they do things. And so we’ll spend six hours going over and around it and around in a circle and back again and trying to relate to something that he can relate to. And then he’ll say okay “I think I’ll get it” and he really gets it and he is probably, I mean he has a really lot of personal insight (R: mhhm)because we really focus on that. Which is unusual. (R: right) But he doesn’t, every time a new situation arises, it’s new. R: If it’s not the same situation (P: right) he doesn’t (P: yes) know how to generalize (P: yes) what he’s learned to, I see (P: yes).

- R: That is too funny. Did you um, was there any bullying that took place in middle school? Or high school? P: No, not that I know of. R: So pretty much it was just those rough elementary school years? That’s good P: yes. I think he wasn’t pushed around anymore. I think he was more sure of himself. But he also was very reticent to ever reach
out. *(R: mhmm)* And I’ve been anxious over that of course forever. Because he has no close friends.

- *R: 22:05* *Do you feel like the school supported you enough?* *P:* Yes I think the schools were very supportive. I don’t think that we had the same services that they have now. But for what we had they were very supportive. *R: What do you see now that you wish you could have had then?* *P:* Well in kindergarten and first grade and I don’t know whether it would have ever been different for him but they didn’t know what to do with him in those grades. . . . *R: But if it was, if you were raising him and he was now I mean the age of your daughter now, you know you would definitely push for those kind of services. P:* Sure, absolutely, sure. And I would have been more understanding.
SUMMARY

Helen’s Interview

1. A. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved.

   (2) 2:18 Um junior high, um let me see. Middle school was was the first really bad one that I had to go to the school and get really upset about. He came uh home, several days in a row and just cried and didn’t want to go back to school. And uh it was really hard though for him to verbally explain to me what had happened. Just he really didn’t wanna go back to school and J loved school so I knew that something had happened. So finally um he was calm enough and able to use his language enough to tell me that there were some boys that had been teasing him at school and the day before one of them had followed him into the bathroom at school. And J had always used a stall, he had just been taught that and he was very modest but he always used a stall and and the kids I guess or these boys, teased him a little bit that he wouldn’t use the urinal and uh while he was in the stall, sitting on the toilet, they kicked the door in and I guess they stood there and laughed at him and pointed at him and he was devastated and didn’t know what to do. . . . And then that’s that happened I think in sixth grade 5th grade just um towards the end of middle school.

   (8) R: Do you uh, has there ever been a time when your son has told you about a conflict that happened and how he um resolved it but on his own. P: 25:43 Yes, there has been, but most of them were as he got older . . . uh in the lunch line they used to let the special ed kids out a few minutes early so that they could get their lunches and be sat down before the herd of kids (R: uh huh, right) came into the lunchroom and J was mainstreamed a lot and so um the teachers would forget to let him out a few minutes early. so he would be standing in line and uh sometimes the, the lunch lady would tell him he could come up to the front of the line all the kids would be soo mad because he got to go up to the front of the line and uh. one kid was standing behind him, pushing him you know cuz J rockin and kind of cuz he’s getting frustrated and nervous and and he got pushed a few times

   B. General bullying.

   (1) 1:32 But then when they get into uh the older elementary ages that’s when um some of the kids started to be a little mean. Imitating him. He stutters and so of course that was an easy target to uh imitate and tease him about. He also had some uh self stim routines. Flapping his fingers.

   (3) 4:41 . . .And junior high was absolutely horrible, and I know that’s when all of the kid’s hormones start kicking in and you know boys and girls are interested in each other. But the boys were really, really pretty mean. And one thing that I don’t know if this has been an advantage or a disadvantage for J is that he is a handsome young man and he looks normal and you don’t realize he has a problem until you talk to him. And so I think a lot of the kids at school expected him to act more normal than he really could and um I think he ended up
getting teased maybe a little bit more because of it and uh not, I don’t think too many girls have teased him along the way, the boys have been the hardest.

(4) 6:20 . . .His social appropriateness had to be taught. It didn’t just come naturally just uh just from playing and being with other people. We had to teach everything it seemed like. And uh so when and even though he couldn’t really express himself as well as he would like to of, he could tell he was being teased he just didn’t know how to deal with it.

(6) And you know ‘cuz they, I don’t think that he naturally ever knew how to stick up for himself because he felt at such a disadvantage verbally for one thing. And then his thought processes are just a little slower. It takes him a while to uh just to think about it and react to it. He could always tell when they were being mean but he just didn’t know how to react uh and so he would kind of shut down a little bit and just. But we’ve done everything we can to uh just to socialize with him, to interact with him, keep him part of a group.

(9) 31:13 Um so do you feel like he’s pretty he was able to decipher between bullying and appropriate interactions? P: 31:22 He he developed a sense of humor as he got older. Um no, there was definitely a time when kids were able to talk him into doing things that in his mind maybe he knew that was not appropriate. But they would do it and they would encourage him to do it. . . . When the kids would think it was real funny if they could get him to.

(10) 32:49 um a lot times sarcasm has been a problem because you can be sarcastic without really sounding mean and he he didn’t know he wasn’t able to tell (R: right) if they were nice or if they well he would just think that they were his friend because they would talk to him (R: right) and he couldn’t decipher that it was a mean voice or something mean inappropriate being said to him. and that took a while for him to and still he probably still has some problems with that. I think people could say some sarcastic things to him and he would not understand. . .Um he has developed a little bit of a sense of humor. For a while, he couldn’t, if someone were really kidding with him he didn’t get it either. (R: oh) He would think they were being mean. (R: right) But when they were really joking (R: mhmm) and wanting to engage him and being funny he didn’t get that either.

2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?

(5) And of course, in the resource classes in Junior High, um there’s a combination of all different kinds of special needs and of disabilities and some of them are behavior problems and uh J has never, he’s never had behavior problems. In fact, for having autism he is a very sensitive um and very social person. He’s always wanted friends but just had a hard time of knowing appropriate behavior. His social appropriateness had to be taught. . .7:57 And I don’t think, I’ve never had anyone tell me that he was a bully I do know that he had his
feelings hurt and would get angry. But when that happened he would go and be by himself, he
would leave the group. And separate himself and didn’t want to be around anybody. Which
is, you know, bad for kids with autism because they have a tendency to want to do that
anyway. And sometimes he would clench his fists and have a really angry face and kinda
stomps around.

(7) 20:06 I know a lot of parents deal with their children acting out and bullying and maybe
self injury and stuff like that because they get so frustrated. And J has had frustrations but he’s
hasn’t dealt with them in an aggressive way he’s um internalized them more. So we’ve had to
so I haven’t had to deal with him being mean to other kids. (R: that’s good) yeah, yeah.

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?

(1) He stutters and so of course that was an easy target to uh imitate and tease him about. He
also had some uh self stim routines. Flapping his fingers. And we did a lot of behavior
modification to make his stims more socially acceptable and he has done really well with
those. Although he still kind of rocks on his toes and he’ll shake his hands a little bit down by
his sides.

(2) Well you know, and he has to continue to go to classes throughout the day with these boys
and so I uh called the school the next day and was really angry and talked to the principal and
J knew the boys that had done it and so of course um they were called in but then J and I had
to work for days to get him to have his confidence built back enough that he felt like he could
go back to school and face them or handle that situation and we’ve always had to role play.
Whatever kind of teasing that he had experienced at school then when he got home and could
tell me about it, then we’d role play. 4:41 So that he could experiment on different things that
he could say or do to make them leave him alone. . . . (R: So you say, you worked a lot on role
playing and talking through things. Do you feel like the school also did this? Or do you feel
that most of conflict, conflict uh resolution came from the home?) P: 20:53 I I think the big
things like the bathroom incident. The schools um we all did the same thing. I know the
principals talked to the children, the other children involved, the parents had to talk to them I
think it was a group effort those the big conflicts were group efforts. The little things that
upset J um we just uh you know uh I don’t know because I didn’t call I never called another
parent and said you know tell your kid to leave my kid alone (laughing) (R: yeah) so I always
wanted to try and have j confidence built up enough that he could do it himself. Because I
knew if I was calling if I were calling other parents and and that he might get it worse, you
know? (R: yeah, yeah) and I didn’t want him to have that kind of reputation. Yeah I think the
school helped a lot. Teachers and the principals especially during those middle school years
(R: definitely) yeah yes. . . . 24:10 after the incident at the middle school, we kept a back and
forth book for a while because I didn’t want those boys around him for a while. I just felt like
that was an unfair situation to put him in, to have him in the same classes you know I didn’t
want you know, you never know what’s going on with another child. In their home life or why
they’re being that aggressive and what kind of problems they’re dealing with too and I, I
expressed that to the principal you know you need to deal with this child in a certain way but
I don’t want my child exposed to their aggressive behavior anymore (R: right) because J can’t
deal with that, he doesn’t know how to deal with it 24:56 and we’re going to have to work on
on it and so you know sometimes it is good to just remove them from the situation and I think usually the teachers and principals have been pretty willing to do that when because I’ve only done it when there’s been a big issue.

(3) 4:41 And junior high was absolutely horrible, and I know that’s when all of the kid’s hormones start kicking in and you know boys and girls are interested in each other. But the boys were really, really pretty mean. And I only think I’ve only been to school for problems maybe two or three times.

(6) 15:20 . . . He could always tell when they were being mean but he just didn’t know how to react uh and so he would kind of shut down a little bit and just. But we’ve done we’ve done everything we can to uh just to socialize with him, to interact with him, keep him part of a group. Because I think if you don’t make a concerted effort to do that that they really feel comfortable being alone. (R: right it’s more natural) Yeah it doesn’t bother (R: right) them. They’re fine. They don’t yeah and so you just have to really interact with them and keep them involved, even if you’re forcing them to. Then after a while it becomes natural for them to (R: right) and I want him to feel more natural with people than alone. (laughing) (R: yeah)

(8) Yes, there has been, but most of them were as he got older (R: okay) when he was able felt like he was able to stick up for himself and he’d he’d you know practiced and learned enough to say “I don’t like that” you know “don’t do that.” (R: that’s good) and where he’s been able to stop. uh in the lunch line they used to let the special ed kids out a few minutes early so that they could get their lunches and be sat down before the herd of kids . . . finally, the lunch lady told me this, is that J turned around and said “please stop pushing me, I don’t like it.” And the kid stopped. but see, I think most of the you know for all the times before J had never said anything. I think they they don’t know what to say so they don’t say anything and then they’re easy to tease but finally he said I don’t like it stop it (R: good for him) and then the kid stopped. And then that was a good lesson for j too because 27:20 it was like oh so. If I say stop it I don’t like that sometimes they stop. (Laugh.) So that was good.

(10) there was definitely a time when kids were able to talk him into doing things that in his mind maybe he knew that was not appropriate. But they would do it and they would encourage him to do it. And so that’s another thing we spent a lot of time talking about is that sometimes other kids try and get you into trouble that that you know what’s right because we’ve taught it here at home and you you have to be able to say “no, I won’t do that” and if you know if it goes further than that to be able to tell the teacher to give them some kind of power that they can go to someone and and uh, uh be safe in telling them but that happened a little bit probably in middle school and junior high.

- P: okay let’s see well. Just uh just like someone pestering, like teasing him, imitating him, mocking him because he has the the stutter. Then um first of all I would always let him be pretend to be the bully and I was him because I wanted him to feel you know I didn’t want him to feel like I was teasing him too (R: right) so he always got to pretend to be the bully and and then I would I would say what I a few options of what I think J could say, you know. “I know I have a stutter but I can’t help it so please stop, you know, imitating me, it makes me feel bad” just to be able to or that he could talk to his teacher. And have his teacher talk to both of them together because I think a lot of times um uh
you know the other kids if it’s explained to them that, you know, this child has a
disability, he stutters, he can’t help it, please don’t tease him, a lot of times the other kids
will just stop doing it, if they understand. (R: right) So we would just go over a few
different things that he could say and we’d practice them. And then then maybe he’d do
homework and have supper and then we’d come back in the living room and do it again.
And then maybe we’d change positions. And then by the end I would be the bully and
give him the opportunity to say (R: that’s great) what what he was going to say and then
I said, “so tomorrow, if that kids imitates you and and mocks you, what are you going to
say?” And I said let’s you know, we’re riding in the car let’s practice it, I’m going to be
the bully and then I’d say something mean and he uh, we just practiced really (R: that’s
great) and uh 30:39 it did help but it’s hard to know what what to uh practice them on (R:
right) ‘cuz sometimes kids will tease him over things he didn’t expect. . . .P: We have
role played a lot. Because I think it gives them a little bit of a sense of power that they
because um J has to process things over and over again. It takes him a while to think it
through, figure out exactly what it means and uh I think the more we role play and the
more he thinks about it then when he’s faced with that negative situation again, he knows
he can do, you know, a few he has a few options. He doesn’t have to just get mad or
start crying or you know. That he can say. I don’t like that, leave me alone or I’m going
to go tell. And you know ‘cuz they, I don’t think that he naturally ever knew how to stick
up for himself because he felt at such a disadvantage 15:20 verbally for one thing. And
then his thought processes are just a little slower. It takes him a while to uh just to think
about it and react to it. He could always tell when they were being mean but he just
didn’t know how to react uh and so he would kind of shut down a little bit and just.

- 36:42 okay and so another thing I was just discussing that J is an artist but and it’s kind
of a natural thing that he always liked to do. And it was a way for him to relive stress and
frustration and it has been since the time he was little. He liked to draw and uh and so
we encouraged that and that has been a way for him to build self confidence, have some
some recognition in an area where he excelled a little bit and to get some acceptance
from his peers too that (R: yeah) um. and so he’s uh loved to do that and it’s been a real
calming influence in his life.

- And another thing that’s been really important in his life too is animals. 37:46 And uh
he’d uh, you know there’s just the two children in our family, he just has his older sister
and and we’ve always had pets. And he relates very well to animals so 38:00 we’ve
had dogs and cats and he’s ridden uh we’ve got friends who have horses, he’s ridden
horses. And he has a real natural uh ability to uh kind of connect with animals, he loves
animals and it helps him. It’s funny when he’s talking to a horse or to our dog, he doesn’t
stutter (R: really?) but when he’s talking to a person I guess whom he feels judgment
from or feels nervous (R: that’s really interesting) that then he he stutters. But They
told me his stuttering had nothing to do with the autism. It was a separate um (R: really)
problem but um I I think they’re connected
4. Were you satisfied? What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

(2) P: 20:53 I think the big things like the bathroom incident. The schools um we all did the same thing. I know the principals talked to the children, the other children involved, the parents had to talk to them I think it was a group effort those the big conflicts were group efforts. Yeah I think the school helped a lot. teachers and the principals especially during those middle school years (R: definitely) yeah yes. R: 22:10 um do you wish that there was anything that would have been done differently? P: um R: at the time when the conflict was going on do you wish someone would have reacted differently or even now looking back P: Well for one thing I know that when it happened, the day it happened, I’m sure J acted different with his teachers and with everybody he came in contact with that day in fact he may he may have you know went and hid somewhere in the school I don’t know. But I think with kids that have special needs uh I wish there were some way to kind of monitor them a little bit more closely. I don’t think they should be you know segregated from the rest of the school population but I think the more I just think the school needs you know more technicians to help the teachers. They need more people there so that there’s more adults kind of monitoring what’s going on. and I know that it’s hard to justify with how much money they may have but . . .24:10 after the incident at the middle school, we kept a back and forth book for a while because I didn’t want those boys around him for a while. I just felt like that was an unfair situation to put him in, to have him in the same classes you know I didn’t want you know, you never know what’s going on with another child. In their home life or why they’re being that aggressive and what kind of problems they’re dealing with too and I, I expressed that to the principal you know you need to deal with this child in a certain way but I don’t want my child exposed to their aggressive behavior anymore (R: right) because J can’t deal with that, he doesn’t know how to deal with it 24:56 and we’re going to have to work on it and so so you know sometimes it is good to just remove them from the situation and I think usually the teachers and principals have been pretty willing to do that when because I’ve only done it when there’s been a big issue

(3) And I only think I’ve only been to school for problems maybe two or three times. 6:15 When he finally got to HS, that’s when it seemed uh they seemed to mellow out a little bit and there was actually a group of kids that were accepting and uh a little protective of some of the special ed kids. And uh through HS I think he had some pretty good experiences. But uh Junior high was definitely the hardest.

- 10:35 or, and And so I think that’s hard with kids with disabilities because they have a tendency to end up alone a lot and I think are more sedentary and it’s really important to uh teach them exercise and activities that they can do independently without having to rely on another group of people but or I think they. Cuz J would sit and play video games you know if you let him all day he loves that so you have to kinda get them interested in something else to get them out there.

- 23:23 I’ll tell you one thing, parents uh of children with special needs better be
involved and know what’s going on in their school I volunteered for everything J and I were at everything, literally. because I wanted I wanted to know exactly what was going on. J would never come home and tell me anything that was going on at school, I had to I had to be there. So if you’re expecting an autistic child to communicate to you what’s happening at the school or what’s going on (R: laughing) in class it’s not going to happen (R: right) I had very close contact with um teachers, principals and volunteered for everything at the school that I possibly could so that um we had back and forth books.

- R: 27:30 that’s great. Do you feel like it would have been better to teach him these skills before he was bullied so that maybe that catch up would have come at the right time? P: yes R: absolutely and you know what it probably would be good for every child. But definitely for kids with disabilities. They need to be able to know a little bit of what to expect and how to react to it. Autistic children need to be taught those kind of social situations anyway and not, you know. I I wish I would have known but uh probably like most parents who have children with autism, you learn as you go and yeah now if I had another child with autism I could do a lot better (laugh)

- The little things that upset J um we just uh you know uh I don’t know because I didn’t call I never called another parent and said you know tell your kid to leave my kid alone (laughing) (R: yeah) so I always wanted to try and have j confidence built up enough that he could do it himself. Because I knew if I was calling if I were calling other parents and and that he might get it worse, you know? (R: yeah, yeah) and I didn’t want him to have that kind of reputation.
SUMMARY
Camille’s interview

1. A. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved.

   B. General bullying

   (2) 6:40 Um oh he would be the um object of he’s vulnerable so that a lot of other kids would chug him on and dare him to do things that normally a child of that age wouldn’t do. Like a sixth grader they would dare him to eat grass. And so he would go and eat the grass thinking that that was being a part of that group but it really wasn’t. *(R: not realizing that was bullying instead)* mhmm, it was hard for him. 7:08 um he learned by junior high to tell like the climate when he was being bullied. But like that transition before he didn’t so.

2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?

   (1) P: 5:43 um he would want to, he would want to engage but he didn’t know how to so he would go to like maybe stand up in the classroom and go like poke somebody and just poke them. And hopefully it was someone that was tolerant and would go get help from the teacher *(R: mhmm)* or you know say “please stop” um. Or one time he had a substitute in school and the class was just really chaotic. And most of the kids

   (3) 17:30 R: were there ever instances where um your son took on more of a bullying role? Simply because he did not know how to interact with people? P: um he would with his youngest sister. *(R: really?)* mhmm. Never with other kids in school, he’s very obedient, um but he would come home and take things out on her. *(R: Really?)* and tease her and target her and um we had to work. We had to really work with him on dealing appropriately with some anger if he came home from school feeling angry you know, he could take a nap, we gave him choices of what he could do. Um but yeah we would see that at home with his youngest sister

   (4) P: um. Oh for him bullying? *(R: mhmm)* P: 21:02 you know there was one incidence, it wasn’t a bullying incident but in high school he liked a girl and he had learned to drive. It took him a while to learn to drive he was late in getting those skills *(brief interruption)* um so he was about 17 but he really liked this girl and didn’t know how to let her know. So he would take our family van and after school he would drive really slow and like drive and follow her home and he did it several times and so this girl’s mother called and said “my daughter thinks your son is stalking her and it’s really creeping her out”

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?
(2) 7:08 um he learned by junior high to tell like the climate when he was being bullied. But like that transition before he didn’t so. R: *um why in junior high did he learn it? Was it just because that’s when it clicked or were you guys working on that?* P: 7:25 um well that’s when he, a lot of the social skills training that we had done um he he felt he lost that sense of that safety net that he had in elementary school and that group of friends that had grown up with him. Because it was just several elementary schools came together (*R: right*). Um so he lost that cohesiveness and the climate was such that um it was that aggressive behavior he could really sense that and um and it was difficult to give him the kind of structure that he needed to feel safe and predictable because the classes change so often.

8:08 so part of eighth grade we homeschooled him and then the second half we did part time in a private school (*R: okay*). So his whole eighth grade year was not in the public schools.

(3) *R: 18:13 how did you deal with that?* P: um with um we dealt with natural consequences that you know if he hurt her then he had to go to his room, be separated and talk about what happened and process it. um and then do something nice for her in return. Which, he didn’t like doing that. (*laughing*) So that was for him a consequence he didn’t like. We wouldn’t make him, we helped him, we tried to help him learn the concept of you know, I’m sorry I made you feel bad but we wouldn’t make him say “I’m sorry” we wanted him to really understand what that was (*R: mmmm*) so we’d have him serve her, make her bed, do things that would help her because he had hurt her so we we I and you know. We just did a lot of trial and error. (*R: right, absolutely*) Yeah it was a lot difficult. and there were some times we just physically had to protect her. It wasn’t often, it was usually after a bad day of school. Or and she’s a screamer and unpredictable. If she’d scream he’d just smack her (*laughing*) so. So we taught him that you know he can leave the room, (*R: mmmm*) um and if he’s so upset you know he can come get me, come get dad. And he learned to regulate himself, separate himself. And then we got him some we call them attenuating ear um I’m having work recall problems um ear like not like ear plugs but they would filter out the high frequency noise (*R: oh*) so when we went to church or when was home and his sister was bugging him he’d put those ear plugs in it kind of like attenuated that sound. (*R: really?*) yeah (*R: that’s pretty cool*) yeah we learned about that from an audiologist. So

(4) and so I had to explain to this girl’s mom about S and um and that you know it was not that at all. He was just, he liked her (*R: right*) and they were friends and he didn’t know how to deal with all of those feelings. So I talked with her and at first the mother was really angry um but once I helped her understand where S was coming from she was fine. And then um she talked to her daughter. And I said you know if you want me to come over and talk to both of you that was would be fine. And then S um we had to talk to S about that whole theory of mind that whole what her perspective was like what that felt like to her. And once he got that he was able to stop the behavior. (*R: good*) yeah so I think just getting, figuring out the other person’s perspective is just wasn’t has been a constant challenge for him.
2:17 Um so then what we decided to do we worked with his speech therapist and created a circle of friends to help him um with some of the social skills of interacting with other kids. And we did we taught his whole class so that everyone in his class knew where S struggled. And so they would, he could play with kids that were considered, what at the time was like pro social, that they had some social skills training to help him

(3:21) um because he um he had learned some social expectations in elementary school and there was protection with more rules and more guidance and support. ASK

4:02 and then in high school, and um he joined the band. And that structure provided kind of an artificial, not an official circle of friends but a circle of friends in the band.

R: 8:55 when you say the social skills training that you guys had worked on before, what do you mean by that? Like what kind of social skill training did you do? P: um we did um a lot of social stories to help make, create more predictability in his life and help script, help him script his life and understand certain social situations that created anxiety to decrease anxiety. Um we worked closely with counselors. And then we uh worked with a program called “skill streaming” this is back in the early 90s. R2: skill streaming, I think I heard of it. P: mhmm, it’s an older program. I have I don’t know if I have it here but I have the books. But it’s a program where you teach the typical kids and the kids with the social challenges things to do. And he had um a ring of cards um “how to join a group” (R2: mhmm) “how to stand in line” (R2: mhmm) and he could refer to these cards and have them in his pocket. And so it kind of gave him a way to decode the world and gave him some steps for access. And we’d practice at home (R: mhmm) and has a family we would go to the playground when kids weren’t in session and play as a family and kind of teach him how to play on the play equipment and (R: okay). Um we did some role play of situations what do you do if someone’s like bugging you or getting too close to you? And we’d role play even things like that. R: 10:26 when did you start doing this? P: um well we started informally before we realized what was going on in preschool … 15:47 (R: mhmm) and I think a lot of it is self-regulation, learning to self-regulate instead of, if there’s something loud and unexpected in the classroom you don’t get up and scream and run out you take deep breaths and do self-calming behaviors (R: right) that was one thing that was on his little card thing. Yeah. Take a deep breath if you feel angry and upset. (laughing) Yeah. Count to ten. I can still see the cards in my head (laughing) we still have them somewhere so.

R: 12:41 did you do anything specifically to help him deal with um bullying. Or differentiating between bullying, non-bullying type of things? P: Mhmm. Yeah we did a lot with that. We worked with um the school counselor and we um did a lot of training with um what bullying looks like and what what’s the difference between uh a mean dare and a nice dare. And um talked about if it’s something, if someone’s asking you to do something that you normally don’t typically see other children doing it, it’s probably not a good idea. (R: right) and we had to do it really concretely (R2: mhmm) to help him um with lots of repetition (R: mhmm). So we had lots of talks about well “do you normally see you know, sixth graders going over to the kindergarten playground and swinging on the swings?” and (R: right) and you know singing or something like that. And he’d say “no” and then we’d say “is that a mean dare or a nice dare?” or “a friendly thing or not friendly?” so we had to work with him and he would learn different social scripts and then if things varied a little bit he’d have a hard time (R: mhmm). And that’s where the
circle of friends and training of friends helped.

- So every teacher he had we’d usually like fourth, fifth, and sixth grade um my husband would go out and take him out for ice cream and then I would go in and meet with the class (R: oohh) and talk about you know, what is high functioning autism and how we talked about theory of mind and did an example of that sometimes S doesn’t know what you’re thinking. (R & R2: mhmm) and explained typical behavior and um so those three grades he had lots of kids that were really supportive in his class.

4. Were you satisfied? What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

(2) 8:08 so part of eighth grade we homeschooled him and then the second half we did part time in a private school (R: okay). So his whole eighth grade year was not in the public schools. R: was that better, a better year for him? P: um it was, it was. It was um, he felt more disengaged he felt less connected. Seventh grade was awful because he had lost his circle of friends from sixth grade but seventh grade um was just an awful year. But eighth grade, yeah it was it was great for family but he felt more disconnected (R: mhmm) from his peers. Because he had that desire to socialize but just didn’t know how to connect.

(3) R: that’s neat. 20:06 was there any one thing that you thought made the biggest difference in that kind of situation. Or was it just a combination of trying things or did he just kind of grow out of that? What? P: Um I think maturity really helped (R: uh huh). I think maturity helped and I think his learning as his sister grew up too she became more predictable (R: mhmm). And as he, once he got in high school and he had this group of friends um he did much better. He did much better.

- 3:21 so junior high was really confusing for S... And then junior high there are less adult to children ratio and it was just a lot more difficult. So um. He he had one or two friends that knew of his challenge and were kind to him. But for the most part it was a really lonely time for him, junior high.

- So I think the theme for him is his social situations if they were unstructured and he had to fend for himself and read the social nonverbals and and try to interpret things he did not do well. But in structured situations when people were aware of his challenges he did better. He did better. And so I think loneliness, um, feeling different, um feeling lost, a lot of times he felt lost, he didn’t understand why he couldn’t he couldn’t access these groups of children.

- R: 15:47 how long do you think it took for those things. Um did you see like immediate progress after. I mean going through social skills or talking about the difference between bullying and non-bullying. Did you see immediate results after that or did it take time for him to be able to process it and understand it and apply it. P: um it took time. He would understand with um it was hard for him to generalize when we’d teach him the principles (R: mhmm) and then it would be hard for him to generalize to different situations. (R: right) And then there were some social situations that were just too we kind of decided what um situations were worth the battles that were worth fighting there were some
things we just did not do like boy scout camp. That’s just like a free for all, you know? (laughing) so we didn’t, we didn’t do any scouting anything with scouting um so he knew that we were giving him some room. Some wiggle room. And so when we require him to go to certain social things he was more compliant because he knew that we were pretty flexible in other areas. (R: right) yeah. (R: that’s good) but it did take time for generalization.

- P: oh I think yeah in high school I wish that we had accessed more and thought more about what he could really do for a living. (R: okay) because his he’s got an average IQ, not super high, a lot of the kids with Asperger’s tend to have you know will have high IQs (R: right) that they can compensate but. He’s pretty average that way and so we were so thrilled that he was being he was successful in high school, he was passing high school he was going to graduate and he had a 504 plan and he didn’t need an IEP anymore and so he was a lot more independent and he was driving. We really focused on a lot of those developmental skills and didn’t do a lot of future planning (R: mhmm). He took one computer class at MATC but I think if we could go back in time we would do a lot more of mentoring for okay “what would you like to do for a living?” “What are you curious about?” (R: mhmm) um and maybe I don’t know if he would have been ready developmentally but been thinking more as parents. Because now he’s 24 and he’s at UV he’s at UVU and just taking a couple classes at a time and he works (R: mhmm) at the accessibilities center. So he’s um he’s kind of like he was in high school he was being successful within this structure that he has. But as far as finding something that he can do to support himself that’s productive is going to be a challenge. (R: oh) Yeah.

- R: 24:34 that’s interesting. (P: mhmm) Is there anything else that you would have done differently? P: um. If um. I think maybe given him more more support um with some language processing and um. Because I found in the schools he would just barely get by. You know he did he did well, he passed his classes, but more support to really understand um language. And um understand how we process language and comprehension. Do more with comprehension. And I mean we were always doing social skills things but I think there’s certain things that with language processing that were still hard for him. Now that I’ve gone back to school and my husband’s out of school I think gosh, there’s some things. 25:35 Like when he was in 11th grade he said, “what does it mean when people say ‘for example’?” (R: oh) That certain things he didn’t understand the meaning of certain words but he would just go along. And when he doesn’t understand something he has a nice strategy. He’ll say, “oh what do you mean by that?” (R: oh that’s neat) or “could you say that again in a different way?” so (R: that’s great) I think we would have helped him more comprehension. R: Do you think that would, and then that would have helped him more, socially. (P: mhmm) By doing that not only academically but also socially. P: Yeah I think so. Yeah right. I think it really would have.

- R: 26:11 Do you feel like you focused too much on social social social areas? P: Um social, yeah we did a lot in social/emotional. I don’t know if we did too much, because that’s the area where he still struggles. But I think um because we were busy and had other kids that we didn’t stay with uh speech, that that whole speech and language therapy and the support there (R: mhmm) if that would have helped him.
R: Do you wish that the school would have given you more support or done anything differently? (P: um) Because it seems like you did a lot on your own. P: Yeah it would have been nice if we had more funding in the schools. (R: yeah.) (laughing) Because and when we lived in Michigan, when he was diagnosed and we had um, that’s where we had the uh speech therapist that went into the classroom every week with me and we taught a social skills skill. (R: every week?) uh huh, once a week for an hour that we’d teach it and then they’d practice it and role play. It was unreal. And I didn’t realize and we had OT services. And then we moved to Utah and I just assumed that we’d have the services here (laughing) and (R: not so much) went to the IEP and they just laughed when I mentioned adaptive PE and occupational therapy. It was a totally different (R: mhmm) ballgame. So we had to really be even more pro-active than we were before.

R2: 35:03 So what would you like to like the school, like when he was in junior high he was here in Utah? (P: mhmm) So what would you like the school to do like? P: Oh, like what, if the school could have helped us? R2: mhmm P: He had a fabulous guidance counselor um that was aware that he was being bullied and was really protective and whenever S, like in the lunchroom if someone was bothering him he could go into the counselor’s office at any time and talk to him. But the counselor really didn’t have much ability to control the sheer numbers of um kids. And we even had a meeting with the administrators to talk about options um and they just didn’t have any options for him. He functioned well enough to be in regular ed. but um was vulnerable socially and they really didn’t have a lot of programs or opportunities where we felt he could be safe in that environment. So, did that answer your question?
SUMMARY
Kelly’s Interview

1. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved?

(2) (older son) I do know that he has been aggressive before (R: mhmm) when someone has pushed him and pushed him and pushed him he has punched them. (R: mhmm) and that has happened at uh a boy scout camp, uh twice in fact, (R: laugh) which was kind of embarrassing, when we come home. But the scout leaders have said the other kid wouldn’t stop pushing and pushing and they just thought, “oh, he’s a little kid” and what they don’t understand is that even though he’s not very big, he’s very strong and he has that um inner source of strength that’s a little bit stronger than that of your average kid just because, like I said, his brain is just wired differently. 12:47 and when he unleashes it, then they knew it (R: right) those boys knew it, that had been picking on him. So that’s the type of bullying I’ve seen with him.

(2) 17:30 the scout camp thing, again you know, where I wasn’t there (R: right) and it seemed to me, from the information I got, was that, it happened towards the end of camp, they’d been together all week and it there was just constant teasing, constant um picking at my son and and irritating him and he took it to a point and finally kind of you know, lost it. (R: Well I think) and it wasn’t good, the leaders did talk to them and we talked to him too you know that that’s not the response (R: right) we want, we don’t want to act aggressively, we don’t want to lose it, because that’s not acceptable.

(8)
25:52 uh last year there was a boy that was being mean to S on the playground (R: mhmm) and said that S couldn’t play in a certain area. Because him and his friends were playing there and S wanted to play in that area. I can’t remember what area it was (R: right) but it was a specific area and he thought that he was the boss of that area. And um one of the other kids, S had been to his birthday party the year before, and um they had went to one of these jumping places where they have those bouncing things, and I had took S there and explained to the child’s mother “okay I’m going to bring S and sit and have him ride with you because he gets a little anxious you know riding with a lot of kids and a lot of confusion so I’m going to drive him over and I will let him come to the party. Afterwards I’ll um, they were going to go back to the kid’s house and have um pizza and watch a movie and S called me because the movie was inappropriate, which was pretty, I thought (R: that’s great) impressive of him (R: absolutely) 26:49 at at you know, 10 years old to say uh, “this is not a movie, my parents don’t want me to watch PG 13” and so he called me and I went and picked him up and you know I explained to the mother, “You know, he has Autism and sometimes he gets uncomfortable with things that the other kids are ready for but maybe he’s not. (R:mhmm) and um and so the other kid, the birthday child was actually very supportive of S. and the birthday child happened to be on the playground about six months later and another child was being mean to S and he said, “hey, don't be mean to him, don't you know he's Autistic?” (laugh) and and I didn't really think that was like the right you know (R: right) necessarily but but I do tell other children that S has Autism.
Disagreement: The mom think it is a bullying incident/ one time incident (Wan-Ting)???

B General Bullying

(1) P: 10:34 They um you know, especially as kids get older, they don’t, they don’t always tell you everything. And that’s, what’s hard (R: mhmm) because you sense something going on but you’re not really getting the whole story (R: mhmm) but um. I know there have been times when my older boy was bullied because he’s actually small for his age.

(3) 12:47 and when he unleashes it, then they knew it (R: right) those boys knew it, that had been picking on him. So that’s the type of bullying I’ve seen with him. And then like I say, he has seen things I think in school where, where boys would kind of try to um I think would kind of try to pick a fight with him or something. But a lot of times, he’s just so off in his own world, I don’t even think he’s paying attention (R: he notices) I mean, he just ignores it (R: laughing) if it’s not, if it’s not on his radar, what I call it, then he just goes about his business and ignores it (R: right) and that’s probably good in some ways. It’s good that he’s not letting it affect his self-esteem. (R: right)

*** Disagree: We are not sure/pick a fight --- Bullying?

(4) 13:28 my younger son on the other hand, he um where he’s 12, he’s just at that age now where he’s starting to get, recognize that he’s you know, a little bit different and he is big for his age, and he has taken some harassment you know some of the kids have told him that he’s fat and that he’s you know that he walks funny, ‘cuz he has his feet turned out. And you know, he gets some, we have an occupational therapist, physical therapist, um different people to work with him for certain things, you know, a nutritionist and, and different people but part of it is just the way he is . . . He has had you know, a little bit of bullying from time to time (R: mhmm) and usually you know, if you just mention it to the teachers, they’ll talk to the kids and the kids will will back off. But but I think that’s hard is that is that there it doesn’t matter who the child is, if they have autism, or whether they are just a normal child or just sometimes they just pick on someone (R: yeah).

(5) And he has had you know, a little bit of bullying from time to time (R: mhmm) and usually you know, if you just mention it to the teachers, they’ll talk to the kids and the kids will will back off. But but I think that’s hard is that is that there it doesn’t matter who the child is, if they have autism, or whether they are just a normal child or just sometimes they just pick on someone.

(6) But um as far as the bullying, you know, I wish I could tell you big stories that were big (R: no) you know um, specific instances but when I’m not there (R: we’re glad you can’t actually) and where I’m not as school with him everyday I can’t really say that I. you know and they don’t come home with like, you know, bruises and everything (R: right) I mean, R likes to like box with his friends. And so sometimes he comes home and he’s been boxing with his friends but not you know, it’s with gloves on and it’s with (R: right, and it’s not) you know. (R: it’s for fun, right?) yeah. 23:09 (R: I mean, I don’t understand it but) I don’t
know why, but they think it’s fun.

*** Disagree: Non bullying example (Charisse)

(7)P: 24:20 yeah I think, I think definitely. There’s been times where they’ve told me things and I think, “you know what, I think they were trying to kinda being mean to you” or “that was not very nice, that’s not what a true friend friend would do.”

*** Disagree W: mother thinks it’s bullying & indirect answer to question C: it is resolution – she doesn’t actually describe the bullying

2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?

And um I’m hoping that my boys haven’t really been a bully to somebody else. (R: mhmm) I’ve tried to teach them that they need to be kind, and accepting of other people but I can’t say that they never have (R: right) because I’m sure um in a group mentality, with other kids there with a certain situation, they might try to force their, you know opinion on someone else or whatever (R: right). 19:09 cuz they’re very opinionated.

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?

(1) my older son, he, he’ll, he kind of where he’s in high school now, he kinda says well, “I, I make sure I got a couple of big buddies” he makes sure that some of his friends are, are um uh kinda bigger kids. Or what he considers “tough guys” (R: mhmm) and again, this is all his his impressions, you know, yesterday (R: right) in our meeting when we were talking 11:38 um as parents about our children, we have to remember that when our kids tell us things, that is their reality. So even though it’s not the reality that the rest of the world might see, that is still their reality, so in his reality, my son thinks that it’s okay for him to sometimes um be kind of a smart alec and things because I’ve got these big friends to back me up or these cool friends, or popular friends or whatever.

(2)12:47 and when he unleashes it, then they knew it (R: right) those boys knew it, that had been picking on him. So that’s the type of bullying I’ve seen with him. And then like I say, he has seen things I think in school where, where boys would kind of try to um I think would kind of try to pick a fight with him or something. But a lot of times, he’s just so off in his own world, I don’t even think he’s paying attention (R: he notices) I mean, he just ignores it (R: laughing) if it’s not, if it’s not on his radar, what I call it, then he just goes about his business and ignores it (R: right) and that’s probably good in some ways. It’s good that he’s not letting it affect his self-esteem. (R: right)

*** Agree: does it go under 1 B

(3) (younger son) And you know, he gets some, we have an occupational therapist, physical therapist, um different people to work with him for certain things, you know, a nutritionist and, and different people but part of it is just the way he is. You know, and it’s just going to be the way he is and he tends to win people over with his personality, because
he’s just really interesting to be around 14:15. Cuz he’s so well read, that he gets them excited about something that is his current project, something he’s read about or something he wants to do or he wants to have a food drive or he wants to have a surprise party for the teacher’s birthday or… he creates events and we call him the party planner. Cuz he really loves to create things. And by doing that he endears himself to the other students and so they end up liking him, even if they would like to have a beef, or make fun of him or tease him. But you know. And he has had you know, a little bit of bullying from time to time (R: mhmm) and usually you know, if you just mention it to the teachers, they’ll talk to the kids and the kids will will back off. But but I think that’s hard is that there it doesn’t matter who the child is, if they have autism, or whether they are just a normal child or just sometimes they just pick on someone.

(8) 26:49 at at you know, 10 years old to say uh, “this is not a movie, my parents don’t want me to watch PG 13” and so he called me and I went and picked him up and you know I explained to the mother, “You know, he has Autism and sometimes he gets uncomfortable with things that the other kids are ready for but maybe he’s not. (R: mhmm) and um and so the other kid, the birthday child was actually very supportive of S. and the birthday child happened to be on the playground about six months later and another child was being mean to S and he said, “hey, don’t be mean to him, don’t you know he’s Autistic?” (laugh) and and I didn’t really think that was like the right you know (R: right) necessarily but but I do tell other children that S has Autism. Because sometimes, what they don’t understand is, Autism isn’t just a disability, it’s also a gift. (R: absolutely) So, so we don’t look at it as a negative thing, around here anyway. So that is one instance where another child stood up for him. (R: good for him) And so that is why it is good to have, if they can have just a few children who are a support system (R: absolutely) and and that is why, for us I think it’s good to tell other kids that they have Autism because you explain to the other kids why they act like that 28:06 because sometimes the other kids… in fact, two of S’s friends, actually his very good friends said to him “you know, S sometimes you talk too close and you talk too loud” and I said okay. And so then I talked to a speech therapist and said, “you know what, if he’s doing this let’s work on it.” And so she worked on it, in the social group and in his speech therapy.

• R: it’s sad that way. 15:21 Do you, so do you feel like, um as far as like interventions or like problem solving for these kinds of situations do you feel like it’s taken care of mostly in the classroom? P: 15:33 usually the teacher is the best way to, I think so. Because she knows, she sees more of what’s going on (R: mhmm) again, I don’t always get the whole story (R: right). And so I think it usually has to start with the person who is spending the most time with them, or um sometimes things have happened on the playground and we’ve had to um ask the uh playground supervisors if they would you know, kind of watch things, or be aware of things you know.

• 16:00 We talk about it. But you know, what should you do if this happens, kind of some role play (R: okay) or um just you know, looking ahead, “what would you like to do?” and then “what should you do if that happens next time?” (R: mhmm) but um most importantly, I think for us is, we want them to know that you know, that that they are valued and that it
has it’s not their fault, that they didn’t do anything to deserve it and that their home is still their safe environment. And they get to be who they are at home.

- R: 16:42 so instead of you know, how’s it? I guess. What I’m hearing you say is that you’re, the more effective thing to do is to ensure them that it’s okay and that it’s not rather than like give them than to talk about what to do in the future instances? Or which one would you place more value on? I guess. Or equal value?
  P: 17:00 Well, I don’t, I don’t think it’s okay for kids to be mean to (R: right) them, or bully them in any way. And I always will follow through with it, (R: right), either talking to the school or the principle (R: mmm) or you know, whoever can change the situation. But I also try to talk with them, like, to not um you know, to stay away from that person (R: right), you know, stay away from that part of the playground or you know, try to keep it from happening again. Don’t you know don’t play into it you know.

- and we talked to him too you know that that’s not the response (R: right) we want, we don’t want to act aggressively, we don’t want to lose it, because that’s not acceptable.18:11 P: And but it’s uh at the same time, I’ve said, even though it’s not acceptable, it’s understandable after going through that all week and you’d finally had enough. But um I also usually try to help them understand where the other person is coming from. (R: mmm) cuz usually, if there is a bully, he usually is being a bully because he’s got some problems, something that he feels insecure about or something (R: right) where he doesn’t have friends, or he’s trying to prove toughness (R: right) or something like that. So a lot of times, we’ll talk about that. And um I’m hoping that my boys haven’t really been a bully to somebody else. I’ve tried to teach them that they need to be kind, and accepting of other people but I can’t say that they never have (R: right) because I’m sure um in a group mentality, with other kids there with a certain situation, they might try to force their, you know opinion on someone else or whatever (R: right). 19:09 cuz they’re very opinionated.

- R2: Um so like, like is there when there was a bullying incident like, did you get, like did you know it from a teacher? Or like, from the church, or.
  P: 23:32 From my kids. My kids will usually come home and tell me what happened that day. Or if or if they’re acting upset I can say you know, “what’s going on? What happened today?” I can they’re they’re usually pretty upfront with me. I, I feel like we have good communication, at least I hope, but.
  *** Disagree C-part of resolution process W-indirect, source of information

- P: 24:20 yeah I think, I think definitely. There’s been times where they’ve told me things and I think, “you know what, I think they were trying to kinda being mean to you” or “that was not very nice, that’s not what a true friend friend would do.” And you know, we kinda had a conversation about this last night in fact at our meeting. And we were saying you know, if somebody does something, you have to ask you you should tell the child, you know, “now why would they do that?” (R: mmm) okay? “were they doing it to be nice to you? Were they doing it to make fun of you? Were they doing it because it was going to benefit them?” let’s you know, let’s, you have to stop and think about it because (R: right) because, obviously, both of my boys, probably in the majority of the times they’ve, where someone was trying to bully them they didn’t even give the reaction the person wanted (R:
and generally, the bully will stop at that point. And that is the funny part about it (R: yeah) I don’t know what you guys know about raising children, but I noticed with my other children: usually a bully, the better reaction they get and the more upset they can make the other person the more they bully because they know they’re getting’ them… So, so with these kids, just kind of ignoring them and not not lettin’ it get to them (R: it’s not as fun) yeah, it’s not as fun. So they’ll move on to the next poor child. (R: yeah) You know but but that’s what, I think, must happen a lot. And um but like I say, a lot of it, for my sons, has helped is that they have had a support system socially of kids who do accept them (R:mhmm) and I know um I will tell you one instance, now I do remember. . .

26:49 at at you know, 10 years old to say uh, “this is not a movie, my parents don’t want me to watch PG 13” and so he called me and I went and picked him up and you know I explained to the mother, “You know, he has Autism and sometimes he gets uncomfortable with things that the other kids are ready for but maybe he’s not. (R:mhmm) and um and so the other kid, the birthday child was actually very supportive of S. and the birthday child happened to be on the playground about six months later and another child was being mean to S and he said, “hey, don’t be mean to him, don’t you know he’s Autistic?” (laugh) and and I didn’t really think that was like the right you know (R: right) necessarily but but I do tell other children that S has Autism. Because sometimes, what they don’t understand is, Autism isn’t just a disability, it’s also a gift. (R: absolutely) So, so we don’t look at it as a negative thing, around here anyway. So that is one instance where another child stood up for him. (R: good for him) And so that is why it is good to have, if they can have just a few children who are a support system (R: absolutely) and and that is why, for us I think it’s good to tell other kids that they have Autism because you explain to the other kids why they act like that 28:06 because sometimes the other kids… in fact, two of S’s friends, actually his very good friends said to him “you know, S sometimes you talk too close and you talk too loud” and I said okay. And so then I talked to a speech therapist and said, “you know what, if he’s doing this let’s work on it.” And so she worked on it, in the social group and in his speech therapy

29:29 mhmm, well and and I will say, it even adults sometimes don’t know quite what to do with it. (R: mhmm) And you know, I had a big meeting with all of S, I mean my son’s scout leaders, and all those people (R: mhmm) and I sat them right down and say here’s some things you might see now that he’s going to be going to the young men organization and here’s here’s he’s going to be there on Wednesday, every Wednesday night and here’s what you might see and here’s how I would like you to respond. And if you have questions you can talk to me. If you have, (R: that’s great) you know, if you wonder why he acts that way and I said, because it’s going to be different than the other boys. Some of the behavior you see is not going to be typical 12 year old behavior (R: right) but most of the time they’re not doing the behavior to be obnoxious (R: mhmm) or to offend you or anyone else, they just, they just are either anxious about something or they don’t know what to expect and (R: right) and it’s good because 30:25 they’ve learned to be a lot more um structured with what they do at the activities and have (R: that’s good for them!) more planning involved and things like that, yeah which is is rare (R: you should have had a student like this before, laughing) yeah, exactly because they’ve had to be more a little more um
organized with it because then he knows what to expect and he behaves better for them (R: right) they know that so. R: I think it’s wonderful that you’re willing to talk to them (P: yeah) I think it eliminates so much confusion and then you know P: 30:53 right and well you know we I feel bad because you know sometimes you know like when you move we first moved here a couple years ago. We got that feeling that we were being judged you know by other people in our church or in our neighborhood or whatever that that our kids were doing certain things and they didn’t understand why they were doing those things. So the more we can educate them and tell them, “you know, this is why they do that.” Then (R: yeah) then they have an understanding and more of acceptance and then. You know and then they become friends and like I say a big support system for us too

- He he has learned a lot of that empathy and compassion and stuff that most children with autism don’t have. But it’s it’s kind of has to be taught, it really does. R: 32:57 that’s incredible do you think it has to do with the dog? P: a lot of it does. A lot of it does. And you know, I will say. When it comes to bullying, that was one of the things I said when we got the dog, they would never send home one of these very valuable very special dogs with someone who had any anger issues (R: mhmm) or um had ever been cruel to animals or cruel to other children. (R: mhmm) and so it’s very important that they have um control of their uh emotions and that they are mild-mannered and sweet (R: right) and stuff, that’s important and (R: it’s a goal for him) yeah and it is a goal for him (R: it’s an important goal for him) but sometimes he’ll get frustrated with life or even with the dog and he’ll, he’ll try to raise his voice and I’ll say, “remember, even when we trained,” we had to go to two weeks of training in California (R: mhmm) before we could bring the dog home (R: right) they told us there, which was pretty interesting, that you never raise your voice at the dog. You always use a calm voice; you always use that same level of tone and tell them what you expect from them.

4. Were you satisfied? What would you have liked to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

- So we’ve done really well. We feel like mostly um with my younger son, because of his early diagnosis and the early intervention he’s been able to be mainstreamed most of his um schooling. (R: mhmm) I mean he did do a uh the autism preschool (R: mhmm) the first year they had that, in our school district. Then he did transitional kindergarten and then regular kindergarten. And so he is like one year, maybe, behind his class but not even a full year (R: right) because of his birthday being in July. So 1:21 (R: oh that’s great) So it’s not like super noticeable to the kids that he is a little bit older than them. And um and you know, and he’s always had services throughout the years and had an IEP to keep him um all of you know, his needs met. (R: right) But I really think early intervention is the key, I’ve told a lot of people that (R: yeah). Find out, you know, and it would be easy as a parent to deny you’re child had a problem it would be easy to say, “you know what, he’s just high-spirited” or “he’s just you know, that’s just his personality” or whatever. And a lot of parents do that and that’s fine, maybe that works for them. But what I found out is as soon as I recognized and accepted that there was a problem there, then we could get him the help and he
progressed so much better. 2:12 *(R: mhmm)* way way better.

- R: 19:12 overall would you say that their social interactions with peers at school have been more negative or positive? P: They, I think they’ve been pretty positive, really, as a general rule they’ve been positive. They’re you know, teachers have always been pretty, you know, pretty positive about what’s going on *(R: good)* with them and other kids. *(R: that’s good)* you know, there’s, there’s always those situations that you’re not really happy with, but, but generally.
SUMMARY
Kevin’s Interview

1. A. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved?
   B. General Bullying
      (1) 1:07 okay, the first one comes to my mind, he’s in 8th grade right now. This happened a couple of months ago I believe but it’s happened several times, um. Because of autism, kids, these kids don’t know how to reciprocate. They don’t know how to uh interpret facial expressions and what’s going on, or joke. (R: mhmm) They don’t generally joke (R: right) and you know I and you know, and have a good time. They tend to stay to themselves and they’re kind of paranoid. And he’s had his um uh one kid uh a couple times kids have slammed his hand in locker doors you know just to uh get a good laugh (R: mhmm)

      (2) um, tripped him in the lunch room, you know. (R: mhmm) plate goes everywhere (R: right) you know, and and he he just is you know, devastated. (R: yeah, absolutely). So, yeah he’s been bullied, every, every month or two we have a situation we have to deal with the principle.

      (4) Um other, some, a couple kids were suspended in grade school because of some things they did to him (R: mhmm). I’m not sure exactly what they did but it was bullying. (R: mhmm) And pretty you know pretty bad stuff, they did. And they wouldn’t leave him alone and like they got suspended for a while.

      (5) R: 3:36 mhmm, right has the bullying been um would you say more physical than verbal, or? P: It’s both. (R: both.) Yeah, it can be both. Um it’s been both, oh yeah, yeah.

      (6) R: right. Does, so is that more for the other students to stop them from doing it? (P: mhmm) Is there anything that’s been happening with your sons specifically (P: oh yeah) you know, maybe strategies, you know how to react? (P: um well, you know, he doesn’t he doesn’t strike out or anything if somebody does something. (R: right) he just gets. He’s just the uh subject that gets picked on (R: yeah) and so he gets pretty devastated you know, it’s pretty hard for him to deal with stuff like that. But, he he uh a lot of crying, you know, a lot of heartache (R: mhmm) and then you you do what you can.

      (7) P: 8:40 well, social stories and stuff like that are really good for kids (R: mhmm) and so you know and that’s what, you know, we’ve got different therapists and us (R: mhmm, yeah) school therapists, counselors, everybody’s kind of uh trying to help these Autistic kids or R has Aspergers (R: Aspergers) you know, they’re just odd duck kids, they’re kinda like school nerds I mean you know how to tell you, they’re just like nerdy (R: yeah) but they’re the kids that get picked on a little, you know (R: any kind of difference, you know, stands out) yeah, if they look different, if they talk different, if they walk different, if they laugh different, if if they respond different, if they don’t if they’re conversations are weird if they don’t play games right. The kids pick up on those things and they make fun of them.

2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?
(3) R: yeah, absolutely. Do you, how early do you think that this started? P: 2:52 oh it starts, it starts, it starts, right, it could start in first, kindergarten, first grade, it doesn’t, doesn’t, preschool even. (R: yeah) Cuz you know, these kids don’t know how to act in social situations and they tend to lose friends real quick and they do the wrong thing to lose friends. (R: mhmm) I remember, one time, C when he was just 4 years old, a friend was playing with another friend and he got so mad that he punched him. (R: right) C punched him in the, and he lost his friend, you know (R: mhmm, right) He doesn’t realize the consequences (R: right) he just reacted, you know. (R: that’s what he knows to do) He doesn’t know it, he doesn’t know how to to express himself. You know, doesn’t know how to express his feelings.

(8) R: 11:37 um and you mentioned a time when he was interacting with uh another peer and hit the peer and everything. Has there been any bullying instances like that, or not like that or either, you know. Is there anything that consistently happens? Or even something that was so out of character that, you know. P: Things are usually pretty mild um. They usually happen between classes if it’s going to happen. (R: mhmm) In the hallway, in their lunchroom, when there’s not a teacher um.

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?

(1) (2) (4) P: 2:10 usually from him, and we’ll check with he’s got some good advocate people at the school, and they’ll find out what’s going on. Um other, some, a couple kids were suspended in grade school because of some things they did to him (R: mhmm). I’m not sure exactly what they did but it was bullying. (R: mhmm) And pretty you know pretty bad stuff, they did. And they wouldn’t leave him alone and like they got suspended for a while. And hopefully that put the end to it but you know, things are a lot better than they used to be in schools. You know (R: yeah, yeah) they don’t, there’s a no tolerance rule for that kind of stuff and that’s good (R: yeah, that’s good). It still happens.

(6) P: um well, you know, he he doesn’t he doesn’t strike out or anything if somebody does something. (R: right) he just gets. He’s just the uh subject that gets picked on (R: yeah) and so he gets pretty devastated you know, it’s pretty hard for him to deal with stuff like that. But, he he uh a lot of crying, you know, a lot of heartache (R: mhmm) and then you you do what you can. We don’t usually talk to their parents, we let the schools handle that. (R: right) we let them take care of, that’s kind of their thing. That’s who usually does the best job, too. It’s not you know, we’re too emotionally tied to the(listen) to him, and protective of him, you know. But it’s a rough world out there.

(7) P: 8:40 well, social stories and stuff like that are really good for kids (R: mhmm) and so you know and that’s what, you know, we’ve got different therapists and us (R: mhmm, yeah) school therapists, counselors, everybody’s kind of uh trying to help these Autistic kids or R has Aspergers (R: Aspergers) you know, they’re just odd duck kids, they’re kinda like school nerds I mean you know how to tell you, they’re just like nerdy (R: yeah) but they’re the kids that get
picked on a little, you know *(R: any kind of difference, you know, stands out)* yeah, if they look different, if they talk different, if they walk different, if they laugh different, if they respond different, if they don’t if they’re conversations are weird if they don’t play games right. The kids pick up on those things and they make fun of them.

- *(R: 3:49)* mhmm, okay. And as far as like resolving the problem, what have you seen happen to fix it? You said that there was a students that got you know, suspended as a result. *(P:)* yeah, usually we work with the principle or or teachers that or the school psychologist or something or therapist but we’ll we’ll find out who did what *(R: mhmmm)* and help resolve the situation so that it doesn’t happen again. Yeah *(R:)* right. Does, so is that more for the other students to stop them from doing it? *(P: mhmmm)*

- *(R: 5:12)* yeah what do you tell him after these situations? *(P:)* well, um we’ll process things with him *(R: mhmmm)* he’s had a, he’s been seeing uh, he’s got a therapist that he’s been seeing. He’s been seeing a therapist probably for the last six years *(R: really?)* yeah and he uh he knows what to do in situations, he has it memorized. *(R: he does?)* oh yeah. *(R: 5:36)* so have, do you guys talk to him about what to do? Or is it the therapist? Or is it the school? Or a combination? *(P:)* He’ll usually, he’ll usually have worked it out before he even comes home. *(R: really)* With, with uh the school people and then you know if he’s hiding it and not saying anything to anybody, the bullying, not saying anything for fear that he’s going to be made fun of or something *(R: mhmmm)* when he, he usually is more angry, irritable at home, something’s going on *(R: mhmmm)* and he’ll open up and uh let us know what’s going on and then we’ll, we’ll try to uh help him through it. *(R: mhmmm)* What can you do, can you avoid these kids? Can you just know, if he’s going to, if he’s going to slam if he’s going to slam the locker on your hand, just put your leg in the way from now on and don’t. *(R: right)* But you know he just assumes that *(R: right)* everybody’s you know, is gonna be nice.

- *(P:)* Well, first you say, what what was, tell us the situation, what is happening. And he’ll he’ll try to just understand his feelings get him to talk about his feelings. *(R: mhmmm)* Which is hard for an autistic kid to try to talk about anything *(R: right)*. Get him to talk about his feelings and don’t talk, don’t react to it, don’t try to solve it. Listen to it and empathize with him and it usually is just doing that then he’ll be able to come up with a solution. *(R: mhmmm)* On his own, we don’t have to *(R: oh, okay)* he can he can then you say, wellwhat are you going, what do you think you’re going to do next time? If you think this, I mean. *(R: mhmmm)* Well I could go and talk to so and so and you know *(R: right, right)* and you know *(R: yeah)* let him know who it was *(R: absolutely)* let some, let the principles take care of it *(R: yeah)*. Yeah that’s kind of how we just. We help him try to do as much as he can on trying to figure out how to take care *(R: right, on his own)* and not do everything for him. *(R: you’re not going to be there when it happens most of the time)* Oh, you can’t survive, it’s brutal. *(R: absolutely)*. Yeah I’m we’re, I’m he’s the language is horrendous it’s amazing what’s going on I mean I can’t, but that’s life, it’s scary.

- *(R:)* yeah, it is. 7:59 Do you feel like um when you do talk about these things is it always post problem, or do you feel like there’s ever like is there any like interventions happening before it actually happens if that makes sense. I guess if it’s, I mean it’s a continual basis but is it like
bullying, talk about it. Or is it like do you constantly talk about it with him so he know what to do? (P: no) it’s always right after? P: 8:20 deal with each situation and after it’s done we’re done. (R: okay) We it’s over with (R: mhm) we move on. (R: is it the same at school?) I hope so, I hope he can you know, move on, I think he moves on pretty good. He doesn’t really hold grudges or anything.  

R: Did it take him very long to memorize what to do? You said, you said that he had memorized that.

- R2: so we’re talking about working with the people at school. Can you give us like a, an example, like how a school works with you to resolve. P: 17:04 We find ourselves having to educate even the counselors about our kid. (R: mhm) and the longer they’re there in the school, the and the the more the child, they understand the kid. Okay, so by the time they’re done with sixth grade, they they’ve got a handle on it, they know our kid. Okay, they know his his faults, his you know, they know how to work with him, they know how to help him. Um teacher selection is huge um. I think you got to have a teacher, a really carative teacher. . . . See he’s like three or four years socially behind everybody. So right now he’s just, he’s 15, he’s just starting to like basketball, you know? (R: right) Well that happened three or four years ago for most kids. (R: yeah) and they’re all on Junior Jazz and he he wouldn’t even (R: right) you know. So so when he gets out, out on the playground in a, in a in a situation with kids who are really coordinated and savvy, he tends to get frustrated and not want to be there. So you got to kind of pick and choose what he likes to do. He’s our our C is very computer literate. So that’s his thing, he TA’s a lot of computer classes (R: really) the teachers just like, rely right on him so. (R: I’m sure) So that’s kind of and that’s what makes him happy so you kind of let him go where where his interests are so he school isn’t a negative experience for him. Feel positive so he can look forward to doing some of those things.

4. Were you satisfied? What would you have liked to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

(8) P: Things are usually pretty mild um. They usually happen between classes if it’s going to happen. (R: mhm) In the hallway, in their lunchroom, when there’s not a teacher um. R: So you think, lack of supervision probably  P: Oh yeah, because the schools are overcrowded you can’t keep track of your kid. (R: yeah, yeah.) You can’t have a chaperone wherever you go.

- R: So would you say that you’re satisfied with what’s happening right now? Or is there anything you wish that was happening that isn’t happening, (P: well) as far as like interventions go? P: 9:33 Well we’re uh, we’re pretty settled in here in the uh neighborhood you know, we’ve got a little house we’d like to have a bigger house. (R: laugh) We have, there’s six of us, you know, four kids, two adults (R: yeah). But the trade off of going to another school and losing the connections you already have is probably not worth moving. (R: right) So yeah, the, those things, when you have kids with disabilities, you tend to hunker down and just, you know, try to ride out the storm. (R: absolutely) and develop your connections, your social network that can (R: mhm) help your kids (R: mhm) and while it’s strong and not have to do, re-write the book and do it all over again. So we’re in a really good elementary school. We’ve got a really good junior high, we’ll be going to a nice brand new high school (R: mhm) and those
things are really attractive, you know? When you know, because when kids have been classified (R: mhmm) with a with a disorder, that’s been diagnosed and proven and tested, you know, you get services, (R: yeah) and you want to be in the right places to get services so they can watch out and ?? (R: right) and you know, so that’s kind of why we’re probably still in this home (R: yeah) and that’s okay.

• 10:55 Do you wish that there were anything more that the teachers were doing? Or the principals? P: you know what right, R: with the situations, are you happy with? P: right now occasionally, R: given what you have. P: 11:04 We run into, we’ve run into some people that just aren’t very just don’t want to be bothered too much (R: yeah) you know. Those are some challenges, yeah you get some, you get some school counselors that aren’t very understanding and want to use the uh cowboy up come on, life’s rough (R: deal with it) you know deal with it attitude.(R: right) It doesn’t work with an Autistic kid. They don’t understand that. (R: yeah) So.

• P: 12:25 yeah, so you know he, he’s he’s got to learn how to deal with things and it’s but it’s hard (R: mhmm) and bullying’s been around for forever (R: yeah), And you know, you just hope you can, your kid can get through it. (R: yeah, absolutely) and we’re we’re thankful that we’re in a good school district and uh we’ve got good, good resources (R: mhmm, absolutely) you know, that’s the main thing, we’ve got good resources, ad good people to work with and I think I think that’s, that’s probably the best thing for any parent is is if they or the best security blanket a parent can have is a good support system around him, teachers, therapists (R: mhmm) good education, classes you can attend (R: right) and especially. Unfortunately most teachers don’t have special ed backgrounds, which is, they don’t understand, but they’re understanding more and more about Autism Spectrum Disorders (R: mhmm) which are huge. That’s why they, you hear in the news they there’s more Autism now. But see, they’ve put everybody in the spectrum (R: right, and it its) so

• P: We really rely on the school system. Yeah, if you’re in a, if you’re in a, if you’re in a school system with old teachers that aren’t up on, kind of, you know that they don’t have a good handle on the um the psychiatric problems, mental disorders that kids come in to school with you’re you’re really in a handicap, (R: yeah) you’re really handicapped as a parent. Cuz the parent has to sit there and educate the teachers. (R: yeah) which is really frustrating. (R: yeah) But as far as I know, um the the the least, now I think Nebo school district since they have a parent support group now, they’ve had one for about four years now (R: mhmm) 15:27. There, it’s filtering down. They’ve got. Most school districts have have Autism/Aspergers specialists (R: right) right on board. But one person in a giant school district, but they they try to get the information out to the teachers so they can attend (R: mhmm) the meetings to get educated on these. So a lot of, a continuing education is huge. If if the teachers aren’t taking advantage of that (R: right) they’re going to really not understand some of these weird disorders these kids come into school with. (R: absolutely) I mean, you can see a kid in a wheelchair, but a kid with Aspersers syndrome, that is really complex. (R: yeah, definitely) I mean, as a parent, I don’t even understand half of it (R: yeah). But you know, so (R: yeah) so you know, continuing education is huge I think that’s a that’s,
that’s a you know, whoever gets gets the information out to get to those kind of things. (to the child) they’re taping me. (laugh) Good bye. Good bye. Go get something to eat (R: laugh). Okay so anyway.

SUMMARY
Pauline’s Interview

1. A. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved.

B. General bullying

- R: 13:15 I hope it works. (P: I know, so) Um, so have there, before he was diagnosed did you was there any bullying that happened? P: No, um

2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?

(1) So that was, I don’t know, a month ago (R: mhmm) and we thought he he told us that people were bullying him. A few boys, at school. And um he wouldn’t tell us what they were saying and he was getting into fights because of it and hitting and kicking kids because of whatever it was they were saying and then he would never tell us (R: right). And then, come to find out, it took us about two weeks we found out that he was saying things to them (R: uh-huh) like, “I’m smart and you’re dumb” “you’re an idiot ‘cuz you don’t know that” (R: right) which may be true in his mind (R: mhmm) at that moment. Well, if someone says that to you, they’re going to get mad and say things back (R: right) and then that makes and then he’s thinking they’re teasing him. (R: right) Whereas he’s the one that’s like, that started it

(2) It was a three day weekend, four day weekend, he couldn’t, so we didn’t know anything that whole weekend and then the next week (sigh) this was such a long time ago (R: laugh) um I think he got in trouble again and his teacher started watching to see what was causing him to start hitting or fighting with kids. And she started to realize that he was saying things to them (R: oooh) and then making them mad. (R: I see) And then um they would say things back. And then he would get mad thinking that they were making fun of him (R: right) and then start the (R: hitting) fight, yeah.

(3) 6:40 Something that happened two days, yesterday, yesterday morning as soon as he got to school. They were having this group project, I still don’t know the whole story ‘cuz his story is different than the teacher’s (R: right). The teacher just said they were doing a group project. And he had a book and he just all of a sudden he just stood up and whacked a kid on the head with it and sat back down like nothing had happened. And this is very unlike him. (R: yeah) And J said that he was actually reading and it was guided reading, it was reading time (R: uh huh) and you were supposed to be reading. And this
kid just comes up and starts talking to him, you know, nothing 7:15 he didn’t say anything mean or bad (R: mhmm) and but he was like “I was reading, couldn’t he see I was reading and it was bugging me that he was talking to me? (R: mhmm) and so I just whacked him on the head because he should’ve known I was reading and not to bother me.” (R: it’s a hard thing) (laughing) so, he had detention yesterday and today because of that (R: yeah) and that’s that was really weird because he doesn’t he’s never done something (R: right) like that before.

(4) P: yeah um. The outbursts that he had at school weren’t with other kids it was with teachers and trying to get him to do work (R: interesting) but there wasn’t any problems with. Well, maybe once in the whole school year. But I just thought that was. I know, I remember one time, this was last year before he was diagnosed (R: mhmm). He was on the monkey bars, waiting his turn to go but someone was in front of him (R: mhmm) and the kid behind him pushed him (R: mhmm) like “go! Go already” and you know of course he’s waiting for him to be all the way done (R: right) so J got mad, turned around and started kicking him and (R: yeah) but he didn’t say anything to him like (R: right) I’m waiting or whatever (R: yeah) so then J was the one in trouble and not the other kid. (R: of course) (laughing). But, before, it’s been, this has been the worst year for fighting. Yeah

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?

(1) (2) R: Right. So in this situation, when that happened, a couple months ago, whenever that was (P: mhmm) um what did you guys do in response? You said you went to the therapist, the counselor (P: yeah) and is that basically how you handled it? Or were other things done? P: 5:40 um, let me think what we did at the time. Well I think, I kind of blamed myself a little bit for him. Because last January when we found out, we told him we were doing all these tests to find out what was different about him. Because we knew something was different, we knew he had a different way of thinking. And so we were trying to figure out why. And we learned he had low self-esteem. (R: mhmm) And so we started trying to build him up and telling him how smart he was and so we’re always telling him, “you’re really smart, in fact, you are probably even smarter than some of these other kids.” And so here we are giving him all these words to tell other kids (R: right) and. And so then now we have to teach him that, “yes, you’re smart in some things but some kids are still smarter than you (R: mhmm) in other things. But you don’t tell somebody that you’re smarter than them because it’s going to hurt their feelings. (R: yeah) So don’t ever say that again. (R: laughing) You can think it all you want, but don’t say it aloud. So we’re trying to tell, teach him what not to say (R: mhmm) um.

(3) R: 7:37 So, so when this happens do you just normally talk about it with him? Like P: Well we talked about um how it’s not okay to hit people and how if you’re an adult and you hit somebody you can be charged with assault and go to jail and that’s why we have to learn as children not to do that. And also we use um we take away privileges (R: okay) he has to bring home a note every day from school (R: mhmm) saying how he did and if he did his work and turned it in. And if he didn’t then something, whatever he’s in to at the moment (R: mhmm) gets taken away and right now it’s the computer (R: gotcha). And
so he has, he wasn’t allowed to play on it (R: right) and it makes him really mad. So it really gives him the incentive to do it. So today was a good day although he did his detention but everything else went good so

4. Were you satisfied? What would you like to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

- R: That’s good, that’s really good. 8:24 So were you pleased with the way things were handled? (P: um) or do you wish that there was like more being done? P: With the situation? With those specific situations? (R: mhmm) Or with it all, in general? R: Well, both. I know, that doesn’t make it any easier for you. P: 8:44 Um, I think, his teacher’s really good. She has a lot of experience with Autism, kids with Autism and that’s why we requested her. Um but she has so many kids in her class, in a mainstream regular classroom that have Autism. (R: right) So she can only do so much. (R: right) And I don’t feel like the school itself has enough support. Like there’s no, he doesn’t have a, somebody to go to at school, like a counselor (R: mhmm) or a therapist at school. Um, there was a friendship class last year (R: mhmm) and that’s not there this year. (R: okay) So I I feel, I hear things from other people (R: mhmm) getting these things in their schools and I’m wondering, why isn’t it in my school?

- P: 9:31 Like uh, a peer model, a someone or somebody, an adult, I don’t know if it’s a volunteer or a paid person to to be with him (R: mhmm) throughout the day and like, I don’t know, whisper things in his ear like oh, “he said that but this is what he really means (R: oh, that’s interesting) so don’t take it that way, it’s meant this way” just to kind of guide him through the situations (R: that’s really interesting) and I don’t know. I know that’s in um it’s the school district, the school in Provo that has someone like that (R: oh, okay, that’s really interesting, I’ve never heard of that before, have you heard of that? [to R2]) and I don’t know if that child is more, J is pretty high functioning, I don’t know if that child is less functioning and needs that person for, you know.

- P: Um I I bought this book written by a boy. What is it called? Who has Aspergers. (R: oh, interesting) He wrote it from his perspective and he was a teenager when he wrote it. (R: that’s really interesting) And so I’ll chapters, like when this bullying thing started we read through that chapter together and talked about it (R: oh that’s really interesting) and he he thinks this kid is really cool because he’s like him (R: yeah!) and he’s like, “yeah, that’s kind of how it is.” (R: that’s interesting) But it’s like he forgets, he doesn’t remember what we read. Cuz, he’ll do things anyways. (R: right) Um and R: 11:26 Do you read it very often? P: um, just when I see, like I haven’t pulled it out since then, we did read it when we first got it. There’s some sections on um um just what is Aspergers and what kids with Aspergers like and (R: right) don’t like. When we first got it when he was first diagnosed to help him figure out, there’s someone else like me and (R: yeah) everybody else is the weird one and not me (R: right). This is how it should be (R: that’s right) um and I just bought two more books from Craig Kendell. I guess his son has um Aspergers, I just got them yesterday so
I’ve only read like a chapter (*R: yeah*) (*laughing*). Um and then we talk.

- **R2: 14:27** So you talk about like you see like some children that have like certain service. (*P: yeah*) So how would you like the school to do like to help (*P: Um*) you with that for, like for his experience. *P: Um*, I would definitely like that friendship, I know there’s classes that you can pay for and take him, like I could take him to this class with other children his age and they, it’s like a friendship class and they learn social skills in that class. I can’t afford that but I know (*R: it’s not at the school?*) No it’s like private. (*R: oh*) um. And it’s a lot of money, it’s a couple hundred dollars and it goes for like six or eight weeks, or however long (*R: mhmm*). I know last year there was one in the school, they were just pulled out of class once a week and do whatever is (*R: yeah*) and that person left and they haven’t replaced him. So I think that would help. *R: You feel like that helped him?* *P: 15:20* I I think it was beginning to (*R: mhmm*) and like if he were to keep going it would help him. (*R: right*) um

- **P: uh uh, just speech (R: okay, just speech)** where he learns like last year he was learning sarcasm (*R: mmmm*) and I’m I’m not quite sure what they’re doing this year because they don’t send the paper home every week to tell me what they did.
SUMMARY

Sara’s Interview

1. A. Describe a situation involving a bullying incident in which your child was involved?

B. General Bullying

(1) P: 0:56 yeah he’s had some problems. Some of the problems he’s had has been with other kids in resource who um just have figured out kind of how to um push J’s buttons (R: mhmm) and so like they know that um he doesn’t like songs or singing so they’ll sing and that type of thing. There have also been situations where he’s been in regular classroom settings that the kids have been not very nice to him (R: right) and so um I think J has gotten to where he reacts negatively, to even when, he draws a lot, and so because some of the kids have teased him about his drawing, then other kids will come and say, “oh I like your drawing” you know, (imitating J) “whatever” you know (R: right) he just doesn’t act very appropriately to it because he’s been teased about it by before.

(2) P: Um, I don’t think he’s had physical bullying (R: mhmm) so much as um definitely kids in the lunchroom who have teased him (R: mhmm), it’s more teasing and really trying to get him riled up because they know, they know that he will react to it. R: How does he react to it? P: Um, so he gets very defensive and he’ll get, I know that there have been times um not in recent years as much as in like middle school where he’d start crying and I think they would do it to get that reaction out of him because they would think that was funny, so. (R: right, I’ve seen it many times) so. (R: Um) He gets defensive and kind of start calling names back and that type of thing and then he gets worked up to where he’s playing and he like sad/is upset or (R: absolutely)

(3) And so um and then as we transitioned into junior high school we could see that the bullying was meaner. It was um more mean-spirited um (R: right) and so um we we realized that we needed to address how we could could you know, both, one, help J to deal with that but also to um not let them get him upset so that it wasn’t as fun for them. (R: right) So that it wasn’t rewarding for them. (R: right) so. R: 4:5
2. Has there ever been a time when your child bullied someone else?

R: 11:41 so has there been any instances where you feel like he’s been more of a bully? Taken on that role.

P: I know there was one time that um one of the girls in the ward came up and said “J said, he made fun of my make up he said ‘you look like a raccoon’” or something and I think he just I don’t think he was trying to be a bully (R: right) I think he was just um (R: that’s what the connection was) yeah, exactly (R: for him and you know they) and so I talked to him about it yeah yeah I mean obviously (R: why not say it?) (laughing) yeah and so I said, “you know how would you feel if someone said that about you? (R: mhmm) Or called attention to something like that” (R: right) and so we just talked through it and. But other than that he’s (R: it’s never been a problem?) no. he doesn’t really, I mean he’s pretty mild-mannered and friendly with people most of the time. Like I said, he’s a little, a little more defensive now (R: mhmm) and trusting of people when they try to be kind to him (R: right) than he used to be because he I think he’s just put up that part/guard a little bit (R: right) to protect himself but.

3. Was the bullying incident resolved? How?

(3) And so um and then as we transitioned into junior high school we could see that the bullying was meaner. It was um more mean-spirited um (R: right) and so um we we realized that we needed to address how we could know you, both, one, help J to deal with that but also to um not let them get him upset so that it wasn’t as fun for them. (R: right) So that it wasn’t rewarding for them. (R: right) so.

• R: 2:42 Um, when these things happen, what is the next step? Like, after this happens, what do you do? How do you? How’s the reaction? Do you know about most of the bullying instances? P: No, he he never tells me. (R: mhmm) Um it’s usually kids in the neighborhood who’ve seen him at school, and they’ll tell their parents so, or they’ll come and talk to me about it. (R: right) And J never ever comes and talks to me. So we’ve really worked through um we’ve tried to work through with him, telling him who he can go to at school, and it’s okay to talk to a teacher, or go talk to a principle and that (R: mhmm) type of thing but, I think it’s usually other kids who are going to (R: mhmm) those sources and saying this is (R: oh okay) what the problem is, rather than J, J doesn’t. (R: he doesn’t really take, stand up for himself or whatever) No. He would never yeah come home and tell me that he had had a bad day or anything It’s it’s other kids who have told me.

• R: Would he ever say anything to the bully himself? P: 3:36 Um, I I think in calling names back or saying rude (R: mhmm) things back but not in saying, you’re crossing the line I mean, yeah(R: right). R: So has he ever I mean, has there been any attempts in trying to teach him how to react? Or is, do you just rely on what he’d normally do? P: We actually had that as part of his IEP for a little while. R: Really, for about how long?
P: um, I would say two to three years. *(R: okay)* Well, maybe longer than that. I think we started when he was in elementary school. *(R: okay)* because he had some problems with kids singing and stuff just to *(R: right)* bother him. And so um and because his reaction was so um I can’t think of what I’m trying to say but it was a little over the top. *(R: right)* Um, it was it was more than it should have been for what was going on *(R: yeah).*

* R: 4:50 * Do you think he understands the concept of them doing it to get a reaction?* P: Um I think he does *(R: mhmm)* I think he does but um yeah, I don’t know that he still has gotten to the point where he really knows how to deal with it appropriately so much *(R: right).* He’s done better *(R: so -mhmm)* but it still is, yeah. *(R: yeah, that makes sense)* It’s not quite appropriate with his reactions. *(R: So what is like an example of an IEP goal for that.)* *(P: um)* Like, I mean, if you, maybe it doesn’t have to be technical words or whatever.* *(R: No, I think what we went through was the things in particular were if you start getting upset then *sigh* I’m trying to think, I mean it was kind of in steps. *(R: okay)* If you are confronted then you need to try and ignore, I mean ignoring was part of it, *(R: mhmm)* going to um someone who was an appropriate person *(R: mhmm)* to talk to was part of it, some of the steps like that. So that he could kind of work through it rather than *(R: right) ...reaction* *(R: 5:53 and how, how did they teach this to him? If, if you.)* *(P: Um, I think some of it, like I said, because there are some kids in the resource classes who just, as part of their challenges, *(R: right)* um don’t completely understand the differences of other kids *(R: right).* And so some of them would just tease you know, and it’s not as mean-spirited as as other kids in the school and so um I think in the classroom they would try and address that when it was other kids *(R: mhmm)* and it was not, I mean, it was more in a *(R: mhmm)* does that make sense? *(R: yeah)* Kind of a lower level *(R: right)* um then they’d try to address it and say, “J, it’s, it’s okay you can just ignore that” *(R: mhmm)* or you can, you know “here are some things you can do to deal with that.”*

* R: 6:36 * Okay. * Do you think that they ever like. Did they ever work like one-on-one you know like in role-playing, or is P: Yeah, he’s done some role-playing. Um, one thing too that they’ve done is the the (sigh) what’s it called? The social, the story board type thing *(R: social stories)* the social stories *(R: right?)* exactly, they’ve done some of that with him *(R: okay)* um, so to help him with the bullying I know that’s one of the biggest things that they’ve used is the social stories. *(R: get them to work) yeah right,* and because J loves to draw, too, then that was great for him. Because he could kind of draw it out *(R: oh! That’s a great idea)* yeah. So. *(R: would they like write the story and then (P: yeah) draw *(P: he’d kind of help with that) and illustrate how it goes or.* *(P: yeah,* but because his strength isn’t really he doesn’t have a lot of writing skills and *(R: mhmm)* that type of thing he could. Yeah, that helped him I think.
R: yeah, that sounds. Did you do anything at home specifically? P: 7:28 Um, we we talked about it (R: mhmm) with him I mean we talked it through, we talked about bullying and talked ???. and that type of thing. But because there wasn’t, isn’t really a problem at home, do you know what I mean? (R: yeah) . . . R: 8:22 Was it um, when you’d find out from other you know, people from the neighborhood, or if the teacher would call you or something, you would you would address it with your son afterwards (P: yeah) when you find out? (P: yeah) So how would how would that interaction go? Just P: Um, normally he wouldn’t like talking about it, or he’d say, “it wasn’t that big a deal” “it didn’t matter, it doesn’t matter” (R: mhmm) you know, um even if sometimes they’d say he was in tears or he was, you know, that it had really gotten out of hand (R: right) I just really doesn’t really want to talk about it, so.

there’s not a lot more we can do (R: right) and so um (R: right) yeah we did try to um there are some kids in the neighborhood in our ward who are wonderful (R: mhmm) kids who are J’s age who are just incredible and so um we kind of talked to the quorums that way (R: mhmm) and said, if you guys can look out for J and kind of set up some um just some people to um kind of (R: support) look out for him. Yeah I mean, they were there and they were doing that already but kind of you know, just talk to them and say, “oh you guys don’t know how much it means to us that you are, you know, really looking out for him” and I think that really did kind of help them go “oh, this is you know something I need to do” (R: yeah, absolutely) And so.

R: and did you hear any instances where he’s actually used those? Or you know. P: yeah. Yeah. R: okay. Which one does he generally use? That’s a weird question. P: as phrases, or? (R: yeah, phrases) um just R: does he usually, you know, ignore it or like try to ignore it? P: Um I think he does um (R: tell him to stop) I think telling them to stop is more, I mean a little bit of ignoring but it doesn’t get very far before he says you need to knock it off (R: right) R: Does he tell (mumbling) P: what was that? R: 14:18 Does he tell adults as well P: no, not really R: or is it mostly all observing P: yeah, them observing it. So yeah.
4. Were you satisfied? What would you have liked to have seen done differently in this particular situation?

- P: um I particularly, I uh I think high school kids are different then junior high school kids. (R: mhmm) I I don’t think they’re as mean, (R: mhmm) I think they kind of grow up a little bit um I don’t feel like I was really satisfied with what was going on in the junior high. (R: mhmm) I know that there were a lot of people looking out for him (R: mhmm) and that helped a lot (R: mhmm)

- but I think that there were things that were going on that we that never even came to our attention. (R: yeah) So, um and I was disappointed even with the resource teacher, the teacher he had, who had his IEP I was disappointed with her reaction to it. (R: really?) Because as I went to her and said, “okay, I’ve had three neighbors tell me that their kid said this happened (R: mhmm) at school and obviously it was enough that it bothered these kids (R: right) to go and talk to their parents” and she’s say, “Oh I think you’re overreacting” (R: really?) And so I didn’t like think that was handled (R: yeah) probably, so. But yeah, as he’s moved into high school, I don’t think the bullying has been as bad and, part of that is probably too because he has an older brother who’s huge (R: laugh) who’s you know, at the school with him and stuff but, (R: right, that’s great for him) but I think too because kids just have grown up a little bit. 10:23

- R: 10:23 So if you could do it over again, not that you’d want to (laugh) but if you could, what would you do differently? I mean would you ask the school to do more? Or would you do more at home or uh you know, would you start earlier with him? What do you? P: I think start earlier (R: okay) but also I wish that there was and I don’t know how how to make it work, (R: right) because I think there does need to be more from the school um but I don’t know what it would be (R: yeah) um because they said, well this is what we’re doing, we’ve told him he could come here but I know that as his mom, that he doesn’t do that. He won’t go into the classroom and say, I’m being, I’m having trouble. (R: right) so. Um I don’t know if there’re um, if it would have to be peers who (R: mhmm) are maybe on some peer counsel or something (R: right) that could help watch for that or if it’s more, supervision in the
lunchroom or that type of thing. Because I, I think it’s times like that when they
have less supervision that there is more trouble (R: the passing period) yeah (R:
cafeteria) exactly (R: on and off the bus maybe too kind of) so yeah, definitely time
on the bus that we’ve had problems and so um the bus driver’s wonderful and he sits
up by the front and (R: mhmm) you know (R: that’s good) so that type of thing (R:
good).

- R2: I think you mentioned about the IEP goal (P: mhmm) and how he teaching him
  how to react to a bully (P: mhmm) do you see any difference after like the
  improvement in those things? P: I think so I think it helped him just to not have such
  a big reaction to kind of um I think it helped him to uh to just know how to deal with
  the um subtle bullying (R: mhmm) a little better and yeah. So.
APPENDIX D

Coding Table to Accompany Coding Form Consisting of (2) Specific Incidents of Bullying, (b) Interventions at School and (c) Interventions Outside of School

Brenda

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Instructions: Primary Coder initially identifies the items in advance of 2nd Coder’s verification or lack of verification of the items in the respective coding category. Using the case summary, 2nd Coder checks “no” only if she believes the item DOES NOT fit the respective category. If 2nd Coder believes important items have been omitted that should have been included - those items may be noted as comments at the end of the coding category. They are not to be counted as disagreements.</td>
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**CATEGORY ONE** (Specific Incidents of Bullying)

Item One: 2:00 Um my son did experience a lot of bullying. Where he was a victim of you know, just he was more timid, he would get upset when I would offer to intervene because he said I’d make it worse. And so for a long time, in fact most of the school year I never knew it was happening because he’d just go cry to his big sister and she’d promise not to tell. You know kind of thing. And so finally like, late home again? And these books are muddy and he just doesn’t take care of things and she’s like “mom, it’s not that” you know. R: I see, what kind of bullying was happening? P: 2:39 Um he was in third grade so usually it was a couple grades ahead you know, 6th graders would wait until he was off the school ground because they knew the rules about bullying and they were clear. And so they would wait until he was on his way home and then they would do things like take away his backpack or throw his books and homework in in you know mud puddles. (R: mhmm) A lot of pushing, shoving, name-calling, that sort of thing.

Item Two: But actually bullying happened from very early on. Children much younger than him would push him or bite him (R: really?) and he would withdraw. (R: that’s how he reacted to it)

√
Yeah. . .5:17 . . . a small, or a young child, not small, about his size, but much younger had bitten him through the skin and the back.

| Item Three: 11:46 . . . | P: At that time, *(R: middle school)* yes he began to make friends and then he went through a time when he became a follower. *(R: okay, when was this?)* Um probably towards fifth, sixth grade *(R: mhmm)*. And that was really alarming because kids would find him that were troublemakers and get him to do it for them. *(R: I see)* Get him to follow along. You know, let’s get in to the neighbor’s haystack, let’s let out their rabbits, let’s you know just. *(R: right)* “What are you doing?” “Well they said I could.” And he didn’t have the connection to know, I mean you know they said he could, and he could do it, you know. *(R: right)* there wasn’t.

| Item Four: He’s the child I’ve cried over the most. Um. Um he was a victim of of sexual abuse by a gang um which again, I didn’t find out because. . . 22:05 | √ |

(Only because we spoke about it with Wan-ting and Dr. Anderson. Previously, I had this here. They said the intervention would not be one for bullying—rather sexual abuse.)

### COMMENTS:

**CATEGORY TWO (School Interventions)**

| Item One: P: 5:17 . . . I taught him at home for several years and then tried again where he did well with remedial classes in addition to the regular class. | √ |

| Item Two: So I’m more confident *(R: uh huh)*. I feel pretty well read. Where I tried to take the classes every month that they’re offered | √ |
through the district for educators and parents. *(R: that’s great)* That’s very helpful. *(R: that’s been helpful? What do they do, what do they talk about in those classes?)* P: Um the parent, what do you call it, liaison *(R: mhmm)* between the school district and the parents. Or the educators, whoever it is *(R: mhmm)*. Um will ask, what do you feel like you need help with? Where are you at now? *(R: mhmm)* What classes do you want to see and then she finds them, finds professionals *(R: wonderful)* wherever they are and said, “this is our group, will you come?” And she has excellent people come all the way from how horses will help or how a pet will help or *(R: oh really)* to you know, just managing difficult behaviors, transitioning from small child to teens, *(R: mhmm)* you know just just whatever the group feels that like we need support on. *(R: Right. Which classes have you found to be most beneficial? For you.)* P: Oh all. 27:32 All of them

**COMMENTS:**

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<td>Item One: 5:17 . . . And we talked about this in the counseling that we both had as I was doing intervention and at one time the counselor scolded me severely because uh a small, or a young child, not small, about his size, but much younger had bitten him through the skin and the back. <em>(R: really)</em> And he you know I was comforting and trying to reassure and it was you know they spoke a different language there was a communication barrier and so I brought him home and I explained that it was a little kid. And the little kid didn’t know better and you know they just wanted what he had <em>(R: mhmm)</em> so that was their way of doing, anyway just kind of. And the counselor said, “No. You let this child know in particular he has the right to defend himself, that he has the right to say no. This is mine, <em>(R: mhmm)</em> you can’t have it. You know, help him establish those protective barriers.”</td>
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<td>Item Two: 8:32 . . . By the time we’d moved to California um then uh their team took over and the team that made the biggest difference was occupational therapy. *(R: Really? (P: yeah) What made the difference,</td>
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part of it? P: Um, they did massage they had small brushes, they used full body pressure things that seemed to soothe in particular these overactive senses. R: Mhmm, did that make a difference in relationship with uh or in his relations with other people? Or just in how he dealt with things? P: Everywhere. R: Everything? Interesting P: It was everywhere. He became calmer, less distractable, he was more easily reasoned with (R: mhmm) um but therefore he interacted better overall with others. R: I see, that’s interesting. Were you doing anything at home with him? Or were they mostly like services outside like. P: The services came to the home actually in California (R: Oh did they?). It was very nice. (R: Oh that is convenient) So we had an occupational that would come once a week and just spend and hour to two hours with him just doing various things, teaching him progressive mental activities. He had no um short-term memory recall. So we would work on that, play games for that (R: right).

| Item Three: P: Elementary school because we uh enrolled him in karate classes we began to really assert, once we found out (R: right) that this was still going on. Then we were like okay this is (R: you’re done) yeah, we’re done. We’re done. R: Okay so okay you found that to be effective? Like, karate classes? P: Yes I think it helped him again, much as physical therapy had just to, you know there was a lot of body movement and it was okay it was, (R: mhmm) nobody’s getting hurt. (R: right) Nobody’s you know. And and uh you know there was contact with people in sparring, it was okay, it was safe um. So I think he gained confidence and a lot of self-confidence 11:46 at that point which he didn’t have before. | ✓ |

| Item Four: P: We just you know I’d I you know we talked about following, we talked about leading. We you know basically he had to take the responsibility for what he had done, make amends. You know, go to the people and talk about his part in it. (R: right) That you know, basically teach him moral character and I think um he went through a really really hard time at that point because he would focus on one thing 13:21 and then he couldn’t shift the focus. | ✓ |
# APPENDIX E

Coding Table to Accompany Coding Form Consisting of (2) Specific Incidents of Bullying, (b) Interventions at School and (c) Interventions Outside of School

Camille

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### CATEGORY ONE (Specific Incidents of Bullying)

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<td>Um oh he would be the um object of he’s vulnerable so that a lot of other kids would chug him on and dare him to do things that normally a child of that age wouldn’t do. Like a sixth grader they would dare him to eat grass. And so he would go and eat the grass thinking that that was being a part of that group but it really wasn’t. (\textit{R: not realizing that was bullying instead}) mmmm, it was hard for him.</td>
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### COMMENTS:

### CATEGORY TWO (School Interventions)

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<td>well that’s when he, a lot of the social skills training that we had done um he he felt he lost that sense of that safety net that he had in elementary school and that group of friends that had grown up with him. . . \textit{R: 8:55 when you say the social skills training that you guys had worked on before, what do you mean by that? Like what kind of social skill training did you do?} P: um we did um a lot of social stories to help make, create more predictability in his life and help</td>
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script, help him script his life and understand certain social situations that created anxiety to decrease anxiety. Um we worked closely with counselors.

Item Two: And then we uh worked with a program called “skill streaming” this is back in the early 90s. R2: skill streaming, I think I heard of it P: mhmm, it’s an older program. I have I don’t know if I have it here but I have the books. But it’s a program where you teach the typical kids and the kids with the social challenges things to do. And he had um a ring of cards um “how to join a group” (R2: mhmm) “how to stand in line” (R2: mhmm) and he could refer to these cards and have them in his pocket. And so it kind of gave him a way to decode the world and gave him some steps for access. And we’d practice at home (R: mhmm) and has a family we would go to the playground when kids weren’t in session and play as a family and kind of teach him how to play on the play equipment and (R: okay). Um we did some role play of situations what do you do if someone’s like bugging you or getting too close to you? And we’d role play even things like that. R: 10:26

Item Three: R: 12:41 did you do anything specifically to help him deal with um bullying. Or differentiating between bullying, non-bullying type of things? P: Mhmm. Yeah we did a lot with that. We worked with um the school counselor and we um did a lot of training with um what bullying looks like and what what’s the difference between uh a mean dare and a nice dare. And um talked about if it’s something, if someone’s asking you to do something that you normally don’t typically see other children doing it, it’s probably not a good idea. (R: right) and we had to do it really concretely (R2: mhmm) to help him um with lots of repetition (R: mhmm). So we had lots of talks about well “do you normally see you know, sixth graders going over to the kindergarten playground and swinging on the swings?” and (R: right) and you know singing or something like that. And he’d say “no” and then we’d say “is that a mean dare or a nice dare?” or “a friendly thing or not friendly?” so we had to work with him and he would learn different social scripts and then if things varied a little bit he’d have a hard time (R: mhmm).

Item Four: R: Do you wish that the school would have given you more support or done anything differently? (P: um) Because it seems like you did a lot on your own. P: Yeah it would have been nice if we had more funding in the schools. (R: yeah.) (laughing) Because and when we
lived in Michigan, when he was diagnosed and we had um, that’s where we had the uh speech therapist that went into the classroom every week with me and we taught a social skills skill. *(R: every week?)* uh huh, once a week for an hour that we’d teach it and then they’d practice it and role play. It was unreal. And I didn’t realize and we had OT services. And then we moved to Utah and I just assumed that we’d have the services here *(laughing)* and *(R: not so much)* went to the IEP and they just laughed when I mentioned adaptive PE and occupational therapy. It was a totally different *(R: mhmm)* ballgame. So we had to really be even more pro-active than we were before.

| Item Five: 28:28 . . . P: Um we, I talked with the uh um speech and language pathologist and she was working on intonation and did have a group with um social skills. And I told her a lot about the recess and we problem-solved together and she through um being in a meeting. And then we had an autism specialist *(R: mhmm)* for the state that came to our IEP *(R: oh wow)* and um in the IEP we referenced this discussion well you know in this train of intonation is great and with this group is great but it’s not the real setting. And he needs help generalizing *(R: right)* and so as an IEP team we brainstormed that intervention. | ✓ |

| Item Six: 35:03 . . . P: He had a fabulous guidance counselor um that was aware that he was being bullied and was really protective and whenever S, like in the lunchroom if someone was bothering him he could go into the counselor’s office at any time and talk to him. But the counselor really didn’t have much ability to control the sheer numbers of um kids. And we even had a meeting with the administrators to talk about options um and they just didn’t have any options for him. He functioned well enough to be in regular ed. but um was vulnerable socially and they really didn’t have a lot of programs or opportunities where we felt he could be safe in that environment. So, did that answer your question? | ✓ |

COMMENTS:

| CATEGORY THREE (interventions Outside of School) | YES (✓) | NO (✓) |
Item One: 8:08 so part of eighth grade we homeschooled him and then the second half we did part time in a private school (R: okay). So his whole eighth grade year was not in the public schools.  R: was that better, a better year for him? 

Item Two: And that’s where the circle of friends and training of friends helped. So every teacher he had we’d usually like fourth, fifth, and sixth grade um my husband would go out and take him out for ice cream and then I would go in and meet with the class (R: ohh) and talk about you know, what is high functioning autism and how we talked about theory of mind and did an example of that sometimes S doesn’t know what you’re thinking. (R & R2: mhmm) and explained typical behavior and um so those three grades he had lots of kids that were really supportive in his class. R: that’s great   P: yeah R: 14:3

Item Three: R: 15:47 how long do you think it took for those things. Um did you see like immediate progress after. I mean going through social skills or talking about the difference between bullying and non-bullying. Did you see immediate results after that or did it take time for him to be able to process it and understand it and apply it. P: um it took time. He would understand with um it was hard for him to generalize when we’d teach him the principles (R: mhmm) and then it would be hard for him to generalize to different situations. (R: right) And then there were some social situations that were just too we kind of decided what um situations were worth the battles that were worth fighting there were some things we just did not do like boy scout camp. That’s just like a free for all, you know? (laughing) so we didn’t, we didn’t do any scouting anything with scouting um so he knew that we were giving him some room. Some wiggle room. And so when we require him to go to certain social things he was more compliant because he knew that we were pretty flexible in other areas. (R: right) yeah.

COMMENTS:

R: 10:26 when did you start doing this? P: um well we started informally before we realized what was going on in preschool. We um he wasn’t playing appropriately (R: mhmm) so we did um play intervention. I look back on it now and we did a lot of, he had stereotypical play and we would (R: mhmm) um it was. It’s now called floor time, Stanley Greenspan was just getting started with a lot of his work and my husband was studying psychology and so we would just happen upon things. And
so we did a lot of floor time interventions with play and have play dates. What my husband calls rent a friend where you’d find a kid in the neighborhood that was very nice very kind, very nurturing. Not necessarily would want to be our son’s friend. But we would set up a play date and have something really fun at our house (R: okay). And and structure things, so have highly structured activities at our house that he could be successful at (R: mhm). So and by the time he was in high school he had a good group of friends, they were all a year younger but the leader of this group of friends had a younger brother with a disability so he was very sensitive and always included my son in his group. (R: that’s great) Yeah so I think the key was when he was accepted that there was structure and sensitivity by one you know or more members of the group.
APPENDIX F

Coding Table to Accompany Coding Form Consisting of (2) Specific Incidents of Bullying, (b) Interventions at School and (c) Interventions Outside of School

Pauline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Primary Coder)</th>
<th>(2nd Coder)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions: Primary Coder initially identifies the items in advance of 2nd Coder’s verification or lack of verification of the items in the respective coding category. Using the case summary, 2nd Coder checks “no” only if she believes the item DOES NOT fit the respective category. If 2nd Coder believes important items have been omitted that should have been included - those items may be noted as comments at the end of the coding category. They are not to be counted as disagreements.</td>
<td>YES (✓)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CATEGORY ONE** (Specific Incidents of Bullying)  
None – all instances of bullying are when the child is the perpetrator  
✓

COMMENTS:

**CATEGORY TWO** (School Interventions)  
None – all interventions concern preventing the child from bullying, not from being bullied; or concern “correcting” his autism  
✓

COMMENTS:

**CATEGORY THREE** (Interventions Outside of School)  
None – all interventions concern preventing the child from bullying, not from being bullied; or concern “correcting” his autism  
✓
### APPENDIX G

**Coding Procedure: Percentages of Agreement - by category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Category One</th>
<th>Category Two</th>
<th>Category Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incidents of Specific Bullying</td>
<td>Positive School Interventions</td>
<td>Positive Interventions Outside of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>1/1 = 100%</td>
<td>1/1 = 100%</td>
<td>1/1 = 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camille</td>
<td>1/1 = 100%</td>
<td>6/6 = 100%</td>
<td>3/3 = 100%</td>
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<td>Brenda</td>
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<td>2/2 = 100%</td>
<td>4/4 = 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category Totals</td>
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<td>9/9 = 100%</td>
<td>8/8 = 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Over all percentage of agreement by category is 94**