

## **Fighting**

Essential question: "What can we do about the fighting in our school?"

**School:** Anna Lingelbach Elementary School, Philadelphia, PA

**Year of project:** 2001-2002

Take a survey in any elementary school. You'll find there's only one activity more popular than lunch: *recess*. This 4th grade class at Anna Lingelbach Elementary School discovered, not surprisingly, that recess is also when most school fights take place. And they wanted to do something about it.

Using "field observation" (note taking, tallying, charting and analyzing data), they watched several recess periods and observed the kinds of conflicts that break out during different games. For example, in jump rope, students fight over who goes first. In hide and seek, it's who is "it." Sometimes fights emerge over picking teams. Sometimes it's when someone says something mean, or deliberately breaks the rules of the game.

With help from their teacher Candice Smith and their SLC Coordinator Mary Kwartnik, the students learned about a concept called "socialized recess", a strategy used by some schools to decrease incidents of violence on the playground. The success of this approach depends on good organization and on an underlying understanding of good sportsmanship. Learning about sportsmanship, can be fun, especially when your partners are from Phillies Fundamentals, a program co-sponsored by The Philadelphia Phillies organization and the city's Department of Recreation.

The students also teamed up with the singer/songwriter team, Two of A Kind, to write and record a song about their project. Their goal was to use the song to raise awareness among the entire student body about cooperation and conflict resolution. The project culminated with a presentation to the school's faculty, when they outlined how their plan for socialized recess might work at Lingelbach.