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JENNIFER SALTMAN PHOTO

Calgary entertainer and educator Steve Harmer uses magic to help teach Alexander Park elementary school students about bullying.

The magic trick for bullying prevention

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STAR REPORTER

It's never too early to teach kids about bullying.

That's one of the messages parents and teachers at Alexander Park elementary school are putting out to their students and the community.

Last week, Calgary entertainer and educator Steve Harmer visited the school to help teach students how to "Be Aware & Care", part of a bully prevention program that is based on the Bully Proofing Program.

"One of the reasons I focus on elementary students is that I want the program to be preventative and proactive," Harmer said after Friday's show.

Alexander Park's Parent Advisory Committee paid for Harmer's visit, which follows a bullying presentation made at the school earlier this year.

Harmer says his goal is to prevent bullying by teaching students what it is and help them to understand it and its consequences — all using magic and illusion.

"The caring kids are the majority, and the majority can't let the bullies, or minority, rule the schoolyard and classroom," Harmer says.

He seems to be doing something right, because during his presentation, students were quiet when they were supposed to be, participated and appeared to be paying rapt attention.

Harmer says one thing about Alexander Park is that the school's motto, "Kind Hands, Kind Words," fits in with the message of caring he is trying to spread.

Principal Vicci Nelson says Harmer's presentation complements what the school's teachers are already trying to teach in class.

She agrees that it's never too early to teach children about bullying.

She says one problem that arises with young children is that some don't know what bullying is and that it's what they're doing; there's no name put to it.

The school's programs and presentations, such as Harmer's, are meant to make the students more aware of bullying.

"It's a continual thing," Nelson says. "It has to be dealt with early. We see it very early on, so we're trying to set good examples."

For more information on Harmer's presentations and preventative programs, visit www.motivationalmagic.ca.