

Strategies for Helping Your Child with Different Types of Bullying

Bullying is when a person is exposed repeatedly, and over time, to the negative actions of one, or more persons. Listed below are four types of bullying and a few ways to cope with each.

Physical – pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, taking possession from, or hurting someone’s body in any way

Parents can help by encouraging your child to...

- ✓ Report immediately
- ✓ Not fight back
- ✓ look the person in the eye, tell him to stop and walk away
- ✓ Avoid going where this usually happens (when possible) and let an adult know where this tends to happen
- ✓ Try to avoid getting visibly emotional (raise voice, cry, run, anger outbursts, etc.) People who bully love to make you lose control!
- ✓ Run if in danger

Emotional – by harming another person’s self worth by name calling insulting, gestures, eye rolling, staring, threatening, intimidating, challenging in public, put downs, or hurting someone verbally in any way.

Parents can help by encouraging your child to...

- ✓ Act like it doesn’t bother him
- ✓ Ignore it
- ✓ Agree with him
- ✓ Say something funny
- ✓ Change the subject
- ✓ Have a “cue” to get the teachers attention
- ✓ Tell him how you feel and you wish he’d stop
- ✓ Role play the “comebacks” above, and if none of them work...report, or report anyway. Make sure your child knows 3-4 comebacks by memory.

Social – by harming a person’s group acceptance by gossiping, spreading rumors, playing tricks on, insulting their race/gender, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, trying to ruin their reputation, excluding someone, or trying to disrupt someone’s friendships in any way.

Parents can help by...

- ✓ Letting your child know it's not her fault
- ✓ Holding her accountable when she's bullies others
- ✓ Avoiding giving a solution. Help her brainstorm a strategy
- ✓ Asking, "Does she treat all of the girls this way?" If not, ask "Who is doing this?" Ask, "How does she treat the other girls?"
- ✓ Encouraging her to try out her strategy, and if it doesn't work she might consider new friends
- ✓ Helping her to remember that the most important thing is to "ACT LIKE IT DOESN'T BOTHER HER"

Electronic - by harming someone through the use of text messages, phone calls, chat rooms, emails, photos, Facebook, Myspace, blogs, twitter, or any other type of electronic means.

Parents can help by...

- ✓ Having rules and consequences for misuse of electronic devices (ie. No use of "on line slang", vulgar language, etc.)
- ✓ Not allowing cable TV, or computers in your child's room
- ✓ Installing monitoring equipment and filtering software (www.websafety.com and www.safefamilies.org)
- ✓ When cyberbullied, send a firm, non-threatening message asking for all communication to stop.
- ✓ Saving and printing out evidence of any cyberbullying
- ✓ Send a copy of cyberbullying to the school and other parent(s). Avoid contacting the other parent while angry, or electronically
- ✓ Turning in all threatening electronic contacts to the Police
- ✓ Having your child sign an internet/cell phone use contract (sample at www.safekids.com)
- ✓ Teaching: Ignore, Sign Off, Block and Report
- ✓ Helping your child learn to communicate without the use of electronic devices by solving problems face to face.
- ✓ Setting a good example.

Note: It is not considered bullying when students tease each other in a playful/friendly way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength/power (could be physical or social power) argue, or fight. To be considered bullying 1) the behavior occurs repeatedly and over time and 2) and there's an imbalance of power in some way.

Points for Parents

“If your child is being bullied”

- If your child gives you indication that he/she is being bullied, believe your child and record the information. Remember to write down where and when it happened, who was involved, and the type of bullying that took place
- Take the initiative and talk with you child. Ask for specifics and write them down. If a child doesn't volunteer information easily ask open-ended questions like “Tell me about your day”
- Contact the school immediately. Share your written log of the bullying incident with the teacher, or administrator. As the teacher to discuss a plan to stop the bullying behavior in addition to a safety plan, if there is retaliation by the child who is bullying.
- Role play scenarios to develop more resistance skills at home. Concentrate on non-verbal cues such as stance, voice inflections, eye contact. Etc. Ask the school counselor for help with “comebacks”.
- Investigate if your child is more of a passive, or proactive victim. Have you heard that your child sometimes annoys, provoke others m or has a short temper (proactive), or is shy, sensitive, physically weaker, low self image, becomes easily upset (passive). If it's “proactive”, sometimes you can help your child change certain things that make him/her more of a target. Even if your child is a “proactive victim” it doesn't give others the right to bully him/her, but it sometimes does make it more understandable.
- Please do not do the following:
 - ✓ Confront the child who is bullying and/or parents
 - ✓ Ask your child to stand up to the bullying with physical force
 - ✓ Blame your child for being bullied
 - ✓ Keep the bullying a secret
 - ✓ Let your child hear you talk negatively about his/her school, teachers, or administrators