

A Parent's Guide to Role-Playing Bullying Reports

Bullying is serious. Make sure your child knows that it is important to practice reporting bullying so he or she will know what to do if it happens in real life. When your child reports bullying, it is most important to listen carefully and ensure your child's safety. The following are steps you can take when your child comes to you about a bullying situation.

1. Listen.

Stop what you're doing and focus your attention on your child. Your child needs to know you care about what he or she is saying. Set aside all possible distractions and look at your child as he or she is speaking.

Child: I need to tell you something important.

Adult: What is it? I'm listening.

2. Affirm.

Reporting bullying can be difficult. Affirming your child's feelings immediately lets him or her know reporting is the right thing to do, and that you will support him or her. Make sure your child faces you, stands up straight, and uses a strong, respectful voice.

Child: I need to report bullying. These two older kids won't leave me alone.

Adult: I'm sure that's been difficult for you!

3. Ask more questions.

Get more information about what's been happening by asking questions.

Adult: Do you know who the kids are?

Child: Yes, they ride my bus.

Adult: When does this happen, and what do they do?

Child: They've bugged me almost every day since school started. When we get off the bus at school, they push me and grab my backpack and throw it. Then they laugh and laugh and call me mean names.

4. Tell your child what will happen next.

Make sure you and your child have a clear, mutual understanding of what will be done to help stop the bullying.

Adult: So this has been happening for a while. I'm so glad you told me. No one deserves to be bullied. I'll call your principal and tell her what you've told me, and set up a time for you to talk to her about it tomorrow. She needs to know what's going on.

Child: I'm scared.

Adult: It will be okay. The principal cares about all her students. She wants everyone to feel safe at school, including you!

Child: Okay...

5. Assure support.

Make sure your child knows you will support him or her.

Adult: If you still feel scared tomorrow, I can go with you.

Child: That might help. Phew! I feel better already.