

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Tips for Families



What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that is characterized by the following:

1. *Repetitive* behavior;
2. Physical or emotional *harm*; and
3. An *imbalance* of power.

Bullying can involve an individual or a group of students.

What are the types of bullying behaviors?

1. **Physical Bullying** — hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, beating up, stealing or damaging property
2. **Verbal Bullying** — name-calling, mocking, hurtful teasing, humiliating or threatening someone, racist or sexist comments
3. **Social Bullying** — excluding others from the group, gossiping or spreading rumors, setting others up to look foolish and damaging friendships
4. **Cyber Bullying** — using email, cellphones, text messages and the Internet to threaten, harass, embarrass, exclude or damage reputations and friendships

What are the warning signs that my child might be being bullied?

Possible warning signs include:

- Fearful of going to school or participating in other activities;
- Appearing anxious or scared;
- Complaining of feeling unwell;
- Changes in sleep patterns, appetite, mood;
- Losing things, needing money, reporting being hungry, coming home with broken or missing school supplies or belongings; and
- Appearing isolated from his/her peer group.

What should you do if you think your child is being bullied?

1. Listen to and talk with your child right away. Don't put it off. Let your child know he/she did the right thing by telling you, and assure him/her you will help.
2. Talk to the school staff and arrange for a meeting with you, your child and the teacher, counselor or principal/assistant principal.
3. Work together to create a plan to address
 - What your child needs to feel safe at school;
 - What your child can do to avoid being bullied in the future; and
 - Whom he/she can go to for help.
4. Recognize that the school may need some time to investigate your concerns. Bullies are very good at what they do; getting to the bottom of the behaviors takes time.
5. Keep open the lines of communication between home and school. Arrange a follow-up meeting or phone call.

What if my child sees another child being bullied?

Witnessing bullying can be hard too. Children feel uncomfortable and may stand by and do nothing, join in the bullying to avoid becoming a target or defend the child being bullied. Share with your child that bullying can end when bystanders speak up for the victim.

Encourage your child to:

1. Report the incident to a teacher immediately;
2. Not give bullying an audience;
3. Help the victim get away;
4. Set a good example; and
5. Be a friend.



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References: www.stopbullying.gov and <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>