

Bullying

Every day nearly 160,000 children in the U.S. stay home from school because of bullying. Bullying isn't "just part of growing up." It can have a lasting effect on the victim, the bully, the school and the community. Every child deserves an environment where they can develop without fear of aggression or cruelty. Following are some ways parents and adults can help prevent the long-lasting effects of bullying.

General Prevention Tips:

1. Spend quality time with your child. Talk and listen to your child.
2. Be a positive role model. Respect others and stand up for yourself when people don't respect you.
3. Teach your child not to be a bystander. Encourage your child to tell the bully to stop, or to walk away and get help from an adult.
4. Help your child feel good about him-or herself in a healthy way. Encourage your child to set and reach goals.
5. Use positive discipline and teach nonviolence. Teach that using violence to solve problems or deal with anger only makes things worse.
6. If you're worried about your child or yourself, seek help from school counselors, school support groups, private therapists or your family health-care provider.

Tips for Parents of Bullies

1. Know the warning signs. Your child may be bullying others if they:
 - Enjoy putting others down and don't care about others feelings.
 - Disrespect authority and people who are different from them.
 - Disregard rules.
 - Need to have power over others.
 - Make jokes about violent acts or enjoy violence.
2. If parents learn that their child is bullying others, they can do the following:
 - Stay calm. Feeling angry or ashamed is normal, but instead focus on how to help your child learn positive behavior.



- Talk about it. Ask your child why he or she is bullying others. Talk about nonviolent ways to deal with strong feelings like anger. Most importantly, make it clear that you think bullying is wrong and set clear, nonviolent consequences for future bullying behavior.

Tips for Victims and Witnesses

1. Many children who are bullied keep it a secret. They may think telling will make matters worse, so know the warning signs. A victim may:
 - Seem quiet or depressed.
 - Have bruises or other injuries.
 - Come home with missing or damaged belongings.
 - Ask for more lunch money.
 - Loose interest in school or do poorly in school.
2. If parents learn that their child is being bullied, they can do the following:
 - Again, stay calm. Tell the child that nobody deserves to be bullied.
 - Ask why your child thinks he or she is being bullied.
 - Think of peaceful solutions together.
3. Encourage your child to:
 - Stick with a group. Avoid being alone in “target” areas like locker rooms, restrooms or empty classrooms, and avoid places where the bully hangs out.
 - Don’t fight back or seek revenge.
 - Be assertive and confident. Use body language to show you are not afraid.
 - Agree with the bully. Say, “You’re right.” Then walk away.
 - Tell the bully to stop or walk away and get help from an adult. Report all bullying incidents.
 - Teach your child not to be a bystander. When no one speaks up, the bully learns he or she can get away with it.

