



Resources for Parents

What Is Bullying?

Bullying occurs when another student or group of students repeatedly harms a student, either psychologically or physically. It may include assaults or aggressions, verbal and/or physical threats, intentional exclusion from a group, spreading rumors, menacing gestures or faces, or repeated name calling.

It occurs when there is an imbalance of power. Bullying is when someone takes unfair advantage of someone less powerful who cannot successfully defend him/herself. Power can be physical size, strength, numbers, social standing, verbal skill, economic power, cultural, social or ethnic power, level of intelligence, an ability, popularity, gender, and so on.

There are some notable gender differences in bullying behavior, although both girls and boys participate. For example, girls are often more indirect and spread rumors or intentionally leave someone out of activities while boys typically engage in direct, overt bullying behaviors such as physical assaults or verbal taunts and threats.

A common misconception is that bullying is an unavoidable part of growing up. Because of this, sometimes bullying behavior can go unnoticed, or even be ignored. When teachers or parents fail to recognize certain behaviors as bullying, there can be serious consequences. Victims of consistent bullying report physical and mental health problems, they may suffer from depression or low self-esteem, may bring weapons to school, and may contemplate suicide more often than others their age who are not experiencing bullying.

Bullying affects everyone. It creates a climate of fear and anxiety, and diminishes a safe, healthy learning environment.



Warning Signs of Bullying

- Being accused of being a bully at school or elsewhere.
- Getting into trouble for fighting (physical or verbal) with other children at school.
- Becomes easily frustrated when he/she doesn't get his/her way. Defiant or oppositional.
- Dominant or aggressive with other children.
- Speaks about other children as "stupid" or uses other negative terms to describe others.
- Shows little concern for others in bad situations.

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STATISTICS

- 43% fear harassment in the bathroom at school.
- 282,000 students are physically attacked in secondary schools each month.
- Every 7 minutes a child is bullied on the playground.
- Adult intervention—4%
- Peer intervention—11%
- No intervention—85%

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Characteristics of Children Who Are Bullying

1. Strong desire for power and control over others.
2. Physical strength greater than average for own age, and greater than victims.
3. Age usually older than victim's.
4. Average or above-average self-esteem.
5. Minimal anxiety and insecurity usually claimed.
6. Low-average to above-average popularity outside of own group of followers.
7. Success in hiding behavior from adults.
8. Continual tormenting of victims.
9. Hardness, lack of empathy or understanding for others, lack of conscience.
10. Defiant attitude toward authority, refusal to follow rules, sometimes-violent behavior toward parents and teachers.
11. Actions become worse when a victim fights back.
12. Skill at seeming innocent and talking one's way out of situations when caught.



What To Do If Your Child Is Bullying Others

It may be difficult to accept or understand. Find out exactly what your child has been doing, what they're *accused* of doing, and what they *admit* to doing. Talk calmly to them about why they're behaving this way. Do not use a confrontational or accusatory tone. They may be experiencing social or emotional difficulties, or may feel pressure to participate in bullying behavior in order to fit in, and to avoid being bullied themselves.

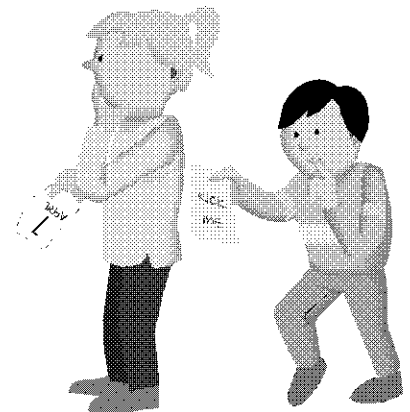
Make sure they understand what behaviors are acceptable, and which are not. Establish rules and non-physical consequences (such as losing privileges). Implement consequences consistently when rules are broken. Report any incidents to school officials, even if your child is the one bullying. This teaches them to be accountable for their own behavior. It also shows them that you will not tolerate such behavior, and that you want to help them avoid it.

Help them understand how it affects the victims, the bystanders and the school environment. Discuss alternatives to aggressive behavior, such as asking for help, respecting others, showing tolerance. Praise them for using appropriate behavior.

"Implement non-physical consequences consistently when rules are broken."

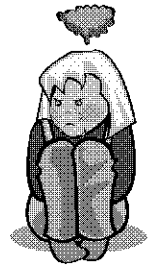
Myths About Bullying

- Bullying behavior can't be changed.
- Bullies have low self-esteem.
- Bullies only come from poor backgrounds.
- Bullies are all large males.
- Bullies are usually poor students.
- Most bullying happens on the way to and from school.
- If you stand up to stop bullies they will quit bothering you.
- If you stop the behavior at school, it will still go on outside of school.
- If you tell an adult, it will only make the situation worse.



Characteristics of Children Who Are Being Bullied

1. Rarely tell about being bullied because they think it will make matters worse.
2. Don't think adults can or will help.
3. Are repeatedly teased, called names, belittled, ridiculed, intimidated, degraded, threatened, given orders, dominated.
4. Are made fun of and laughed at by others.
5. Get picked on, pushed around, shoved, punched, hit, and kicked.
6. Are involved in quarrels or fights in which they are unfairly defenseless and from which they try to withdraw (maybe crying).
7. Have their books, money or other belongings taken, damaged or scattered around.
8. Have bruises, injuries, cuts, scratches or torn clothing that cannot be given a natural explanation.
9. Are (often) alone and excluded from the peer group during breaks and lunchtime, do not seem to have a single good friend.
10. Are chosen among the last in team games.
11. Sometimes carry weapons to protect themselves from bullies.
12. Show sudden or gradual deterioration of schoolwork.



What To Do If Your Child Is Being Bullied

Do not confront the suspected bully on your own. This may only serve to escalate the situation, and ultimately make things worse. Talk to a school administrator about the situation. The school is responsible for providing a safe learning environment.

Role-play with your child and discuss ways to respond to a bully. Ideas include walking away, telling an adult, or asking for help from peers. Bullies rarely target kids in groups, so having a unified peer group can help them avoid being the target.

Telling on those who bully is not tattling, and reporting it helps keep everyone safe.

Make sure there is adequate adult supervision at all times, both inside and outside of school. Be aware of your child's involvement in activities.

"Bullies rarely target kids in groups, so having a unified peer group can help them avoid being the target of bullying."

Facts About Bullying

- Taking a positive approach and awarding good behavior in students can change behavior.
- Research shows many bullies have high self-esteem.
- Bullies can be from any background.
- 1 out of 5 students admits to being a bully or doing some "bullying."
- Bullies are not always poor students, and they do not always pick on the "good" students.
- 43% of fear harassment occurs in the bathroom at school.
- Sometimes standing up to the bully is not wise because it provokes the bully.
- Stopping the behavior at school will deter the behavior elsewhere.
- Bullying can best be stopped by the intervention of adults in authority.

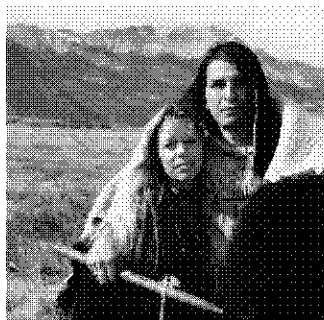


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*"Teach us love, compassion and honor...that
we may heal the Earth, and heal each other."
- Ojibwe Prayer*



Robert and Terri Lynn TallTree

For more than thirty years audiences around the world have been touched by the message and powerful presence of The TallTrees.

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<http://www.thetalltrees.com>

THIS DOCUMENT WAS COMPILED USING INFORMATION FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

Bullypolice -- www.bullypolice.org
Committee for Children -- www.cfchildren.org/issues/bullying/
Kids Health -- www.kidshealth.org
National Association of School Psychologists -- www.naspp.org
Peaceworks -- www.stopbullyingnow.net
Bullying.org -- www.bullying.org
Anti-Bullying Network -- www.anti-bullying.net
Bullystoppers.com -- www.bullystoppers.com
Kentucky Center for School Safety -- www.kysafeschools.org

**For ongoing bullying resources,
check out our blog at**

How To Eliminate Bullying — Creating a Peaceful World

Even if you don't think bullying behavior is happening at your child's school, please consider getting involved in establishing a bullying prevention plan if the school doesn't already have one in place. In addition, you might consider talking with school officials about the school's current policy for responding to bullying behavior.

Call your state department of education for more information about their policy against bullying. Many states have policies in place, and they may explain your child's rights regarding bullying behaviors and what should be done when those behaviors occur in schools. You can visit www.bullypolice.org.

Teach your child that bullying behavior of any sort is not acceptable! Do this even if you believe that your child is not in danger or involved in such acts. Encourage and support your child in reporting all incidents of bullying to you and/or school officials.

Get involved in your child's life, both inside and outside of school. This is important for both your child and you. Know who their friends are, and watch to see how your child interacts with other children. You will be able to do something if you see any potential problem behaviors that are taking place. Talk about how to engage in nonviolent interactions and how to respond to bullies to prepare your child for those situations in school and elsewhere in their lives.

Seek outside help. Dealing with bullying behavior can be difficult. Your school's psychologist, counselor or social worker may be able to offer additional suggestions or work with your child to change behavior.

"As Native people of the land, we are taught to emphasize peace — not only toward each other but toward our environment and all living things. I believe this would be the most positive way to eliminate bullying." - Robert TallTree

