

Bullying: Is My Child Being Bullied or Bullying Others?

What Parents Can Do.

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Bullying is when...

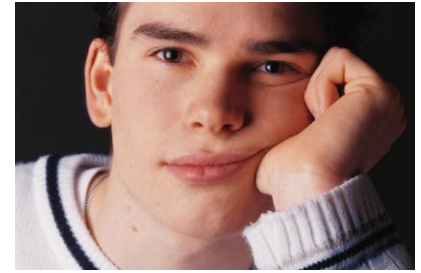


A student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another--basically what is implied in the definition of aggressive behavior. Negative actions can be carried out by words, for instance, by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names...someone hits, pushes, kicks, pinches, or restrains another by physical contact...making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person's wishes.

*-Dan Olweus, *Bullying at School* 1993.*



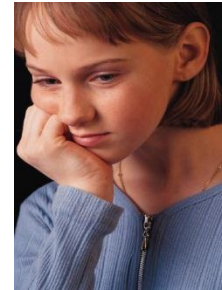
Bullying in Schools



- Approximately 15% of students bully others or are bullied
- Bullying is experienced by both boys and girls, although it usually takes different forms
- Bullying usually happens in undefined areas of the campus
- Physical bullying hurts a person's body or property
- Emotional bullying hurts a person's self-esteem
- Social bullying hurts a person's group acceptance
- Bullying is always the result of a perceived imbalance of power, and should not be confused with peer conflicts
- Bullying at school affects the one who is bullying, the victim and the bystander



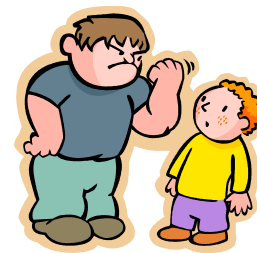
Dispelling the Myths



- ***Once a bully, always a bully.*** Bullying behavior is learned and therefore be unlearned.
- ***Those who bully have a low self-esteem.*** They generally have a high self-image and believe that they are superior. They often believe the victim deserves the treatment they get.
- ***Bullies are only from poor families.*** Bullying occurs in all socioeconomic levels. Bullying is a problem in both public and private schools.
- ***Bullies generally do poorly in school.*** Those who bully are usually average students.
- ***Standing up to a bully (fighting back) is the only way to stop bullying.*** Bullies only pick on students they know they can beat. Bullies thrive on getting a reaction from the victim.

Characteristics of Students Who Bully

- Do not feel empathy toward others, rather enjoy causing pain
- Calm or flat affect when asked about their behaviors
- Believe victims deserve their treatment
- Do not know how to interpret unintentional acts
- Earn average grades in elementary, then tend to decline as they reach middle and high school
- Bullying behaviors increase in elementary, peak in middle school, and decline in high school as students have a stronger idea of their own identity
- Good self-esteem with a desire for control and power
- Surrounded by a small group of friends
- Often oppositional toward adults
- Believe that rules do not apply to them





Characteristics of Students Who Are a Victim

- Two types of victims = passive and provocative.
Rely on adults more than peers for emotional support and guidance; rarely report bullying since they believe that it will only make things worse; insecure, sometimes anxious and have low self-esteem; rarely defend themselves; few friends
- Passive victims never provoke attacks
- Provocative victims sometimes appear to instigate conflicts, and at times pester or irritate those around them



Signs That Your Child May Be Bullied

- Feeling ill in the morning; not wanting to go to school
- Change in route to school
- Refusal to talk about the day at school
- Drop in school performance
- Change in friendships
- Coming home from school with torn clothes or destroyed property
- Unexplained crying, especially before going to sleep
- Nightmares
- Lack of confidence
- Change in behavior towards friends and siblings; becoming more violent and becoming a bully

What Parents Can Do

If you think your child is bullied, get the facts...listen.

- Building empathy means empowerment: Listen; don't interrupt; don't judge your child's feelings; show you are interested; stay calm; ask questions if you need to clarify; repeat back to your child what he/she said to ensure you understand.
- Teach a positive attitude; don't let your child put him/herself down.
- Give specific and generous praise when your child overcomes a challenge.
- Use humor with your child.
- Encourage reasonable risks; something he/she hasn't done before...it is okay to make a mistake.
- Encourage making friends; strategies of first being a friend, be a good sport, organized activities, learn to do things other children enjoy, treat others the way you want to be treated.



How Your Child Can Safely Stand Up To Bullying

- Be Assertive: posture, walk, eye contact.
- When making an assertive statement: be direct, respectful and honest. Keep a safe physical distance, don't make physical contact, use "I-messages"; choose the right place and time.
- Give your child positive strategies: ignore the comment; avoid the bully; use self-talk; make a joke; have friends help tell the bully to stop; tell an adult at school.



Signs That Your Child May Bully Others

- Enjoys putting people down
- Doesn't care if feelings are hurt
- Shows disrespect for authority (at home and school)
- Enjoys fighting
- Believes that everything should always go his/her way
- Won't admit mistakes
- Lies frequently to get out of trouble
- Think that rules do not apply to him/her
- Believes that others aren't to be trusted
- Uses anger to get what he/she wants
- Has an attitude of superiority over other children



What Parents Can Do

If you think your child is bullying others

- Spend more time with your child.
- Consistent discipline, remain calm.
- Eliminate violent t.v., videos and games. Do not allow children to push, hit, shove, call names, or allow cruel or demeaning jokes.
- Talk to your child, ask about his/her feelings.
- Make sure he/she knows that they are loved unconditionally.
- Highlight similarities between your child and other children.
- Have them care for animals with kindness.
- Follow the Golden Rule.





Five Ways Parents Discourage Bullying

1. Show Respect.
2. Demonstrate Empathy.
3. Respect Feelings.
4. Handle Anger.
5. Resolve Conflicts.



Resources/References



- The Parent's Book About Bullying; Changing the Course of Your Child's Life. William Voors. www.hazelden.org.
- The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander. Barbara Coloroso. www.harpercollins.com
- Building Moral Intelligence; The Seven Essential Virtues That Teach Kids to Do the Right Thing. Michele Borba, Ed.D. www.josseybass.com
- Bullying, What Parents Can Do. www.sunburstvm.com
- No Bullying Program: Preventing Bullying at School. James Bitney, Beverly Title. www.hazelden.org
- Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. Dan Olweus, Ph.D. Blackwell.
- California Department of Education. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyres.asp>