



## Parent Intervention

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Effective prevention of bullying is not just the responsibility of the schools and the children - it also requires parental intervention. It is important that parents get involved in their children's lives, especially when their children are experiencing difficulty at school or in the neighborhood because of bullying. Bullying affects every child in some way - those who are directly involved often feel that their safety and security is being threatened and really need their parents' support.



**OUR CHILDREN'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD REQUIRES A STRONG FOUNDATION OF SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.**

**IF CHILDREN CAN'T TURN TO YOU, AS THEIR PARENTS, THEN WHO CAN THEY TURN TO!**

**SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN!**

### **Points to Remember:**

- Avoid labeling and comparing children to one another.
  - Acknowledge their differences, while praising their abilities, talents and personal gifts.
- Accept each child as an individual.
  - Acknowledge uniqueness, while pointing out what makes your child special.
- Provide positive feedback at every opportunity.
  - Acknowledge achievements, however small, and reinforce positive thinking about themselves and others.

- Teach your children about different cultures and ethnic groups.
  - Make them aware that differences need to be embraced and accepted.
- Set reasonable limits.
  - Standards of behavior both in the home and outside of the home should be made clear.
  - Children need to know the boundaries from which to measure their own behavior.
  - Limits serve as guidelines from which children seem to respond if taught early enough in childhood.
- Help your children acquire relational and social skills.
  - Join community and social groups at an early age so that normal and acceptable behavior can develop.

### **Important Note:**

Try not to force your children to do or say things they do not want to do or say, for this type of behavior is a form of bullying. Let your children tell you what they think and feel their special talents, abilities and gifts are. Let them also choose the social activities they wish to join.

Before intervening and becoming involved, it is important that parents become aware of their own behavior within their family system at home. How do you behave toward not only your child, but also other children and adults in the house? Are your children able to understand most of the interaction that takes place?

Listen to your children and encourage them to talk about their day both in and out of school. Ask them questions about what they did, whom they talked to and played with. Note how your children respond - do they readily fill you in, or are they reluctant to talk?



Take all of your child's complaints of bullying seriously, especially if your child is willing to open up about the experience. Asking more questions about a seemingly minor complaint may uncover more severe problems. Children are often afraid or ashamed to talk to anyone about a bullying experience.

When discussing a bullying episode with your child, be certain to focus on the bully, the bystanders and the bullied child, not placing the blame on any person in the bullying relationship. This relationship has three

parts everyone's role needs to be addressed with your child.

Too often in seeking to stop a bullying situation, adults concentrate on dealing with the obvious external behavior of the bully, and end up ignoring the subtle internal feelings of the bullied child. This fails to effectively solve the problem. It is therefore important to notice your child's everyday behavior, taking note of any changes, however small and insignificant they may seem.

## **Is Your Child Being Bullied?**

Be aware of the signs that your child may be the target of bullying, even if the incident has not been reported to you.

### **Symptoms & Signs:**

- Withdrawal and isolation during the evenings and weekends when your child is not at school.
  - Does your child spend a lot of time alone rather than playing in the neighborhood with other children?



- Grade average drops, typically a change is due to distraction.
  - Is your child easily distracted during activities at home?
- Clothes have been ripped or torn.
  - Does your child change clothes right away after coming home from school, so that any damage will not be noticed?
- An unusual request for money, typically needed for supplies or other unexpected expenses.
  - Has your child been running out of supplies more frequently than normal?

## What To Do if your Child is Being Bullied:

### First:

- ✓ Prevent your child from exhibiting bullying behavior at home or in public. Make sure that they understand that becoming a bystander supports the bully is also wrong.
- ✓ Show them, by *example*, how to behave *the right way* and with *respect* for others.

- ✓ Teach them *how* to resolve difficult situations without using bullying behavior.
- ✓ Show by example how to *resolve* conflict, helping *prevent* your child thinking or feeling like a target.

### **What this Accomplishes:**

You will be teaching your children by example how to interact with others the right way and resolve conflict without creating a bullying situation. This will help build the social skills which they will need as they grow up into responsible adults.

### **Second:**

- ✓ Communicate with your child's School
- ✓ Ask what the *school's policy* is on bullying. You have a *right* to know this policy, which is for parents as much as staff and students.



## What this Accomplishes:

Increased interest in school policies by parents may "indirectly" encourage regular updates of such policies that may otherwise not have been reviewed regularly. If policies have become obsolete or are ineffective in protecting the children, parents should directly ask the school for a review of these policies.

### Third:

- ✓ *Be Alert* for the **warning signs** that your child is being bullied or is bullying others. Family members are typically the first to notice any behavior changes. Also make sure that your child is not a bystander or supporter. Continually reassure children that any bullying that they report to you will be in confidence.
- ✓ *Do not ignore or deny* your child's behavior, as *early detection* **prevents** the behavior from becoming a problem.
- ✓ *Contact* the school immediately if you have any concerns.

## What this Accomplishes:

Determining your child's position in the bullying cycle allows you to help both your child and other children

in their social circle. It cannot be stressed enough that parents need to be *aware* of any changes in their children's behavior. This requires listening to what your child tries to tell you and others.



## What You Can do if Your Child has Already been Bullied?

- Talk to your child about the experience.
- Record your child's experience.
  - What happened!
  - Where the incident happened.
  - When the incident happened.
  - Who was involved in the incident.
- Reassure your child that they are **NOT** to blame for what happened to them and that it was very brave to report the incident. Make sure your child understands the importance of telling the truth about bullying and that it is safe to do so.
- Explain to your child that if there are any further incidents, they should feel *safe* to report them to a teacher immediately.

- Contact your child's school to make an appointment with the class teacher and principal
- Communicate the situation and problems that your child is experiencing while at school. **Be certain that everyone agrees on the seriousness of the issue.**
- Cooperate with the school to find a solution to the problem. **Make sure that everyone agrees on the importance of resolving the issue in such a way as not to cause any repercussions for those who reported the incident, whether they were bullied or bystanders.**

### **Be Prepared before Contacting the School:**

- Be Aware that the teacher or school may not know that your child is being bullied.
- Don't upset yourself beforehand, remain calm - overreacting can be unhelpful.
- Be specific about your child's perception and interpretation of the events - dates, places, names etc.
  - Don't blame the school or the bully, just state clearly the facts as you know them.
- Record the teacher's or school's response to the claim.

- Record what action the teacher or school intends to take.
- Ensure the school is aware that you are placing a serious complaint and not just blowing off steam. Make it clear that you expect something to be done.
- **Ask** how you can *help* in dealing with the situation both within the school and at home.
  - Be available to cooperate with the school's plan of action if you are in agreement.
  - If you are not in agreement, then discuss an alternative plan of action.
- **Communicate** often with your child's teacher and school - open communication is important to solving the problem over the long term.
  - Do not ignore the issue because bullying often includes repetition over time.



## Parent Survey

Please take the time to read through and consider the following. Discuss these questions with your children where appropriate.

**Has any of the following ever happened to your child during the past month?**

Has your child been hit, kicked or pushed by other children? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never*
- b) less than once per week*
- c) more than once per week*

Have other children said mean things, teased, or called your child names? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never*
- b) less than once per week*
- c) more than once per week*

Have any untrue stories been told by other children about your child? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never*
- b) less than once per week*
- c) more than once per week*

Have other children taken any thing away from your child? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never*
- b) less than once per week*
- c) more than once per week*

Have other children refused your child's participation in any activities? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never*
- b) less than once per week*
- c) more than once per week*

Have other children threatened to take things from or hurt your child? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never*
- b) less than once per week*
- c) more than once per week*

If you answered **b** or **c** to any of the above, find out the following:

Who committed the actions against your child?

**(Circle your answer)**

- a) a girl*
- b) a boy*
- c) a group*
- d) other*

Who did your child tell? (Circle your answer)

- a) no one*
- b) a friend*
- c) an adult at school*
- d) a parent*
- e) bus driver*
- d) other*

Where did it happen? (Circle your answer)

- a) classroom*
- b) playground*
- c) hallway or lunchroom*
- d) on the way to or coming from school*
- e) bathroom or locker room*
- f) before or after a school activity*

**How safe do you feel your child is in the following places:**

**Answer on a scale of 1 - 5 meaning:**

- 1) very safe**
- 2) safe**
- 3) kind of safe**
- 4) unsafe & scared**
- 5) very unsafe & scared**

In the classroom?

On the playground?

In the hallways or lunchroom?

Going to and coming home from school?

In the bathroom or locker room?

**How would you describe your child's school's social climate?**

Do others help a child that is bullied or picked on?  
**(Circle your answer)**

- a) never
- b) sometimes
- c) often
- d) almost always

Do children report bullying to adult supervisors or teachers? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never
- b) sometimes
- c) often
- d) almost always

Do children invite other children who may be alone to join them in activities or at lunch?

**(Circle your answer)**

- a) never
- b) sometimes
- c) often
- d) almost always

Do teachers and staff intervene when they see bullying or when bullying is reported?

**(Circle your answer)**

- a) never
- b) sometimes
- c) often
- d) almost always

Is parental involvement valued by the school on behavioral issues and bullying? **(Circle your answer)**

- a) never
- b) sometimes
- c) often
- d) almost always

Survey adapted from "Bully Proofing Your School - A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools" -  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition - William Porter