

## Tips for Parents: What to Do If Your Child Witnesses Bullying

Many children are observers or “bystanders” in cases of bullying at school. It is important that even students who are bystanders in a bullying situation take action to get help, so the bullying stops. We are taking steps to teach this important information to students at school. Here are some things you can do to support these efforts at home.

If your child talks to you about the bullying that he or she witnesses at school, you are encouraged to do the following:

- Teach your child how to get help without getting hurt.
- Encourage your child to verbally intervene if it is safe to do so, by saying such things as: “Cool it! This isn’t going to solve anything.”
- Tell your child not to cheer on or even quietly watch bullying. This only encourages a child who bullies—who wants to be the center of attention.
- Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying. Talking to an adult is not “tattling”—it is an act of courage and safety. Suggest going to an adult with a friend, if that will make it easier.
- Help your child support others who tend to be bullied.
- Teach your child to include these children in activities.
- Praise and reward “quiet acts of courage”—where your child tried to do the right thing to stop bullying, even if he or she was not successful.
- Work with your child to practice specific ways he or she can help stop bullying. For example, role-play with him or her what he or she could say or do to help someone who is being bullied.

*This list has been adapted from a publication originally created for “Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!” a campaign of the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

[www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov](http://www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov)

## Tips for Parents: What to Do If Your Child Is Being Bullied

If your child is being bullied at school, this can be a very painful experience for your child and your family. We are doing all we can at school to put a stop to bullying. Here are some additional things you can do to support your child if he or she is being bullied:

- Never tell your child to ignore the bullying.
- Don't blame your child for the bullying. Don't assume your child did something to provoke the bullying.
- Allow your child to talk about his or her bullying experiences. Write down what is shared.
- Empathize with your child. Tell him or her that bullying is wrong, that it is not his or her fault, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it.
- If you disagree with how your child handled the bullying situation, don't criticize him or her. It is often very difficult for children to know how best to respond.
- Do not encourage physical retaliation.
- Check your emotions. A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, step back and consider the next steps carefully.
- Contact a teacher, school counselor, or principal at your school immediately and share your concerns about the bullying that your child has experienced.
- Work closely with school personnel to help solve the problem.
- Encourage your child to develop interests and hobbies that will help build resiliency in difficult situations like bullying.
- Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his or her class, or help your child meet new friends outside of school.
- Teach your child safety strategies, such as how to seek help from an adult.
- Make sure your child has a safe and loving home environment.
- If you or your child need additional help, seek help from a school counselor and/or mental health professional.

*This list has been adapted from a publication originally created for "Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!" a campaign of the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

*[www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov](http://www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov)*

## Tips for Parents: What to Do If Your Child Bullies Others

If your child bullies other children at school, it will need to be stopped. We are doing a number of things at school to prevent bullying and to stop bullying once it occurs. Here are some things you can do at home to help. Thank you for your help in making our school a safe and positive place to learn.

- Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously and that it is not okay.
- Make rules within your family for your child's behavior. Praise your child for following the rules and use nonphysical and logical consequences when rules are broken. A logical consequence for bullying could be losing rights to use the phone to call friends, using email to talk with friends, or other activities your child enjoys.
- Spend lots of time with your child and keep close track of his or her activities. Find out who your child's friends are and how and where they spend their free time.
- Build on your child's talents by encouraging him or her to get involved in positive activities (such as clubs, music lessons, or nonviolent sports).
- Share your concerns with your child's teacher, counselor, and/or principal. Work together to send a clear message to your child that his or her bullying must stop.
- If you and your child need more help, talk with a school counselor and/or mental health professional.

*This list has been adapted from a publication originally created for "Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!" a campaign of the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

[www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov](http://www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov)