



Tips of Parents: Protect Your Child from Bullying

by

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Note: Some the strategies mentioned in this document and many others can be found in the awarding winning book *Protect Your Child from Bullying* by Dr. Allan Beane, (*order at www.bullyfree.com*.

Starting at Home

- Teach self-control through discipline.
- Don't tolerance the mistreatment of others and consistently applying negative consequences.
- Reward your child for improvement in behavior.
- Teach your child to treat others the way they want to be treated.
- Teach your child that mistreatment and kindness are powerful – creating memories.
- Hold family meetings to teach empathy, sensitivity and values.
- Teach child to control his/her anger.
- Discuss models of acceptance (newspaper stories, television stories, movies, etc.).
- Discuss bullying scenes you watch on television or in movies.
- Teach your child to say, "I'm sorry." "Please forgive me." and then to be kind to the person.

What should you do when I find out your child is a victim of bullying?

- Be thankful that you know.
- Calling the bully's parents may or may not stop the bullying. Many parents of children who bully are understanding and want their children to behave. However, usually it is best not to call the bully's parents.
- Calmly discuss the bullying events with your child. Work with your child to create and maintain a log/diary. Ask your child to answer the following questions. When you report the bullying to school personnel, take this information with you. The questions are: (1) Who is involved? (2) What was said and done to you and by whom? (3) What happened or usually happens immediately before the bullying occurs? (4) Who were the bystanders and what did they say and do? (5) When does the bullying occur? (6) Where does it happen? (7) Was there adult supervision? If so, who were they and what did they say and do? (8) Are there video cameras in the area recording activities? (9) How did you respond? (10) What happened or usually happens after the bullying event? (11) Who has been told about the bullying and what have they done? and (12) How long has this been occurring?

- Take pictures of injuries and consider reporting physical assaults to the school and police.
- Ask your child to keep a journal. Ask him/her to write down what happens to them, their thoughts, and their feelings. This can help heal your child's emotions.
- Let your child know it is normal to feel hurt, fear, embarrassment, shame, and anger.
- If your child says, "No one likes me at school," don't disagree.
- Stay calm and do not be too quick to blame anyone. Also, do not respond until you have details.
- Make sure your child understands that no one deserves to be bullied.
- Explain why bullies mistreat others. They haven't been disciplined, they are impulsive, they may be mistreated at home, they think they are better than others, they may be jealous, etc.
- Ask yourself, "Is my child contributing to this problem?"
- Ask yourself, "Is there anything about your child that draws negative attention that can be changed?" However, keep in mind that your child does not deserve to be bullied.
- Don't tell your child to retaliate.
- Don't tell your child to ignore the bullying.
- Immediately develop a safety plan with your child that can be expanded by his/her school. Here are some guidelines and suggestions:
 - Ask your child what needs to be done to keep him safe during the school's investigation of the situation.
 - Ask your child the name of an adult he/she wishes to report to every day at school regarding his/her treatment. Share this information with your child's teacher and principal and ask them to make the arrangements for this to occur. If the principal recommends someone else, insist that the person be someone your child wants to report to. Ask the principal to notify you when this task has been completed.
 - Tell your child to avoid the bully, when possible. If your child cannot avoid the bully, then he/she should at least try to keep their distance.
 - Tell your child to use her best judgment and follow her instincts. For example, if the bully wants something that belongs to her and it appears she could be harmed, she should give it up then walk off with confidence, acting as if the bully didn't hurt her. She should then report the mistreatment to a trusted adult. Tell the bullied student safety is more important than possessions.
 - Ask your child to keep the bully guessing where she is by not having a routine.
 - Ask your child to give the supervising adult (bus driver, bus monitor, teacher, etc.) a secret visible signal when she is being mistreated.
 - Tell your child when she sees the bully walking toward her to walk over to an adult and start a conversation with them or walk into a crowd.
 - Explain that yelling can sometimes be effective, especially when she yells what she wants the bully to stop doing. It should be a forceful assertive yell and not one that expresses hurt or helplessness. For example, she might yell "Stop hitting me!" instead of saying "Leave me alone." This will draw attention to the situation and exactly what is happening.
 - Teach your child to throw something at the student bullying him/her and run when in danger.
- Find out what other parents and students know about the bully – don't mention the bullying.
- Talk to other parents of victims – What have they done?
- Since bullies seek to hurt and upset people, tell your child to avoid appearing upset.
- Do not promise your child that you will not tell anyone. You will need school personnel and perhaps others to help you.
- Tell him/her you will do your best not to make it worse.

- Express confidence that a solution can be found – give your child hope.
- Get a copy of the school's or district's anti-bullying policy and procedures. Make sure your child, you, and school personnel are following the procedures.
- Meet with your child's teacher and principal. Share the details (who, what, when, where, etc.) of what is happening to your child. Try not to be seen by other students. Work through school personnel as appropriate and as necessary. Tell the teacher who your child would like to report to every day, perhaps for at least a week. Later, it might be twice a week and then once a week. Ask the teacher to contact you when this has been approved. Remember, if they suggest someone else, insist it be a person your child wants to report to. Share the safety plan you and your child have developed and ask the appropriate school personnel to expand the plan with things they can do. Some examples of school-based strategies are:
 - If the student is bullied on the bus, tell the student to report it to the driver or some other adult she trusts.
 - Ask your child to give the supervising adult (bus driver, bus monitor, teacher, etc.) a secret visible signal when he/she is being mistreated.
 - Make sure faculty and staff are told to increase their supervision of the bullied student, the bully, and the bully's helpers. Ask them to frequently interact with your child.
 - If appropriate, surround your child with other students who will not bully them and who may be assertive with the bully and her helpers.
 - If appropriate, make sure an older student is asked to be your child's "Helper" or "Buddy" to help supervise interactions of the student with others.
 - If possible, make sure your child doesn't have to frequently walk past the student who bullies.
 - Make sure your child doesn't have to go the bathroom with those who bully or make sure the bathrooms are well supervised.
 - If your child is bullied as he/she gets off the bus or as they enter the school from the bus, require the bully to be the last one off the bus. In the afternoon, require the bully to be the last one to get on the bus.
 - If your child is bullied after a class in the halls, require the bully to be the last one to leave the classroom and make sure the hallways are adequately supervised.
 - Make sure the student who bullies and his/her helpers stay in their assigned or re-assigned seats (on the bus and in the classroom) away from each other and your child.
 - Work with you to select and teach the appropriate assertiveness skills.
 - Once the school is satisfied that your child is being bullied, ask them to consider a No Contact Contract (Stay Away Contract). Your child, the bully and their helpers sign an agreement to avoid each other, not to make gestures and sounds toward each other, and not to encourage others to mistreat one another.
- Once the school is satisfied that your child is being bullied, ask them to consider a No Contact Contract (Stay Away Contract). Your child, the bully and their helpers sign an agreement to avoid each other, not to make gestures and sounds toward each other, and not to encourage others to mistreat one another.
- Be patient with school personnel. Don't give up. Maintain and instill hope.
- If the school has been unable to stop the bullying, consider getting a restraining order.
- If you have adult friends or special acquaintances at the school, ask them to befriend your child and to monitor his/her activities.
- Ask grandparents to maintain strong ties and communicate frequently with your child.
- Ask older child who has good morals to mentor your child.
- Involve your child in more activities inside and outside school to develop more friendships.

- Monitor your child's whereabouts and friendships. Sometimes he/she may seek friends in the wrong places and with the wrong people.
- Monitor your child's viewing of violence on television, in video games, and in movies. They may encourage retaliation.
- Limit the time your child has on the computer and telephone – rehashing leads to retaliation.
- Watch for signs of anger, anxiety, and depression.
- Watch for signs of Post Traumatic Stress.
- Watch for signs that your child may be suicidal.
- When appropriate, seek professional counseling for your child.
- Make sure your child gets adequate rest, exercises and eats right.
- Help your child identify talents and gifts and develop a hobby or skill of social value (something students will think is really cool).
- Keep lines of communication open with your child and his/her school.
- Develop social skills and teach your child friendship makings skills. Children with at least one friend are less likely to be bullied (Hodges, Malone, and Perry, 1997). Having a "best friend" reduces the duration of bullying, emotional problems, and behavioral problems (Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, and Bukowski, 1999).
- Develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and physical strength.
- Encourage positive self-talk.
- Involvement in service/helping projects. These can help heal his/her emotions and might help them feel good about themselves.
- If your child has a disability, encourage him/her to talk openly about the disability.
- Provide Assertiveness Training (for your child who is bullied and for siblings) – see attachments
- Teach your child not to expect mistreatment. Encourage him/her to visual being accepted by others and to expect it.
- Teach your child to throw something at the bullies and run when in danger.
- Transfer your child to another school/district. This is a last resort and may not work, especially if the bullies talk to students in the new school.

What should you do when you find out your child is bullying?

- Stay calm.
- Calmly discuss the bullying events with your child and record the details (who, what, where, etc.).
- Meet and work with your child's teachers to change your child's behavior.
- Apply clear, fair, and significant negative consequences (e.g., grounded, child must repay stolen money, timeout, restore what has been destroyed).
- For a day, go to school with your child. Wherever your child goes, go with him/her.
- Require your child to apologize (orally and in writing) to the victim.
- Teach child that power can be experienced through doing good (e.g., through service projects, helping others, correcting wrongs, provide leadership role in promoting acceptance of others).
- Help your child find an area of interest and a hobby, a job or a way to provide a community service.
- Require your child to monitor his/her behavior and report to you. This teaches your child self-management and self-control.
- Immediately reinforce/reward positive and accepting behaviors.
- If needed, seek professional counseling for your child.
- Explore reasons why your child is bullying others.

Assertive Strategies for Children Who are Bullied

Note: Use the following information only with the recommendation of your teacher or counselor and your parents. These strategies should also be used with other strategies to keep you safe. Don't provoke the student who bullies. Sometimes these strategies don't work because students haven't been trained appropriately to use them and sometimes students don't use them appropriately. The best thing you can do is to report bullying to an adult.

General Assertiveness Strategies

- Look confident (assertive body language) by standing tall and holding your head up.
- Don't appear hurt or angry. Keep your facial expressions neutral but serious.
- Don't run away, unless you are in danger.
- Move closer to the bully, turn sideways, and have non-threatening eye contact.
- Maintain good balance by keeping your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Hold your arms beside your body. Don't hold your arms up like you want to fight.
- Don't put your hands in your pockets.

Specific Assertiveness Strategies

Note: After using each of the following strategies, you should start a conversation with someone or if possible, you should walk off confidentially into a group of students or over to an adult.

- Make assertive statements for the victim. Say "Stop it!" with a serious face and serious but calm voice. Or say "This is a waste my time, I'm out of here."
- Fogging. Admit that you have the characteristic the bully is using to tease you. For example, say "You know, I do need to lose weight."
- Broken record. Repeat "What did you say?" or "That's your opinion." or "So."
- Confront the bully concerning her spreading rumors and lies about you.
- Expose the ignorance of the bully when she is teasing you because of your disability or medical problem. Reveal the facts.
- Give the bully permission to tease. For example, say "Well, it's okay to say what you want. It doesn't me."
- Use a sense of humor. Focus your humor on yourself. For example, if the bully says "You sure have big ears." You could say "I do have big ears, sometimes I feel like an elephant."
- Make an asset of the characteristic used to tease you. For example, if the bully makes fun of you for not having hair because of cancer treatments, you could say "Well, I guess _____ (a famous popular person) and I look alike, we both don't have a lot of hair."

Assertiveness Strategies for Siblings or Other Bystanders

Note: Use the following information only with the recommendation of your teacher or counselor and your parents. These strategies should also be used with other strategies to keep you and others safe. Don't provoke the student who bullies. Sometimes these strategies don't work because students haven't been trained appropriately to use them and sometimes students don't use them appropriately. The best thing you can do is to report bullying to an adult.

General Assertiveness Strategies for Bystanders

- Look confident (assertive body language) by standing tall and holding your head up.
- Don't appear hurt or angry. Keep your facial expressions neutral but serious.
- Don't run away, unless you are in danger.
- Move closer to the bully, turn sideways, and have non-threatening eye contact.
- Maintain good balance by keeping your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Hold your arms beside your body. Don't hold your arms up like you want to fight.
- Don't put your hands in your pockets.

Specific Assertiveness Strategies for Bystanders

Note: After bystanders use each of the following strategies, they should start a conversation with the bullied student. If approaching or leaving the bus or if possible, they should ask the bullied student to walk with them.

- Make assertive statements for the victim. Say "Stop it!" with a serious face and serious but calm voice. Or say "This is a waste of Bobby's (the bullied student) time and my time."
- Fogging. Admit that you also have the characteristic the bully is using to tease someone. For example, say "You know, Bobby (the bullied student) and I both need to lose weight."
- Broken record. Repeat "What did you say?" or "That's your opinion." or "So."
- Confront the bully concerning her spreading rumors and lies about someone . Refuse to spread the lies and demand that the rumors stop.
- Expose the ignorance of the bully when she is teasing someone because of their disability or medical problem. Reveal the facts.
- Give the bully permission to tease. For example, say "Well, it's okay to say what you want. It doesn't bother Bobby (the bullied student) and it doesn't bother me."
- Use a sense of humor. Focus your humor on yourself and the bullied student. For example, if the bully says "You sure have big ears." You could say "You know Jennifer (the bullied student) and I both have big ears, sometimes we feel like elephants. Don't we Jennifer?" or "You know, Bobby and I both are pretty stupid."
- Make an asset of the characteristic used to tease someone . For example, if the bully makes fun of someone for not having hair because of cancer treatments, you could say "Well, I guess _____ (a famous popular person) and Bobby (the bullied student) look alike, they both don't have a lot of hair. I wish I looked like Bobby."