

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED:

1. Talk with your child.

When you first talk with your child about bullying, be prepared to listen without judgment, and provide a safe and supportive place where your child can work out his or her feelings. Children may not be ready to open up right away as they, too, are dealing with the emotional effects of bullying and may be feeling insecure, frightened, vulnerable, angry, or sad. When your child begins to tell their story, just listen and avoid making judgmental comments. It's important to learn as much as possible about the situation, such as how long the behavior has been happening, who has been involved, and what steps have been taken. Encourage your child to talk, and let them know they are not alone and you are there to help.

2. Support and empower your child.

After hearing your child's story, empower them to create an action plan to help stop the bullying. Talk with your child about ways you can support them as well as intervention strategies they can use, such as working with the school or advocating on their own. Creating a plan that works with your child's strengths and abilities can help build self-confidence and resilience. Make sure to share these agreed-upon strategies with those involved in your child's life, such as teachers, coaches, and other adults who interact with your child on a daily basis.

3. Learn your rights.

Check your state's legislation on bullying. Each state has different laws and policies on bullying, along with requirements on how schools should respond. Check your state's Department of Education website for a state Safe Schools office, which can be a great local resource to learn more about your state and school's policy.

4. Think through if others should be involved.

In addition to being supportive and empowering your child to write down a plan, it can be very helpful to document the steps that you plan to take or have already implemented. Written records provide a history, which can be very helpful. You can also think through your strategy about how to involve others that can help your child. This might include determining who you will contact at school, what you plan to ask them, and how you will be involved. Other options include contacting a guidance counselor or other health professionals for advice. If the situation doesn't change, your plan might include steps to contact local law enforcement or legal counsel.

5. Get involved in the community.

Bullying touches many lives and it might be happening to others in your child's school or community. You can help by raising awareness through community events, attending workshops or trainings in your community, or sharing information with others.

What Every Parent Should Know About:

Bullying

WARNING SIGNS OF VICTIMIZATION

Unexplained injuries

Lost or destroyed clothing or items

Frequent headaches or stomach aches or faking illness

Changes in eating habits

Difficulty sleeping or night terrors

Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations

Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem

Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school

**Nearly 1 in 3 students
report being bullied
during the school year.**

(From www.stopbullying.org)

WARNING SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS BULLYING OTHERS:

Getting into frequent verbal or physical fights- particularly with one person

Having friends who bully others

Becoming increasingly aggressive

Getting sent to principal's office or to detention frequently

Having unexplained extra money or new belongings

Blaming others for problems

Not accepting responsibility for their actions

Increasingly competitive or overly concerned about status or popularity

WHY DON'T KIDS REPORT?

Victims of bullying may feel isolated, helpless, afraid, depressed, or unable to control what is happening even though they want it to stop. They may also be ashamed or afraid of reporting because of backlash, judgement, or some form of punishment.

Bullying itself is a humiliating experience and leaves children feeling socially isolated. Fear of further rejection can stop them from reporting.

