

Try it...

For all parents

- If you think your child has been bullied at school, immediately ask to meet with your child's teacher. Calmly discuss the situation. Elicit the teacher's understanding of the situation, what the school plans to do about it, and when you can meet to review progress on the matter. Take notes. Stay involved.
- Bullying can happen in *any* setting. When you sign up your child for activities outside school, ask about anti-bullying policies and procedures. Let program supervisors know it's important to you that they be proactive in preventing bullying.
- Kids say the bus stop and school bus are bullying sites where adult supervision is often less apparent. Meet the bus, if possible, and get to know your child's bus driver.
- If weapons are ever part of a bullying threat, take the threat seriously. The police need to be kept informed.
- Visit the Hazelden Foundation's Web site for detailed information on how to deal with bullying: www.hazelden.org/web/go/olweusparent.

For parents with children ages birth to 5

- Make sure your child's preschool or childcare setting has a positive behavior policy in place. If not, work with staff members and other parents to develop one.
- Help young children learn to speak up for themselves by saying things like, "No, that's not okay." Coach them on walking away from bad behaviors and getting help from an adult if the behavior they experience doesn't stop.

For parents with children ages birth to 6 - 9

- Never blame your child for being bullied. Instead, empathize, explaining that bullying is always wrong, that it's not your child's fault, and that you are glad she or he had the courage to tell you about it.
- There is teasing and there is *bullying*. Talk to your child about the difference between the two and how to best handle both situations. Sharing your own experiences can help.
- Help your child participate in activities that build personal skills and develop confidence that can help her or him bounce back from or deal with bullying situations.

For parents with children ages 10 - 15

- Emphasize that you don't approve of retaliation and that physically or emotionally fighting back will only make the problem worse.
- Stay in touch with your child's Internet activities. Cyber-bullying is an ongoing issue for many preteens and teens.

- Let your child know you take bullying seriously. Listen to your child and determine whether she or he just needs to “talk through” a situation or whether you need to get involved. Trust your instincts.

For parents with children ages 16 - 18

- If bullying happens in a school or youth center, ask for a copy of the anti-bullying policy or the organization’s handbook outlining how it deals with such behavior. If you think it’s time to get involved, don’t hesitate.
- Reinforce nonviolent resistance skills, such as walking away, being assertive (although not passive or overly aggressive), and finding someone such as a trained peer mediator to help.
- Be aware of cyber-bullying. Strongly encourage your teen not to respond to it and to tell you immediately if he or she is the victim of cyber-bullying or other troubling online behaviors.

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