



What Parents Can Do If They Suspect Their Child Has Been Involved in Bullying at School

It is normal for children and teens to have conflicts but true bullying is not something that usually goes away on its own. If you think that your child is bullying or being bullied, believe them and intervene. Some suggested actions could include:

Whether you think your child may be bullied or may be bullying:

1. Encourage your child to share all the information that they have as to the event – what was specifically said and actions taken by all involved in the situation. Gauge the seriousness of the incident and whether this is an ongoing problem.
2. Talk with your child’s teacher &/or principal about the problem and see if they have noticed anything. Remember that your child’s teacher &/or principal may not be aware of the situation. Both parents and school staff need to partner together to guarantee appropriate behavior and student safety.
3. Have your principal notify your child’s teachers regarding your concerns so that everyone who comes in contact with your child can be on the lookout and can intervene should an episode be repeated.
4. If your child was not completely honest, was a bystander who did nothing, or who exhibited in the bullying behavior, make clear your expectations for not repeating that behavior. Children need to know that parents support expectations of appropriate home, neighborhood and school behavior.
5. If your child was a victim or a bystander who reported the incident, praise them for taking appropriate steps to keeping themselves &/or others safe.
6. Your child’s campus has policies and procedures in place for reporting bullying behavior, investigating alleged bullying incidents, dealing with students who are bystanders and those that exhibit bullying behavior, and providing support to those who are victims of bullying. Use your school as a resource.

If you think your child may have been bullied:

1. Reassure your child that you will check into his/her concerns and acknowledge the feelings.
2. Find out what has been tried and work out options with your child – such as being more assertive, not arguing, avoiding people and places, seeking help, etc.
3. Arrange for your child to have opportunities to socialize with other children outside of school to help them build and maintain a strong supportive system of other children.
4. Encourage your child to stick with a friend at lunch, in the hallways, on the bus, walking home or playing in the neighborhood because kids are more likely to be targeted when they are alone.

5. Teach your child to say “STOP!” Most bullies stop bullying within 10 seconds, when someone tells him or her to stop.
6. Be willing to listen with an open mind to feedback your child’s teacher, counselor &/or principal provides. They have an opportunity to observe your child’s and other children’s behavior under different circumstances and can provide valuable information in getting the “big picture.”

If you think your child may be bullying:

1. Make sure your child know that bullying is harmful to all kids involved.
2. Help your child find other ways to exert his or her personal power, status, and leadership at school and that you will work with the school if necessary to support their changes.
3. Work together with school staff to send clear messages to your child that his or her bullying must stop.
4. Explain to your child that this kind of behavior is unacceptable. Stop any acts of aggression you see (including sibling aggression). Establish appropriate consequences for his or her actions. Praise and reinforce your children for following rules.
5. Spend more time with your child and carefully supervise and monitor his or her activities for a while. Know who their friends are and how and where they spend free time. Peers can be influential, especially for teens.