
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Stopping bullying: Tips for parents



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

“Bullying involves an individual or a group repeatedly harming another person—physically (e.g. punching or pushing), verbally (e.g. teasing or name-calling), or socially (e.g. ostracizing or spreading hurtful rumors).”

—*The Bully Project* (<https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/themes/51172dcd1ad07a63d6000002/attachments/original/1361410358/BullyingToday.pdf?1361410358>)

The documentary, *Bully*, and its companion book of the same name have generated attention in the media, in schools and among parents. Even students – those who were allowed to see the R-rated film (for language and violence) – have strong feelings about the subject. The Bully Project, which produced both the film and the book, has sponsored the Bully Movement. Their website has a pledge for students with a goal of reaching one million kids by this month. (thebullyproject.com)

Bullying is not a new problem, but the severity and rate are high enough to cause alarm for parents and educators. Consider these statistics:

- **One in six students is regularly bullied.** (nbcnews.com/id/39758956/ns/health-childrens_health/t/students-regularly-bullied-survey-shows/#.UT69VByG2jQ)
- **Nine in 10 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) students have reported being bullied.** (tolerance.org/supplement/bullying-numbers)
- **An estimated 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students.** (tolerance.org/supplement/bullying-numbers)
- **Fifty-six percent of students have personally witnessed some type of bullying at school.** (makebeatsnotbeatdowns.org/facts_new.html)

Bullies and bullies alike are significantly affected by this behavior. These risks and effects are from stopbullying.gov:

Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, health complaints and lower academic achievement.

Kids who bully others are more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs; get into fights, vandalize property and drop out of school; engage in early sexual activity; have criminal convictions as adults; and abuse partners, spouses or children as adults.

Kids who witness bullying are more likely to use tobacco, alcohol and

(Over)

drugs, have increased mental health problems and miss school.
stopbullying.gov/at-risk/effects/index.html

Bullying is targeted, repetitive, unwanted, aggressive behavior based on an imbalance of power. It is not, for example, a refusal to play with a child during recess; it is repeatedly encouraging other children not to play with a child at recess. Read about the types of bullying at stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/definition/index.html.

Education.com offers these tips for parents who suspect or know their child is being bullied (education.com/reference/article/Ref_What_Do_About/):

1 . Encourage your child to report bullying incidents to you.

- Validate your child's feelings.
- Help your child be specific in describing bullying incidents: who, what, where, when.

2. Ask your child how s/he has tried to stop the bullying.

3. Coach your child in possible alternatives.

- Avoid the bullier.
- Stay near a supervising adult when bullying is likely to occur.
- Help your child find new friends.
- Involve your child in activities outside of school.

4. Talk to the school.

- Share your child's concerns and specific information about bullying incidents with school staff.
- Establish a plan with the school and your child to deal with possible future bullying incidents.

5. Encourage your child to seek help and to report bullying incidents at school:

6. Use school staff and other parents as resources in finding positive ways to encourage respectful behaviors at school.

- Volunteer to help supervise on field trips, on the playground, or in the lunchroom.
- Advocate for schoolwide bullying prevention programs and policies.

7. Encourage your child to continue to talk with you about bullying incidents.

- Do not ignore your child's report.
- Do not advise your child to physically fight back.
- Do not confront the child who bullies.
- Do not confront the family of the child who bullies.