**Parent Resources for a**

**Child Being Bullied**

**Signs for Parents to Watch for**

* Drop in grades and/or loss of interest in school
* Have few friends and or changes in friendships
* Increased absenteeism from school
* Increase in complaint of feeling ill, loss of appetite, and/or sleeplessness
* Lower self-esteem
* Appears depressed or anxious
* Has unexplained cuts, bruises, or tears in clothing
* Relatedly missing the bus and/or tardy.

\*\* If your child shows any of these signs, it does not necessarily mean that he or she is being bullied, but it is certainly worth checking into. These could also be a sign of other problems, such as depression lac of friendships, or lack of interest/frustration with school.

**What a parent can do….**

* **Listen and focus on the child**.
* **Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.**
* **Know that kids who are bullied may struggle with talking about it**.
* **Give advice about** [what to do](http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do/index.html)
* **Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child**. The child, parents, and school or organization may all have valuable input. It may help to:
	+ Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out.
	+ Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between schools, organizations, and parents..
* **Be persistent.** Bullying does not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.
* **Follow-up.** Show a commitment to making bullying stop. Because bullying is behavior that repeats or has the potential to be repeated, it takes consistent effort to ensure that it stops.

**Avoid these mistakes:**

* Never tell the child to ignore the bullying.
* Do not blame the child for being bullied. Even if he or she provoked the bullying, no one deserves to be bullied.
* Do not tell the child to physically fight back against the kid who is bullying. It could get the child hurt, suspended, or expelled.
* Parents should resist the urge to contact the other parents involved. It may make matters worse. School or other officials can act as mediators between parents.

**Why bullying is hard for kids to talk about…..**

* Bullying can make a child feel helpless. Kids may want to handle it on their own to feel in control again. They may fear being seen as weak or a tattletale.
* Kids may fear backlash from the kid who bullied them.
* Bullying can be a humiliating experience. Kids may not want adults to know what is being said about them, whether true or false. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
* Kids who are bullied may already feel socially isolated. They may feel like no one cares or could understand.
* Kids may fear being rejected by their peers. Friends can help protect kids from bullying, and kids can fear losing this support.

**Parent Resources for a Child Displaying Bullying Behaviors**

**Signs for Parents to Watch for**

Kids may be bullying others if they:

* Get into physical or verbal fights
* Have friends who bully others
* Are increasingly aggressive
* Get sent to the principal’s office or to detention frequently
* Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
* Blame others for their problems
* Don’t accept responsibility for their actions
* Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

\*\* If your child shows any of these signs, it does not necessarily mean that he or she is being a bully, but it is certainly worth checking into.

**Why is my child bullying?**

* They may be watching or imitating characters on TV shows or movies with mean behaviors
* They may be trying to be funny and gain more friends themselves.
* They may be lacking empathy skills or not thinking before they act.
* They may be expressing or acting out on anger they have about events in their own lives

 ***VERY few youth actually want to hurt others, and many times they may not know they are actually bullying.***

**What a parent can do if your child is bullying….**

* **Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is.**
* **Show kids that bullying is taken seriously.** Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
* **Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied.**
* **Use consequences to teach.** Consequences that involve learning or building empathy can help prevent future bullying.
* **Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation.** The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others.
* **Avoid strategies that don’t work or have negative consequences.**
* **Follow-up.** After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good friend.

**What Every Parent can do…..**

* **Talk** with your child about bullying and the effect that is has on everyone.
	+ Kids who know what bullying is can better identify it so they can talk about bullying if it happens to them or others. Kids need to know ways to safely stand up to bullying and how to get help.
* **Discuss** your own experiences with bullying and the negative effects it has.
* [**Keep the lines of communication open**](http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/talking-about-it/index.html#Keep the Lines of Communication Open)**.** Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.

Start conversations about daily life and feelings with questions like these:

* + What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things?
	+ What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with? What do you talk about?
	+ What is it like to ride the school bus?
	+ What are you good at? What would do you like best about yourself?
* [**Encourage kids to do what they love**](http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/talking-about-it/index.html#Encourage Kids to Do What They Love)**.** Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
* **Be a positive role model.** Speak up and show your child how a bystander can stop a bullying situation. Talk about things they can say and role play situations they may encounter.
* **Take an active role in your child’s life.** Work with your child’s school, coach, program leader, etc.
* **Discuss as a family** what bullying is and how everyone can work together to make school and their activities a safe and enjoyable place for everyone.

**Online Resources**

[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

[www.backoffbully.com](http://www.backoffbully.com)

www.bullying.org

[www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org](http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/#/home)

[www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying](http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying)

[www.nsteens.org](http://www.nsteens.org)

[www.stopbullyingnow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com)

www.attorneygeneral.gov