

Tips, Tools & Resources

The Bullying Problem

Almost 10% of school age children are the victims of a bully. Bullying can be either physical or verbal and can range from mild teasing to pushing and hitting. While bullying most often involves boys (both as the bully and victim), girls can also be the victim of bullying and they may bully other children (usually with gossip or isolating someone socially, instead of physical bullying). Unfortunately, bullying is quite common as early as the second grade.

Children are most often bullied at school, usually on the playground or at lunchtime when children are more likely to have minimal supervision, or it may occur in the hallways between classes or on the school bus. In any situation, the better supervised children are, the less likely that bullying will occur.

The Recipients of Bullying

Victims of bullies are usually stereotyped as being loners, passive, quiet, sensitive, anxious, with low self-esteem and they are often smaller and/or weaker than other children of the same age and may come from an overprotective home. More importantly, they usually react to bullying by crying, acting out or withdrawing. Being the victim of a bully can lead to your child avoiding school, and developing fear and anxiety about going to school. It can also cause your

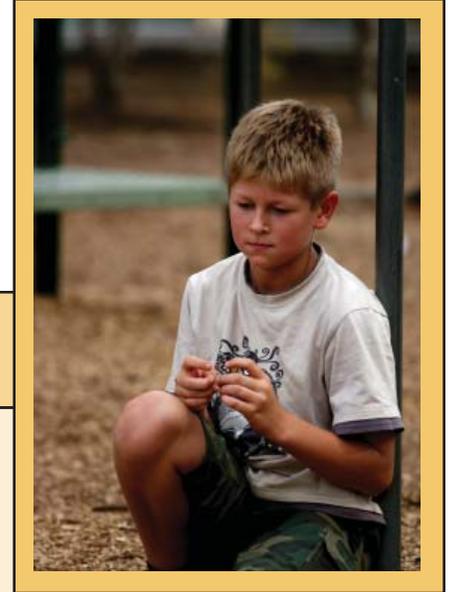
child to feel insecure and have feelings of low self-worth and poor self-esteem, ultimately leading to depression and/or violence, either against himself or against the bully.

Signs and Signals

Since victims of bullies often do not seek help or confide in anyone about the bullying—either because of shame or embarrassment or fear that it will be worse if the bully finds out—it is important to look for signs in your children: *school avoidance behaviors, chronic nonspecific complaints (headaches or stomachaches); insomnia, anxiety, fear of going to school, changes in personality, behavior, or a change in his grades.*

The Bullies Themselves

Children who are bullies may be driven more by a desire to have power over others and to be 'in control' than because they have poor self-esteem and have little empathy for their victims. They may also be aggressive, bossy, controlling, have a low level of self-control, and have difficulty making friends. Bullies are also more likely to develop criminal behaviors as adults. It is important for the bully to understand that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. If the bullying behavior or other aggressive behaviors persist, then he should be given professional help.



Facing the Situation

Avoid teaching your child to fight back, since he may get hurt and it may also get him in trouble at school. Instead, teach the child to show self-confidence and to be assertive. To help victims of bullies, parents can:

- Talk to school officials about the problem, to promote better supervision and ensure proper intervention, and to schedule a meeting with the bully's parents to help solve the problem.
- Teach their child to not respond to the bully by crying or giving in to demands, since the bully is more likely to continue if he gets a response.
- Teach their child to calmly walk away or simply tell the bully to stop and leave him alone.
- Teach their child to make eye contact with others (especially the bully) and to talk with a strong voice.
- Help their child develop strong friendships, so that he is less of a target. Role-playing situations where he is bullied may be helpful in teaching how to respond.
- Help stop bullying by teaching all children to inform an adult if they see someone being bullied.

Reference: http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/parenting_tips/bullies.html

Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Training Exercise

What are some signs that your child might be the target of a bully at school?

What can you do if you discover your child is being bullied?

What can you do if you discover that your child is a bully?