

## HOW TO HELP IF YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

Bullying is mean or aggressive behavior. It can be verbal name-calling or insults; physical abuse, like hitting or pushing; or relational, like excluding someone from a game. Usually the bully has more power and is being mean on purpose. Often bullying continues over time.

If your child tells you about bullying or you suspect he/she is being bullied, it is important to pay attention. Bullying is not simply child's play or typical kid's behavior. It can have serious consequences. Children who are bullied are more likely to have problems with self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. They more school and tend to have fewer friends.

### YOU CAN HELP!!!

- ❖ Many children who are bullied are afraid to report it. Look for signs of bullying, like frequent complaints of illness on school days, physical marks or torn dirty clothing, unusual anxiety about school, or social withdrawal.
- ❖ Ask your child questions about friends and school. It's OK to occasionally ask questions about who he/she sits with at lunch, what he/she does at recess, how he/she gets along with others. These are good questions to ask your child's teacher as well.
- ❖ If your child does report bullying, try not to overreact. Remain calm, but do take it seriously. Get as much information about the situation as you can. Find out who is involved, exactly what happened, how often it happens, etc.
- ❖ If you suspect your child may be contributing to the situation with his/her interactions, be careful not to blame. It is OK to discuss helpful ways to respond to bullying, but remember that no one deserves to be bullied. Assure your child that it is not his/her fault.
- ❖ Do not tell your child to ignore bullying or to respond aggressively. Both reactions tend to escalate the situation. Instead discuss ways to be

assertive like speaking in a calm, firm voice, and standing straight and tall.

- ❖ Often you will need to report the bullying to your child's teacher or principal. Do not do this when you are upset, but wait until you are calm and ready to be productive. Tell them that you expect the bullying to stop and that you want to work together to find a solution. The bullying may not stop after one intervention. Continue to check in with your child and the school. Develop another plan if the first one does not work.
- ❖ Encourage your child to make friends and develop talents and skills. Perhaps he/she could try a new sport or club to meet new children and develop a special interest. This will boost his/her self-esteem and confidence, which will in turn make him/her more resistant to bullying.
- ❖ Discuss with your child that it is important to report bullying and that this is not tattling. It may be helpful to role-play how to get help from an adult when bullying occurs. If you decide your child's level of emotional maturity or social skills are a contributing factor, it is wise to seek help. Your school counselor or other helping professional can assist your child in learning these skills.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

Many of the ideas on this tip sheet were taken from the website [www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov). This is a great resources for both children and adults.

[The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School—How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence](#)

By Barbara Coloroso

[Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain](#) by Trevor Romain and Elizabeth Verdick

[Cliques, Phonies, and Other Baloney](#) by Trevor Romain

[My Secret Bully](#) by Trudy Ludwig and Abigail Marble