

Dealing with Bullying

Dealing with bullying, or a bully, can be difficult and traumatic for people of any age. If you are a victim of bullying, or fear your child or teen is being bullied, this article is a must read. It contains tips for dealing with a bully and helping understand bullying is not acceptable.

Bullying can be a very traumatic experience for your child. It can cause physical and emotional harm, and damage your child for a long time to come. Indeed, a victim of bullying can suffer from physical injury, but the long lasting effects to someone's psyche can be even more damaging in the long term, even though these effects might be subtle. It is also important to note that bullying can take place without physical contact. Emotional, verbal and electronic (online or through text messaging on cell phones) abuse can cause the same emotional and psychological effects as physical bullying. Being bullied can lead to difficulty in forming healthy personal relationships, as well as leading to depression, low self image and even suicide.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [bullying statistics](#) estimate that about half of all children are bullied at some point during their school years. Close to 10 percent of children are bullied repeatedly. This is a rather large number, when you think about it. This means that it is vital that your child learns how to deal with bullying.

Tips for dealing with bullying, or a bully

It can be difficult to deal with bullying, or a bully. It is more helpful when a bully's parents and school are involved as well, working to help diffuse the situation. If you are concerned that your child is the victim of bullying, here are six steps you can take to try and help him or her in dealing with bullying:

1. *Get your child's input:* You need to be a safe place your child can turn for help when dealing with bullying. Be open to your child, and make sure that you are accepting. You should let your child know that being bullied is not his or her fault. Also, you should find out what has been tried to stop the bullying, and what has worked (or hasn't worked) so far.
2. *Talk to the school authorities:* Discuss the problem with your child's teacher, principal or counselor. A meeting with all three can help everyone know how to help a child who is dealing with bullying. In many cases, bullying takes place in unsupervised areas, such as school buses, bathrooms, playgrounds and other areas that can be hard to monitor. If you know where the bullying is taking place, you can let school authorities know so that they can step up "patrols" • in those areas to discourage bullying.
3. *Teach your child to avoid the bully:* Your child does not need to fight back. Encourage him or her to avoid the bully when possible. Suggest that he or she walk away, and go find a teacher or other trusted adult.
4. *Encourage your child to be assertive:* It is not necessary to fight back to defeat a bully. You can teach your child to stand up straight and tell the bully, firmly, to leave him or her alone. In some cases, this type of assertiveness will work.

5. *Practice with your child:* It might be beneficial to have a little bit of role play with your child. This way he or she can practice what to say to a bully, or how to leave a situation that could turn into bullying.
6. *Teach your child to move in groups:* A good support system can be an effective deterrent against bullies. Have your child go to school and other places with trusted and true friends when dealing with bullying.

It is also important to help your children and their friends understand that it is not acceptable to harm others, physically, emotionally, verbally or electronically (cyberbullying). Indeed, you should teach your child to stand up to bullies who may be harassing other children. If your child and his or her friends are willing to come to the aid of others who are being bullied, soon the bully will have no one left to pick on.

Another important aspect of dealing with bullying is to watch your own child for signs that he or she might be a bully. It can be difficult to see such behavior in your own child, but you need to take bullying seriously, and let your child know that it is inappropriate. If your child is a bully, take the time to find out why he or she may be acting this way. In some cases, a child psychologist or developmental expert can help you figure out the reasons behind the behavior and work to change these behaviors.

Bullying can have long lasting effects on people. What happens during childhood can set the tone for the rest of one's life, and it is important that bullying is dealt with early on.