



TIPS ON BULLYING PREVENTION

by Nettie Lerner, M.A.ED.

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Children will often not tell parents about a bullying situation because they are frightened of the child who is bullying them, embarrassed or ashamed about the occurrence, or afraid to be seen as a tattler. It takes a lot of courage for children to tell parents they have been bullied. Nevertheless, children need to tell their parents that they are being bullied.



Your child needs your help to stop the bullying behavior. If we aren't our children's advocates, who will be?

Richard L. Gross, M.D. from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry believes that, "We are all either bullies, bullied or bystanders." **Research indicates that three-quarters of 8- to 11-year olds report they have been bullied.**

A pervasive problem, bullying has long term effects and consequences both for the bullied and the bully. Early forms of bullying can turn into antisocial behavior. For those who have been bullied, physical and mental health can be affected, causing low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and loneliness.

Here are some important facts about bullying:

- Bullying can be direct or indirect, verbal or physical
- Bullying occurs among both boys and girls.
- Bullying that is done in a more secretive or concealed manner is found more among girls but is increasing among boys.
- Although bullying happens most commonly in a school setting, technology has had an impact with incidents of cyberbullying starting at 10 or 11 years of age.
- Intentional exclusion that involves secrets, silent treatments, rumor-spreading, teasing or exclusive grouping is bullying.
- When this bullying occurs with younger children ("If you don't let me play with that toy, I'm not going to invite you to my birthday party"), it is often looked at as not worthy of extra attention, a "normal" behavior or rite of passage.

Bullying is not something that children can work out by themselves!

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One parent of a child who was bullied said, “We’ve normalized this abnormal behavior in our society.” ***Even though bullying is not a new phenomenon, it needs to be addressed. How can parents take a stand?***

Here are some things you can do:

Focus on your child if a bullying situation occurs. It is our job as parents to make sure that our children feel safe and that they know we will help them. Do not tell your child to ignore the bully. Your child might fear you will ignore it. Listen carefully to the situation and how it was handled. Empathize with your child and be supportive.



Contact teachers and principals if a bullying situation happens in school.

Give a factual account of what your child told you. Ask the school to develop a plan to stop the bullying behavior. Follow-up ... if the bullying continues, contact the school again until you are heard and the situation is resolved.

Help your child become more resilient to bullying. Help your child develop specific talents and positive attributes such as music, athletics or art where they can build positive feelings about themselves. Encourage positive friendships.

References:

Little Bullies Begin Tormenting Others Early, The Associated Press, MSNBC, June 23, 2008

Educational Forum on Adolescent Behavior: Youth Bullying, American Medical Association, May 3, 2002

www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov



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