



## HOW TO STOP BULLYING - At Home Edition

### **The work begins at home.**

One of the most important things you can do as a parent is ensure that your child understands what bullying is. More than a definition, this also includes what bullying can look and feel like. Start by having a conversation with your child about what constitutes healthy friendships and what does not.

Although research suggests that parents are often the last to know when their child is being bullied or has bullied someone else, you can break that trend by talking with your kids every day about their social lives.

### **Know the Signs**

Kids don't always tell parents. Signs that your child might be getting bullied at school can include:

- Avoiding school or activities
- Change in eating habits
- Change in hygiene
- Dropping grades
- Headaches, stomachaches, and other illnesses
- Mood and personality changes

### **Instill healthy habits**

It's very important to instill an anti-bullying mindset in your child. This includes more than just teaching your child not to hit, shove, or tease other kids. Kids should learn that being critical, judgmental, making hurtful jokes, and spreading rumors also are unhealthy and constitute bullying.

Cyberbullying is also a big issue for kids. It's also never too early to teach your children about responsible online behavior.

### **Empower your kids**

One of the most helpful things you can do is provide your kids tools with tools for dealing with bullying. Walking away, telling an adult, or telling the bully in a firm voice to stop, are all strategies that you can practice with your child.

It's also important to teach kids how and when to report bullying when they witness it, and help them understand why they do not want to be a bystander.

### **KNOW the policies at your kids' school**

It's important to have a firm grasp on how bullying is handled at your child's school. This includes knowing which person to call if something happens with your children, as well as having clear expectations for how the situation will be handled.

### **Report bullying incidents**

If your child tells you they are being bullied, start by contacting school personnel and ask to meet with them in person. By holding a face-to-face meeting, you are demonstrating that you're committed to seeing that the issue resolved.

It can also be useful to document all bullying incidents. This will help you be prepared if the situation escalates and law enforcement or other outside sources need to become involved.

### **Be and advocate**

It's vital to voice your support for bullying prevention, but it's also important to offer your time. Volunteer to work with your child's teachers or your school's guidance counselor to develop an anti-bullying program. If your child's school already has a program in place, offer to help when events and fundraisers are held.

### **Recruit other parents**

When a lot of parents are committed to bullying prevention, a school's program will be more successful. Form a group of motivated parents to help you tackle the issue. Meet regularly to brainstorm ideas, share them with school officials, and help put new plans or suggestions into action.

### **Spend time at school**

If your schedule permits, accept opportunities to volunteer at school functions and during the day. Sometimes simply having an additional adult around is enough to deter bullying. However, with shrinking budgets, some schools have been forced to downsize. As a result, your kids might be getting less supervision on the playgrounds and during lunch.

### **Ask PTO to start a anti-bullying program**

If your child's school has limited funds for bullying programs, approach your local PTA/PTO and ask for their assistance. You could also suggest a fundraiser to raise awareness and money.

Remember, bullying is not a normal part of childhood. Bullying affects everyone. As a parent, you have the power to do something about it. You can empower your child to stand up to bullies and feel that they can let an adult know if they are being bullied and help them understand what constitutes bullying behavior.

You can also set a good example by getting involved with your child's school and raising awareness and funds to help put bullying prevention measures in place.

**stopbullying.gov**

**National Suicide Hotline  
Call 988**