



Preventing Bullying: Strategies for Parents

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Definition of Bullying

- ▶ Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.



Definition of Bullying Continued...

- ▶ In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:
 - **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
 - **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
 - Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.



Types of Bullying

Physical

- ❑ Hitting/kicking/pinching
- ❑ Spitting
- ❑ Tripping/pushing
- ❑ Taking or breaking someone's things
- ❑ Making mean or rude hand gestures

Social/Verbal

- ❑ Leaving someone out on purpose
- ❑ Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- ❑ Spreading rumors about someone
- ❑ Embarrassing someone in public
- ❑ Teasing/Name calling
- ❑ Inappropriate sexual comments
- ❑ Taunting
- ❑ Threatening to cause harm

Cyberbullying

- ❑ Posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else.
- ❑ It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.
- ❑ Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.
- ❑ The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are: Social Media, Text Message, and Email

Recognizing Signs of Bullying

Physical

- Frequent cuts or bruises
- Unexplainable injuries
- Expresses frequent physical complaints
- Changes in sleeping/eating patterns
- Torn/damaged/missing clothing or items

Behavioral/Emotional

- Sudden reluctance to attend school or related activities
- Frequently spends time alone
- Appears sad or depressed
- Sudden loss of friends
- Avoids social situations/opportunities
- Decreased self-esteem
- Self-harming behaviors (e.g. running away, harming themselves, or talking about suicide)

Digital/Cyberbullying

- Spends large amounts of time online especially at night or when alone
- Receives an excessive amount of text messages or social media notifications
- Quickly exits computer or cell phone when a parent or guardian approaches
- Withdrawn or depressed

Peer Conflict vs. Bullying



Normal Peer Conflict

- ▶ Equal Power
- ▶ One or occasional event
- ▶ Non-threatening
- ▶ Equal emotional reaction
- ▶ Not seeking power or attention
- ▶ Will take responsibility
- ▶ Makes effort to solve problem

Peer Conflict vs. Bullying

Bullying

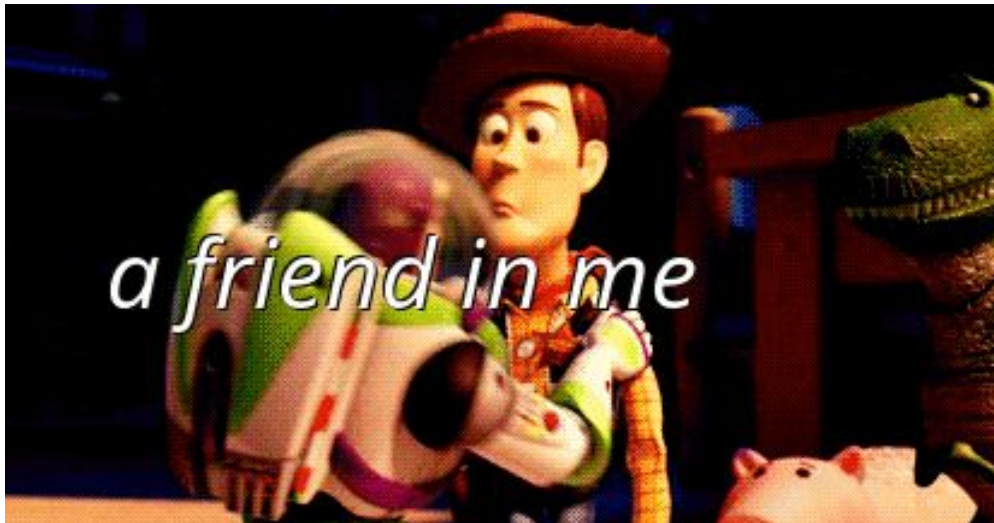
- ▶ Imbalance of power
- ▶ Repeated negative actions
- ▶ Serious threat of physical or emotional harm
- ▶ Strong emotional reaction from victim/no reaction from bully
- ▶ Seeking power, control, attention
- ▶ Blames victim
- ▶ No effort to take responsibility



Discussion Question

- ▶ What are your (or your child's) experiences with peer conflict or bullying?

Buddy



Bully



Who is at Risk for Bullying?

Children at risk of being bullied

- ▶ Are perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or being unable to afford what kids consider “cool”
- ▶ Are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- ▶ Are depressed, anxious, or have low self esteem
- ▶ Are less popular than others and have few friends
- ▶ Do not get along well with others, seen as annoying or provoking, or antagonize others for attention



Who is at Risk for Bullying?

Children at risk of doing the bullying

- ▶ Cannot identify with the emotions or feelings of others
- ▶ Can be easily pressured by peers
- ▶ Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- ▶ Have less parental involvement or having issues at home
- ▶ Think badly of others
- ▶ Have difficulty following rules
- ▶ Have a positive view of violence
- ▶ Have friends who bully others
- ▶ Some are well-connected to their peers.
- ▶ Have social power
- ▶ Are overly concerned about their popularity
- ▶ Like to dominate or be in charge of others
- ▶ Others are more isolated from their peers and may be depressed or anxious
- ▶ Have low self esteem
- ▶ Are less involved in school

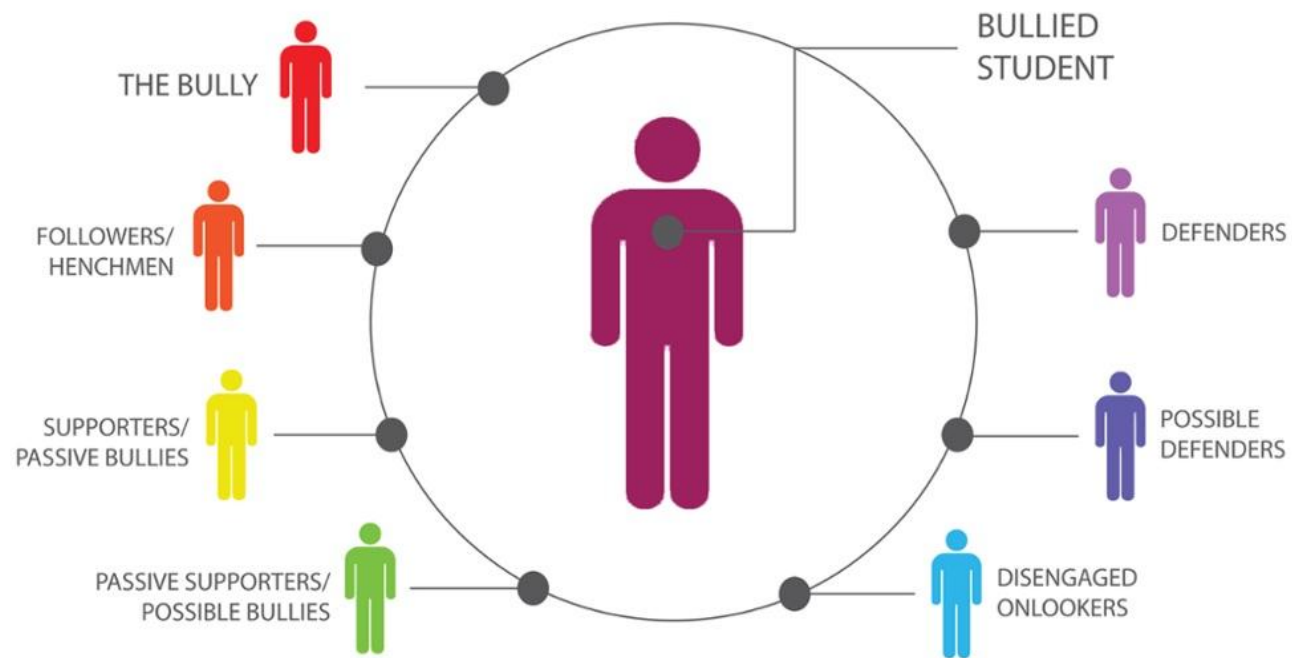
How to Recognize Signs of Bullying

Signs that a child is bullying others

- ▶ Get into physical or verbal fights
- ▶ Have friends who bully others
- ▶ Are increasingly aggressive
- ▶ Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- ▶ Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- ▶ Blame others for their problems
- ▶ Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- ▶ Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity



CIRCLE OF BULLYING



The Bullying Circle

How to Help Your Child: Proactive Strategies

- ▶ Help your child to understand what bullying is
 - Encourage your child to talk to a trusted adult if they are bullied or witness bullying
 - Teach your child to stand up to bullying
- ▶ Have open communication with your child
 - Spend 15 minutes asking your child about their day
 - Get to know your child's friends
 - Stay in communication with your child's teachers
 - Monitor your child's use of electronics and social media
- ▶ Encourage your child to do activities they love
 - Help your child to make friends who have mutual interests
- ▶ Model how to treat others with kindness and respect
 - Teach your child how to manage stress and conflict



How to Help Your Child: Reactive Strategies



- ▶ Stay calm
- ▶ Reassure your child that they are safe and that you will help keep them safe
- ▶ Acknowledge that you are proud of them for telling you what is happening
- ▶ Calmly gather facts from your child about what has happened
- ▶ Allow your child to give input on how they want the situation handled (ex: Honoring your child's need for it to be handled privately)
- ▶ Contact school teacher and/or administrator for assistance

How to communicate with your child

Questions for kids who are already talking about the situation

- ▶ Did the child hurt you on purpose?
- ▶ Was it done more than once?
- ▶ Did it make you feel bad or angry?
How do you feel about the behavior?
- ▶ Did the child know you were being hurt?
- ▶ Is the other child more powerful than you? (i.e. bigger, scarier) than you in some way?



How to communicate with your child



For the child who is reluctant to talk about the situation.

- ▶ How was lunch today?
- ▶ Who did you sit by?
- ▶ You seem to be feeling sick a lot and want to stay at home. Please tell me about that.
- ▶ Are kids making fun of you?
- ▶ Has anyone ever touched you in a way that did not feel right?

How to Seek Help from Your School

- ▶ Stay in communication with your child's teacher
- ▶ Encourage your child to talk with safe adults at school
- ▶ Contact school principal or vice principal if concerns arise
- ▶ Programs at school and are utilized to prevent bullying:
 - Character Counts
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - Restorative Circles
 - Proactive Bully Prevention

Resources

- ▶ <https://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/index.html>
- ▶ <https://www.apa.org/topics/bullying/>
- ▶ <https://www.cfchildren.org/resources/bullying-prevention-resources/>
- ▶ “Bully Beans” by Julia Cook
- ▶ “Llama Llama Bully Goat” by Anna Dedney