

Tips for Parents: What Can I Do If I Think My Child is Being Bullied?

It is important that any adult (at home or at school) take action right away if a child reports bullying. Here are some more things you can do if your child tells you he or she is being bullied:

If you think your child is being bullied:

- a. Share your concerns with your child's teacher.
- b. Talk with your child. Try to find out more about your child's school life. Here are some questions you could ask: *Do you have any special friends at school this year? Who do you sit with at lunch? What are three good things that happened today at school? Are there students that keep on excluding you from activities? Are there students that are repeatedly taunting you?*
 - Tell him or her that bullying is wrong and not his or her fault. Say that you are glad he or she had the courage to speak up. Tell him or her that you will do something about it and explain what you are going to do.
 - If you disagree with how your child handled the bullying, **don't criticize him or her.**
 - Do not tell your child to physically fight back. This is not likely to end the problem and could make it worse by getting your child in trouble at school.

What else can you do if you think your child is being bullied:

- a. Focus on your child.
 - Support your child and find out more about the bullying. Do not ignore the bullying or tell your child to ignore it. This sends the message that bullying is okay.
 - Don't blame your child for the bullying, your child does not deserve to be bullied.
 - Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying. Ask him or her to describe what happened. Ask who was involved, where it happened, and if there were any witnesses.

Although a child who is bullied is never responsible for the bullying, there are things you can do to help your child handle the situation:

- Encourage your child to develop interests and hobbies that will help him or her handle difficult situations like bullying.
- Encourage your child to spend time with friendly students in his or her class. Allow your child to spend time with these children outside of school, if possible.
- Help your child meet new friends outside of school.
- Teach your child safety strategies, such as how to seek help from an adult.
- Make sure your home is a safe and loving place for your child. Take time to talk with your child often.
- If you and your child need additional help, talk with a school counselor and/or mental health professional.

This list has been adapted from a publication originally created for "Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!" a campaign of the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Maternal and Human Services. www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov

