

Parenting Tips

Keeping Your Children Safe From Bullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a deliberate attempt to intimidate, frighten or hurt someone who is perceived weaker. It can occur for children at any age and can have a significant impact on both the emotional and physical well being of your child. If bullying is continual, it can result in low self-esteem, depression, poor peer relationships, increased aggressiveness and difficulty with academics.

Possible Signs that Your Child is Being Bullied

- Increasingly avoids going to school, often reporting feeling sick
- Decrease in self-esteem
- Arriving home with bruises, destroyed clothes, books or toys.
- Lost or missing belongings or money
- Does not share about day's events
- Talks more frequently about disliking school
- Avoidant of peer contact or does not have many friends
- Fear of riding the bus or walking to school

What Can Parents Do?

- Ask your child if there is something going on at school. Your child may be avoiding talking with you about the situation for fear that it will get worse.
- Validate your child's feelings. Ensure your child that you will help him or her with this problem.
- Make sure that your child knows that the bullying is not his or her fault.
- Teach your child ways to respond, such as avoiding that person or situation, asserting him or herself by saying, "stop" or "no," walking together in groups, and reporting bullying to someone your child trusts.
- Find ways to protect your child. Inform the school principal or your child's teacher of your concerns. Stay in close contact with the school until the problem is resolved.
- Do not tell your child he or she is weak or in any way deserves this treatment. A child whose parents take bullying behavior seriously is more likely to stand up for him or herself when bullied and less likely to be a target for further bullying.
- Be a role model for your child. Do not allow any type of abuse or threatening behavior in your home or neighborhood.