



## Some Guidelines for Dealing with Bullying

- Is My Child Being Bullied?
  - Irrational or sudden avoidance of school
  - Frequent morning illnesses – stomachaches, sore throats, etc.
  - Child comes home with unexplained bruises
  - Child asks for money with little reason
  - Sudden withdraw from/ loss of friends
  - Frequent nightmares/sleep problems
  
- Is My Child A Bully?
  - Notice your child's way of interacting with younger siblings – highly aggressive or highly intimidating?
  - What feedback do you get from other parents or teachers?
  - Is your child's reaction to frustration highly physical?
  - Is your child intimidating or physical with animals?
  - Take the time to notice your child's interactions with peers
  
- What Can I Do To Help My Child?
  - The common factor between children who are victims of bullying and those who do the bullying is self-esteem weaknesses. Our primary mission, therefore, is to help our children develop healthy levels of self-esteem:
    - Children are superb imitators! The best way to help your child build self-esteem is to demonstrate your own healthy self-esteem to your child
    - If you make a mistake, admit it and model for your child ways to address and learn from mistakes.
    - Take good care of your body and your health. Let your child know that you lead a healthy life and expect them to do so, as well.
    - Take time to relax and play. Without a proper balance between work and play, it is difficult to feel good about yourself, and your child will pick that up.
    - If you find yourself in the midst of a tough stage, be sure to get support from friends, family or a professional. Model for your child that it is normal to be vulnerable and that it is a sign of strength to get help from others.

- Become effective at praising and reinforcing your child – effective praise is descriptive, not evaluative. Describe what you see and what you feel. Reinforcing comments should outweigh critical comments by a 4:1 ratio.
- Teach your child ways to stand up to bullies
  - Role play assertiveness strategies
  - Practice facial expressions and body posture that will help to demonstrate strength and confidence
  - Teach your child who to contact in school for support and role play how to do so
  - Be sure to inform the school as soon as you feel there is a problem with bullying or intimidation
- Effective intervention must involve the entire school community:
  - Students, parents, teachers, and administrators must non-defensively assess the extent of the problem.
  - The school should make the elimination of bullying a priority and classes and assemblies must stress the fundamental values of respect, safety, and tolerance.
  - Teachers and clinicians can develop small-group role plays on ways to deal with bullies (e.g., Circle of Friends)
  - Must have immediate intervention to address the bully and the victim
  - Must increase adult supervision during free time

**Some helpful resources on this topic:**

- ***The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander.* Barbara Coloroso (2008).**
- ***Bullies and Bullying: A Complete Guide.* Margaret Kohut (2007).**
- ***Bullying at School: What We Know and What To Do.* Dan Olweus (1993)**
- ***The Anti-bullying Handbook.* Keith Sullivan (2000).**
- **[www.violencepreventionworks.org](http://www.violencepreventionworks.org) (Dan Olweus, 2012)**
- **[www.stopbullyingnow](http://www.stopbullyingnow)**
- **[www.cyberbullying.us](http://www.cyberbullying.us)**