

# Bullying

Some parents recall experiences of being bullied as children and may believe that bullying is just “*a normal part of growing up.*”

It isn't. No one should have to suffer abuse and degradation at the hands (or words) of a bully. But bullies rarely just go away.

If you suspect your child is being bullied, but are unsure, asking a few simple questions can be helpful. Such questions may include:

- *What did you do at school today?*
- *What was the best part of your day?*
- *Did anything happen that you didn't like?*
- *Are you looking forward to school tomorrow?*

## Signs to Watch For

- lack of interest in school or a drop in grades
- unexplained injuries
- torn clothing
- frequent loss of lunch money or personal items
- change in appetite
- taking an unusual route to or from school
- withdrawing from family, friends, or activities
- an abrupt change in mood
- anxiety



- increase in physical complaints e.g. belly pain
- difficulty sleeping

Finding out that your child is being bullied is a stressful experience for parents. As difficult as it can be, it is important to remain calm. Becoming too upset may shut down your child from talking about their experience now or in the future.

Children need reassurance that a trusted adult believes and will support them in addressing the bullying. Parents can help their child figure out ways to assertively stand up to the bullying, avoid dangerous situations, and address bullying issues with the school.

## What Can Parents Do?

1. Create opportunities for your child to talk to you. With open rapport, your child will be more likely to disclose difficult problems or concerns. Encourage your child to report bullying incidents to you.
2. Listen attentively to your child and record facts. This information will be needed when communicating with school personnel.
3. Let your child know you will be there for them and that they are not alone. Ensure they know that at home, they are loved and accepted.
4. Reassure your child that the bullying is not their fault and they do not deserve to be bullied.
5. Help your child find at least one supportive, loyal friend. Welcome your child's friends into your home.
6. Continue to monitor the situation by asking your child for updates.
7. Step in, if the situation seems dangerous or if your child continues to suffer.
8. If your child is assaulted, inform the police.
9. Learn what policies exist at your child's school for dealing with bullying.
10. Report the bullying to school authorities and follow up to determine what is being done to stop it. Adults in the school need to be made aware of the extent of the bullying, where it happens, when it happens, and its impact on your child.
11. Teach your child self-defense or enroll them in self-defense classes. This will

increase their confidence and help them to overcome their fear.

## Recommended Resources

Coloroso, Barbara (2006). *The bully, the bullied and the bystander: From preschool to High School- How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*. Toronto: Harper Collins.

Craig, W. & Pepler, D., et al. (2013). *Bullying Prevention. What Parents Need to Know*. Tucson: Quickfind Books.

Wiseman, Rosalind. (2009). *Queen Bees Wannabes- Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and the New Realities*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Three Rivers Press.

## Websites

[www.prevnet.ca](http://www.prevnet.ca)

[www.cybersafecarepei.ca/](http://www.cybersafecarepei.ca/)

[www.netlingo.com](http://www.netlingo.com)

[www.pacer.org/bullying](http://www.pacer.org/bullying)

[www.gov.nl.ca/eecd/files/k12\\_safeandcaring\\_policy.pdf](http://www.gov.nl.ca/eecd/files/k12_safeandcaring_policy.pdf)