



**Watch for warning signs your child may be engaging in bullying behavior. Here are some questions to ask yourself:**

- Has my child ever been accused of being a bully at school or elsewhere?
- Has my child gotten into trouble for fighting (physically or verbally) with other children at school?
- Does my child become easily frustrated when he does not get his way? Is my child defiant or oppositional?
- Who are my child's friends? How does my child interact with others? Have I witnessed my child with other children? Is she dominant or aggressive?
- What does my child do with spare time? What are my child's hobbies?
- Does my child speak about other children as "stupid" or use other negative terms to describe others? Does my child talk about certain children "deserving" bad things to happen to them or showing little concern for others in bad situations?

**What you can do if you suspect your child is bullying others:**

- Become familiar with the anti-bullying policy at your child's school. Discuss school rules and behavior expectations with your child. Ensure that your child understands what behaviors are acceptable and what behaviors are unacceptable.
- Talk to your child, calmly and in a non-confrontational or accusatory tone about their bullying behaviors. Your child may be experiencing social or emotional difficulties that are difficult to handle. Some children may feel pressure to participate in bullying behavior in order to fit in with peers or to avoid being bullied themselves.
- Find out exactly what it is that your child has been doing. What has your child been accused of doing? What does your child *admit* to doing?
- Explain to your child why bullying behavior is unacceptable. Attempts should be made to explain how bullying affects others (victims, bystanders, school climate).
- Establish rules regarding aggressive behavior. Explain to your child that there will be consequences for these types of behaviors, such as losing privileges (consequences should be nonphysical in nature). Implement nonphysical consequences consistently when rules are violated.
- Report any incidents of bullying behaviors to school officials, even if your child is the one engaging in those behaviors. This teaches children that they are accountable for their own behavior. Engage school officials' help in monitoring and addressing these behaviors. This will show your child that you will not tolerate such behavior, and that you want to help your child avoid it.
- Seek outside help. Dealing with bullying behavior is difficult. Your school's psychologist, counselor, or social worker may be able to offer additional suggestions or work with your child to change behavior.
- Teach your child some alternatives to aggressive behavior such as asking for help, respecting others, and showing tolerance for those who are different. Praise your child for using alternative, appropriate behavior.