



I think my child is bullied at school, what do I do?

Things to know about bullying and ways to respond:

1. Bullying can have long lasting and significant negative impact on your child – always follow-up if you suspect bullying.
2. Speak with your child – listen, be sensitive, supportive – remember, being bullied is not your child's fault and your child has the right to be safe at school.
3. Fact find, collect information from your child and the school – keep records.
4. Be familiar with the warning signs of bullying:
 - Noticeably more withdrawn, angry, depressed, anxious, fearful
 - Refuses to go to school, hates school, grades drop
 - Noticeable changes in sleeping, eating and other routines
 - Torn or dirty clothes, missing money or personal items
 - Risky behaviors, child suddenly 'getting in trouble'
 - Loss of confidence, friends – self-esteem drops
5. Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal (gestures, shunning, etc.)
6. Police involvement is sometimes necessary.
7. Children with special needs may be at greater risk to be targeted by bullies due to real or perceived 'differences' that can set them apart.

Ways for you and your school to support your child:

1. Make sure your child's school follows-up – the school should have anti-bullying policies and procedures and up-to-date training for staff.
2. Increasing supervision of unstructured time (hallway, playground, bus, etc.) may be needed (at home, monitor computer use to prevent cyber bullying).
3. If your child is in Special Education, add an IEP goal that teaches your child how best to respond to the bullying. You might also consider other IEP services or accommodations.
4. Identifying a go-to school counselor, mentor, or 'safe' person is often needed.
5. Consider seeking the help of outside professionals (therapists, etc).
6. Create peer buddies and safe social opportunities in and out of the classroom.
7. It may be necessary to make seating or classroom changes.
8. Research shows that school-wide education and awareness is critical. If the bullying is around your child's disability insist on disability awareness education.
9. Consider the unique needs of your child when choosing interventions – some children are more sensitive and vulnerable than others.
10. If the bullying escalates take appropriate action (involve district staff, file reports).

Note: Bullying is about a real or perceived imbalance of power. Because there is a victim and perpetrator, peer mediation is not an appropriate intervention.

Working collaboratively with your school is the best way to stop the bullying. For more in-depth information, download the Matrix packet *Bullying -Taking it Seriously*.



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