

# Coping with Bullying

## Information for Elementary Parents

**Bullying is aggressive behavior that's harmful, intentional, and repeated. Here's what you need to know about bullying, along with some tips on what to do if your child is dealing with a bully.**

### Types of bullying

**Physical** – using physical force to harm others

- ▶ pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking
- ▶ stealing or damaging someone's property

**Verbal** – using words to hurt others

- ▶ making intimidating or threatening remarks
- ▶ taunting, insulting, or embarrassing others

**Social** – hurting someone's social standing

- ▶ spreading rumors and/or lies
- ▶ purposely harming another person's self-esteem or reputation
- ▶ excluding someone from a group

**Cyberbullying** – using technology to cause harm to others

- ▶ posting hurtful or embarrassing words or pictures online
- ▶ sending rude or threatening messages

### Is it teasing or bullying?

Teasing is generally playful and happens between children who like each other. When it's bullying, you see the following:

1. There is a power imbalance.
2. It occurs repeatedly.
3. There is an intention to do harm.

## If your child is a target

When children are being bullied, it's critical that parents believe them, listen to them, support them, and empower them. If your child tells you they are being bullied:

- ▶ have them explain what happened, who was involved, and how, when, and where it occurred.
- ▶ make printouts of anything sent or posted electronically.
- ▶ listen, be supportive, and discuss with your child how to best handle the situation.
- ▶ communicate your concerns to school officials.

*Children often don't tell their parents they're being harassed or bullied. If your child suddenly doesn't want to go to school, ask if someone is causing them a problem at school or online.*

## If your child is bullying others...

- ▶ Take it seriously and don't make excuses.
- ▶ Listen to your child's explanations, but emphasize that there are always other options—no matter what the provocation.
- ▶ Avoid lecturing, criticizing, and blaming. Be loving and firm, focus on solutions, and hold your child accountable. Allow your child to experience the consequences.

***Being bullied can undermine a child's self-confidence. Watch this video for information on how you can help your child be more confident.***



VIDEO