

Bullying Prevention Resource Guide

FOR SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Tips and Topics For Bullying Prevention Success

ADULT BULLIES — PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM TEACHER BULLIES

“A bullying teacher is one who uses his or her power to punish, manipulate or disparage a student beyond what would be a reasonable disciplinary procedure,” says Stuart Twemlow, M.D., a bullying researcher with the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas. Additionally, The Canada Safety Council notes that adult bullies tend to have poor or nonexistent social skills and a noticeable lack of empathy. By attacking and diminishing those around them, they compensate for feelings of inferiority or powerlessness. For an adult who feels this way and is also a teacher, your child may be the most convenient and desirable target.

The biggest reason for stopping bullying, whether by a teacher or another child, is to stop your child from feeling isolated. Children need to know that they are taken seriously and supported by the adults in their lives.

Here are some signs and solutions if you suspect your child is being bullied.

Watch for:

- Changes in your child’s behavior — Headaches, stomachaches, nightmares, doesn’t want to go to school, loses interest in learning, makes self-deprecating remarks, and has dropping grades
- Complaints of being “picked on” — Child states that he is being picked on in front of the class, or that a certain teacher doesn’t like him. Especially when the same teacher is discussed repeatedly.
- Signs of contempt from the teacher — Get precise details from your child such as the teacher’s facial expressions and tone of voice. Sarcasm, patronizing or mocking tones, and yelling are all emotional mistreatment.

Peaceful solutions:

- Arrange a meeting with the teacher, so you have his/her full attention. Be calm, courteous, and professional and listen carefully to what he/she has to say. Try to be open-minded and work it out.
- Put it in writing — A written account of your concerns and keeping notes on meetings and phone calls says you’re serious about what’s happening. Give examples of what’s happening in non-judgmental language and focus on the facts.
- Be prepared to go higher — If meeting with the teacher doesn’t resolve the issue, you may need to get the principal involved. If adult/teacher bullying is part of the school culture, you may have to go beyond the principal to the superintendent or the school board. This is well within your rights as a parent.

Protect your child from ALL kinds of bullies:

- Begin developing a relationship with your child’s teacher(s) early in the school year. Do not wait until the first parent-teacher conference.
- Instill self-confidence in your child through positive reinforcement and positive self-regard.
- Help your child establish good social skills.
- Teach your child to speak out, appropriately and respectfully for himself/herself.
- Be a model of non-aggressive behavior.
- Clearly state that violence is not acceptable — whether it is physical or verbal.
- Assist your child in finding non-violent strategies for anger management and conflict resolution.
- Seek help from a mental health professional if your child is targeted.

TELLING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EDUCATORS AND TEACHER BULLIES

From *Are You a Bully?*, by Linda Staff, Education World, February 2003

Educators	Teacher Bullies
Let students know they care.	Let students know who's boss.
Teach self-control.	Exert their own control.
Set ironclad expectations.	Rule with an inconsistent yet iron fist.
Diffuse minor disruptions with humor.	Use sarcasm to turn disruptions into confrontations.
Privately counsel chronic discipline problems.	Publicly humiliate chronic misbehaviors.
Are judicious.	Are judgemental.
Are aware of the power they wield over their students; choose their words and actions carefully.	Wield their power recklessly, frequently resorting to anger and intimidation.
Help all students feel successful.	Punish students for being unsuccessful.
Address misbehavior.	Attack the character of the youth misbehaving.
See each student's uniqueness.	Compare children to one another.
Treat all students with respect.	Make it clear that not all students deserve respect.
Highlight good behavior.	Make examples of poor behavior.
Are proactive; they create classroom environments that minimize student misbehavior.	Are reactive; they blame students for the lack of order in their classrooms.
Educators educate.	Bullies humiliate.
Exude confidence in their ability to maintain order in their classrooms.	Barely conceal their terror of losing control.

Resources:

Bullied ... by the Teacher?, by Kathleen M. Heins, Better Homes & Gardens, September 2003

"Hit Him Back" Doesn't Work: How to Handle Bullying Behavior, The Menninger Clinic, 2004

Are You a Bully?, by Linda Staff, Education World, February 2003

Bullying Prevention Initiative Common Elements:

- Partnerships
- Cultural Competency
- Positive Youth Development
- Sustained Climate Change
- Interventions for Students (bully, bullied, and bystander)

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