

Bullying

What is bullying?

Bullying is a worldwide problem that is starting to get serious attention from parents. In the past, bullying was thought to be part of growing up. Children were told to stay away from a bully. The bullies were looked at with a “kids will be kids” attitude. Newer research shows that bullying can have a lasting affect on the victim as well as the bully.

Who are they?

Both boys and girls are affected by bullying. Boys tend to use physical methods. They may hit, punch or kick. It may lead to beatings with serious injuries or the use of weapons. Girls more often use emotional or social means such as rumors, name-calling or isolation to hurt or scare victims. Technology such as internet web sites and chatrooms, and text messaging are being used more and more to bully.

What effects does it have on the victims?

Children who are bullied have real suffering. It can interfere with their social and emotional development, as well as their school performance. They may feel they deserve to be teased. They may be depressed, have anxiety issues and may be afraid to go to school. Victims have a harder time making friends at school because other children may be afraid of being bullied if they are friends of the victim.

What effects does it have on the bullies?

Bullies can have long-term problems. Bullying during childhood may lead to serious academic, social, emotional and legal problems. They may also face social isolation, peer rejection and suicidal thoughts. Bullies also are at risk for criminal convictions and alcoholism in adulthood.

What can parents do?

- Deal with bullying openly and directly.
- Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable. Teach children to help others who are being bullied and to report bullying when they see it. Ask your child to include children who often are left out.
- Teach children to solve conflict peacefully.
- Support the victim.
- Reward cooperation.
- Get involved when you see bullying occur.
- If bullying occurs at school, gather information and talk with school officials. Ask the school to develop a safety plan.

What can parents do (continued)

- Help angry children learn ways to manage their emotions.
- Closely watch your child's use of technology.
- Teach verbal assertiveness.
- Teach ways for children to feel powerful by developing each child's unique talents.
- If your child is a victim, teach ways to stay bully-free:
 - Stay away from bullies
 - Tell a friend or teacher
 - Use humor or assertive statements to diffuse situations
 - Travel in groups
 - Run away when in danger

Where can I get more information?

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>. This government website has resources for youth, parents and teachers.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.