

How to tell if your child may be involved in bullying

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone hurts someone else on purpose. A lot of the time it happens more than once. Some things to know about bullying are:

- **There is a difference in power:** Kids who bully use their power to control or hurt someone's body or feelings. Their power might be strength or being more popular than others.
- **It is repeated:** Most of the time bullying happens more than once.
- **It is done on purpose:** Bullying happens when someone means to do it. If a child doesn't mean to bump into another child in the hall, that is not bullying.

Bullying includes actions like:

- making threats
- spreading rumors
- hurting someone
- not letting someone join a group

Bullying is learned, and respect must also be learned. Children copy what they see other children and adults doing. Try to set a good example.

Signs your child is being bullied

Look for changes in your child. Some children who are bullied may not show warning signs. Some signs that bullying might be a problem are:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises
- Lost or ruined clothes, books, school work, art or toys
- Headaches or stomachaches, feeling sick or faking illness to avoid school
- Changes in eating, like skipping meals or eating a lot
- Lower grades, loss of interest in school or not wanting to go to school
- Loss of friends or being left out
- More angry words or actions after seeing certain classmates or coming home from school
- Nervous behaviors like chewing nails or pulling out hair
- Becoming more withdrawn or fearful



Why don't kids ask for help?

Many times, kids don't tell an adult that someone is hurting or scaring them. Kids don't tell adults for many reasons:

- Bullying can make a child feel helpless.
- They might not want to be seen as a tattletale.
- They may be afraid of the child who bullied them.
- They may be afraid they will get in trouble.
- They may fear losing friends.

How can you find out if your child is being bullied?

Ask your child:

- Is something or someone scaring you or making you upset?
- Are you ever afraid to go to school? Why?
- Does anyone make you sad at school? Why?

What can you do to get your child help?

If you think your child needs help, don't ignore the problem. To deal with bullying at school, work with teachers and other school staff.

Always start with the classroom teacher. If the problem continues, the next step is to go to other administrators (counselor, principal or superintendent). If the bullying is happening outside of school, talk with the adult in charge. This may be a coach, club advisor or group leader.

Signs a child may be bullying others

A child may be bullying others if they:

- Are being bullied by someone at home, in the neighborhood or at school
- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Blame others for their problems and make excuses for their actions
- Test limits or break rules
- Need to control others and situations



How to tell if your child is showing bullying behaviors?

You can:

- Attend parent teacher meetings.
- Ask your child how school is going.
- Ask your child about their friends.
- Watch your child play with others.

If your child needs to talk to someone

If your child is a victim or is showing bullying behaviors, they may need to talk to someone. Start with your child's school and see what resources they have. Check with your health care providers to see if they can share where you can find help.

Repurposed from <http://www.stopbullying.gov>. More information for parents and caregivers, children and educators may be found at this site.

