

What do I do when bullying is closer to home?

Bullying in the neighborhood

If your child is being bullied in your neighborhood, there are several things you can do.

- **Stay calm.** Your child needs to see you calm, cool and in control.
- **Talk to your child and listen.** He or she needs your emotional support. Let your child know that it is not his or her fault and that no one deserves to be bullied. Be aware that your child may be embarrassed, hurt, afraid or angry about the incident. Express confidence that you can, and will, help your child.
- **Develop a safety plan for your child.** Increase adult supervision as part of that plan. Enlist a family member, neighbor or friend to keep an eye on things or enroll your child in a trusted after-school or summer program. Make sure your child follows the buddy system.
- **Keep a log when incidents occur.** Try to obtain as much information from your child as possible. If there are injuries, take photos. Save this information in case the bullying escalates.
- **Talk to your neighbors.** Perhaps this situation is not unique to your child, and there can be safety in numbers. Others may have ideas on how to deal with the bullying.

Bullying among siblings

Many parents view arguments among their children as normal sibling rivalry, however, sibling rivalry can sometimes escalate into sibling aggression. There are several things you can do to minimize sibling aggression.

- **Don't ignore it.** While some bickering between siblings is normal, there comes a point where it isn't normal and it becomes sibling aggression. Sibling aggression is a form of bullying and should be treated as such.
- **Set consequences.** Teach your children that aggressive behaviors will not be tolerated in your home.
- **Reward and encourage positive behavior.** When you see your children making good choices and treating each other well, be sure to acknowledge it.
- **Do fun things together as a family.** This is a great way to strengthen bonds between family members.