



## What should I do if my child is being bullied?

### What to do:

- Start a conversation with your child right away.
- Find a comfortable place to talk that is free of distractions, such as the TV or cell phones.
- Take a deep breath and stay calm.
- Ask questions such as:
  - How is everything going at school? Tell me about your day.
  - You seem kind of down. What's going on?
  - What situations can you think of where you wouldn't feel safe in school?
  - Who did you eat lunch with today?
  - Who did you play with at recess? What did you do?
- Let your child know that you are on his or her side and that you are going to do everything you can to help. Reassure your child that what happened is not his or her fault.
- Give your child suggestions of whom to talk to at school when he or she needs help.
- Talk about scenarios and ask your child what he or she would do in each situation. Review ways to stand up to the bully.
- Keep a record of bullying incidents. Include who was involved, what happened and where and when it happened.

### What NOT to do:

- Do not overreact to the answers your child gives you. This may not be an easy thing for your child to talk about, and you want to stay calm to gather as much information as possible.
- Do not threaten the bully yourself.
- Do not confront the bully's parents.
- Do not encourage a physical altercation with the bully.

**Some warning signs that your child is being bullied are:**

- No longer wanting to ride the bus
- Coming home hungry because your child didn't eat lunch
- Complaining of frequent headaches, stomach aches or feeling sick
- A decline in grades, or your child says they don't want to go to school
- Decreased self-esteem
- Losing clothing, books or personal items
- Coming home with ripped or stained clothing
- Having nightmares or difficulty sleeping
- Showing self-destructive behaviors

If you notice any of these warning signs, do not ignore them. Now is the time to start the conversation with your child. If you suspect your child may try to harm him or herself, get help from law enforcement, family resource centers, a physician, a counselor or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).

If your child has been bullied, talk their teacher. Ask about the social dynamics of your child's class and find out if the teacher has any ideas that have worked in similar situations.

If your needs aren't sufficiently addressed by the classroom teacher, reach out to the school counselor or social worker. Ask the counselor to observe your child's interactions with others to help guide you with your concerns.

If you feel you need more assistance, get in touch with your school principal. If your concerns still aren't resolved, contact your school superintendent.

Finally, if your needs aren't addressed at the district level, contact your state department of education.