



www.psst-bc.ca

www.erasebullying.ca

www.bullying.org

www.bullybeware.com

www.pinkshirtday.ca

www.cyberbullying.ca

www.preventbullying.org

www.kidshelpphone.ca

Resources

Parent Guide To Bullying

How to Talk to the School

It is important to include the school in your conversation around bullying. School connectedness is strongly associated with positive mental health and wellness. A teacher or school administrator can play an important role in promoting school connectedness, and will bring a different perspective to the conversation and will be able to help support your child.

- ◆ develop a plan to address the bullying with your child's school - know who to talk to first:
 - ◆ talk to the teacher about the problem if it occurs in a specific class (i.e. gym class)
 - ◆ talk to the principal if the problem is happening in the hallways, on the playground, at the bus stop or if the problem persists in the classroom
 - ◆ if neither of the above is able to help resolve the problem, talk to the district principal, assistant superintendent or the district superintendent
- ◆ know the policies, procedures and escalation process in your school district, and find out what is best for your child's circumstance - make sure you get a copy of the "Code of Conduct" from your child's school - this is often found on the school district website
- ◆ if you feel your child is not safe, report the situation to your local police and the school - in B.C., many schools are working with police and youth-serving agencies to prevent bullying

Setting a Good Example

As a parent, you're responsible for displaying positive and acceptable behaviour for your children. Children often mimic what they see at home. Here are some things you can do at home, to help set a positive example:

- ◆ be a hands-on parent - this means talking to your child, listening, knowing who his or her friends are, monitoring activities, increasing the time spent with your child, etc.
- ◆ think about your interaction with your child - Are you actively listening? Do you ask questions about his/her life? Do you acknowledge or reward his or her positive behaviour?

The Bully

Bullying is about power and power is something that some children will naturally want to experiment with. Some kids may use bullying as a way to enhance their social power and protect their prestige with their peers. Some kids actually use bullying to deflect taunting and aggression that is directed towards them – a form of self-protection.

There are usually many reasons why a child might engage in bullying behaviour including:

- lack of warmth and true involvement from their parents
- overly-permissive parenting
- harsh, physical discipline from their parents
- lack of self-confidence
- poor behaviour modeled at home by their parents or siblings or other adults in their lives
- poor behaviour modeled in the community or in school by their peers
- attempt to gain power in reaction to being bullied by others

Children who bully may turn into teens who sexually harass, become involved in delinquent behaviours, display gang-associated behaviour or engage in dating violence. Research shows that bullies are seven times more likely than other students to carry weapons to school. It also shows that children who acted as bullies in grades 6 to 9 are six times more likely to have a criminal record by the age of 24.

Signs that Your Child is Being Bullied

Children and youth who are being bullied by others will often display a change in behaviour or emotions including:

- not wanting to go to school or participate in extra-curricular activities
- anxious, fearful or over-reactive
- shows low self-esteem and makes negative comments about him or herself or a former friend
- regular complaints of stomach aches, headaches, and other physical symptoms without any particular cause
- lower interest and performance in school (i.e. drop in grades, development of learning issues)
- injuries, bruising, damaged clothing or broken items
- unhappy and irritable
- trouble sleeping, nightmares, bed-wetting
- frequent crying
- threatens to hurt him or herself or others
- significant changes in social life (i.e. no one is calling or inviting him or her out)

Signs that Your Child is a Bully

Children and youth who bully may show signs that they are using power aggressively including:

- little concern for the feeling of others
- aggressive with siblings, parents, friends, teachers and animals
- bossy and manipulative to get his or her own way
- coming home with unexplained objects or extra money
- secretive about possessions, activities or where they have been
- easily frustrated and quickly angered
- believe aggression is an acceptable way to resolve conflicts
- abuse others physically or verbally
- get into fights and blame others for starting them
- have a need to dominate others
- have two or three friends who are also aggressive
- hang out with increasingly younger children
- quick to interpret accidents or neutral events as deliberate hostile acts

Some of the common effects of bullying on the child or youth who is bullied include:

- depression (including sadness, loss of interest in activities)
- anxiety (tenseness, fear and worries)
- loss of self-esteem
- increased levels of aggressive behaviour
- health problems like headaches, stomach aches
- loneliness and social anxiety
- missing school
- social withdrawal and isolation
- suicidal thoughts or suicide (in the most extreme cases)

Some adults who were bullied in their youth report extended psychological harm into adulthood including: continued distress, self-blame, fear and internalized problems like depression.

There are also effects on the children or youth who bully that need to be considered. They not only have problems with peer relationships, they are at risk for many behaviour and relationship problems as they get older, including:

- aggression
- sexual harassment
- dating aggression
- delinquency
- alcohol or drug use
- gang involvement

A child or youth can be both a bully and a victim and may move between the two. These children and youth experience the most serious emotional, behavioural and relationship problems, and require the most intensive support.