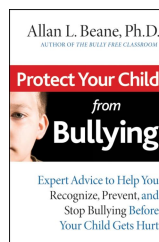




Tips for Parents: Protect Your Child from Bullying



by

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*Note: Some the strategies mentioned in this document and many others can be found in the awarding winning book *Protect Your Child From Bullying* by Dr. Allan Beane, www.bullyfree.com.*

Protect Your Child from Bullying

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Starting at Home

- Teach self-control through discipline.
- Communicate a zero tolerance of mistreatment of others by consistently applying negative consequences for bullying behavior.
- Teach the Golden Rule.
- Teach your child that mistreatment and kindness are powerful – creating memories.
- Hold family meetings to teach empathy, sensitivity and values.
- Teach child to control his/her anger.
- Discuss models of acceptance (newspaper stories, television stories, movies, etc.).
- Discuss bullying scenes you watch on television or in movies.
- Teach your child to say, “I’m sorry.” “Please forgive me.” and then be kind to the person.

What should I do when I find out my child is a victim of bullying?

- Be thankful that you know.
- Calling the bully’s parents may or may not work. Many parents of children who bully are understanding and want their children to behave. However, usually it is best not to call the bully’s parents.
- Discuss the bullying events with your child (who, what, where, etc.) – do not interrogate – avoid “Why” and “You” statements.
- Keep a log/diary and take picture of injuries – report physical assaults to school and police.
- Ask your child to write down what happened, thoughts, and feelings.
- Let your child know it is normal to feel hurt, fear, embarrassment, shame, and anger.
- If your child says, “No one likes me at school,” don’t disagree.
- Stay calm – do not be too quick to blame anyone – do not respond until you have details.
- Make sure your child understands that no one deserves to be bullied.
- Explain why bullies mistreat others.
- Ask yourself, “Is my child contributing to this problem?”
- Ask yourself, “Is there anything about your child that needs to be “normalized?”
- Don’t tell your child to retaliate.
- Don’t tell your child to ignore the bullying.
- Tell your child to avoid the bully – when possible.
- Find out what other parents and students know about the bully – don’t mention the bullying.
- Talk to other parents of victims – What have they done?
- Find out if your child’s school has an anti-bullying policy.
- Explain that bullies seek certain reactions – want to hurt you and make you upset.
- Do not promise your child that you will not tell anyone.
 - Tell him/her you will do your best not to make it worse.
- Express confidence that a solution can be found – give your child hope.
- Contact your child’s teachers (do not be seen at school when you make the report).

- Work through school personnel as appropriate and as necessary.
- Ask for an adult your child can report to every day at school. Ask your child to name that person.
- Be patient - don't give up – maintain and instill hope.
- If possible, file formal charges against the bully – assault, etc.
- Seek a restraining order.
- Ask certain adults at school to befriend your child and to monitor his/her activities.
- Ask grandparents to maintain strong ties and communicate frequently with your child.
- Ask older child who has good morals to mentor your child.
- Involve your child in activities inside and outside school.
- Monitor your child's whereabouts and friendships.
- Monitor your child's viewing of violence on television, in video games, and in movies.
- Limit the time your child has on the computer and telephone – rehashing leads to retaliation.
- Watch for signs of anger, anxiety, and depression.
- Watch for signs of Post Traumatic Stress.
- Watch for signs that your child may be suicidal.
- When appropriate, seek professional counseling for your child.
- Make sure your child gets adequate rest, exercises and eats right.
- Help your child identify talents and gifts and develop a hobby – skill of social value.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child and his/her school.
- Don't be afraid to involve your child in deciding what should be done.
- Develop social skills and teach your child friendship making skills.
 - Children with at least one friend are less likely to be bullied (Hodges, Malone, and Perry, 1997).
 - Having a "best friend" reduces the duration of bullying, emotional problems, and behavioral problems (Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, and Bukowski, 1999).
- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem (enroll in martial arts, give choices and brag on choices, emotional rehearsal, visualization, etc.).
- Encourage positive self-talk.
- Teach him/her to never walk alone.
- Involvement in service/helping projects.
- If your child has a disability, encourage him/her to talk openly about the disability.
- Provide Assertiveness Training (for your child who is bullied and for siblings) – see attachments
- Teach your child not to expect mistreatment – using visualization – see himself or herself being accepted by others.
- Teach your child to throw something and run – when in danger.
- Transfer your child to another school/district (last resort and may not work).

What should I do when I find out my child is a bully?

- Stay calm.
- Discuss the bullying events with your child (who, what, where, etc.) – do not interrogate.
- Meet and work with your child's teachers to change your child's behavior.
- Apply clear, fair, and significant negative consequences (e.g., grounded, child must repay stolen money, timeout, restore what has been destroyed).
- For a day, go to school with your child – wherever your child goes, go with him/her.
- Require your child to apologize (orally and in writing) to the victim.
- Teach child that power can be experienced through doing good (e.g., through service projects, helping others, correcting wrongs, provide leadership role in promoting acceptance of others).
- Help your find an area of interest and a hobby, a job or a way to provide a community service.

- Require child to monitor his/her behavior and report to you—teaching self management and self-control.
- Immediately reinforce/reward positive and accepting behaviors.
- If needed, seek professional counseling for your child.
- Explore reasons why your child is bullying others.

Assertive Strategies for Children Who are Bullied

Bully Free Program

www.bullyfree.com

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Note: Use the following information only with the recommendation of your teacher or counselor and your parents. These strategies should also be used with other strategies to keep you safe. Don't provoke the student who bullies. Sometimes these strategies don't work because students haven't been trained appropriately to use them and sometimes students don't use them appropriately. The best thing you can do is to report bullying to an adult.

General Assertiveness Strategies

- Look confident (assertive body language) by standing tall and holding your head up.
- Don't appear hurt or angry. Keep your facial expressions neutral but serious.
- Don't run away, unless you are in danger.
- Move closer to the bully, turn sideways, and have non-threatening eye contact.
- Maintain good balance by keeping your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Hold your arms beside your body. Don't hold your arms up like you want to fight.
- Don't put your hands in your pockets.

Specific Assertiveness Strategies

Note: After using each of the following strategies, you should start a conversation with someone or if possible, you should walk off confidentially into a group of students or over to an adult.

- Make assertive statements for the victim. Say "Stop it!" with a serious face and serious but calm voice. Or say "This is a waste my time, I'm out of here."
- Fogging. Admit that you have the characteristic the bully is using to tease you. For example, say "You know, I do need to lose weight."
- Broken record. Repeat "What did you say?" or "That's your opinion." or "So."
- Confront the bully concerning her spreading rumors and lies about you.
- Expose the ignorance of the bully when she is teasing you because of your disability or medical problem. Reveal the facts.
- Give the bully permission to tease. For example, say "Well, it's okay to say what you want. It doesn't me."
- Use a sense of humor. Focus your humor on yourself. For example, if the bully says "You sure have big ears." You could say "I do have big ears, sometimes I feel like an elephant."
- Make an asset of the characteristic used to tease you. For example, if the bully makes fun of you for not having hair because of cancer treatments, you could say "Well, I guess _____ (a famous popular person) and I look alike, we both don't have a lot of hair."

Assertiveness Strategies for Siblings (Bystanders)

Bully Free Program

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Note: Use the following information only with the recommendation of your teacher or counselor and your parents. These strategies should also be used with other strategies to keep you and others safe. Don't provoke the student who bullies. Sometimes these strategies don't work because students haven't been trained appropriately to use them and sometimes students don't use them appropriately. The best thing you can do is to report bullying to an adult.

General Assertiveness Strategies for Bystanders

- Look confident (assertive body language) by standing tall and holding your head up.
- Don't appear hurt or angry. Keep your facial expressions neutral but serious.
- Don't run away, unless you are in danger.
- Move closer to the bully, turn sideways, and have non-threatening eye contact.
- Maintain good balance by keeping your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Hold your arms beside your body. Don't hold your arms up like you want to fight.
- Don't put your hands in your pockets.

Specific Assertiveness Strategies for Bystanders

Note: After bystanders use each of the following strategies, they should start a conversation with the bullied student. If approaching or leaving the bus or if possible, they should ask the bullied student to walk with them.

- Make assertive statements for the victim. Say "Stop it!" with a serious face and serious but calm voice. Or say "This is a waste of Bobby's (the bullied student) time and my time."
- Fogging. Admit that you also have the characteristic the bully is using to tease someone. For example, say "You know, Bobby (the bullied student) and I both need to lose weight."
- Broken record. Repeat "What did you say?" or "That's your opinion." or "So."
- Confront the bully concerning her spreading rumors and lies about someone. Refuse to spread the lies and demand that the rumors stop.
- Expose the ignorance of the bully when she is teasing someone because of their disability or medical problem. Reveal the facts.
- Give the bully permission to tease. For example, say "Well, it's okay to say what you want. It doesn't bother Bobby (the bullied student) and it doesn't bother me."
- Use a sense of humor. Focus your humor on yourself and the bullied student. For example, if the bully says "You sure have big ears." You could say "You know Jennifer (the bullied student) and I both have big ears, sometimes we feel like elephants. Don't we Jennifer?" or "You know, Bobby and I both are pretty stupid."
- Make an asset of the characteristic used to tease someone. For example, if the bully makes fun of someone for not having hair because of cancer treatments, you could say "Well, I guess _____ (a famous popular person) and Bobby (the bullied student) look alike, they both don't have a lot of hair. I wish I looked like Bobby."