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# BULLYING AT SCHOOL & ONLINE

quick facts for parents



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**Bullying at School and Online – An Education.com Special Edition**  
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## P r e f a c e

Dear Parent:

Overwhelmingly, schools are safe and nurturing places for students, and school leaders and faculty are dedicated to making sure schools remain safe learning environments for all students. However, bullying is a serious issue that every school in the nation faces.

We know this problem isn't confined to school grounds. Bullying at school affects and is affected by what happens at home between siblings, what happens in the neighborhood, and what happens when kids go online. We must work together to take immediate action, whether a child bullies, is a victim of bullying, or is a witness to bullying.

This new e-book is designed to help parents take an active role in addressing bullying at school and online. It presents practical information and resources on bullying and cyberbullying, including a list of 10 actions parents can take to help reduce bullying.

This e-book was created by the American Association of School Administrators, Education.com, a leading website for parents, and Dr. Shelley Hymel and Dr. Susan Swearer, renowned experts on bullying, with corporate sponsorship provided by Symantec, makers of Norton security software.

We are pleased to share this free resource with you as part of our continuing effort to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for all children.

Sincerely,

Dan Domenech  
Executive Director  
American Association of School Administrators





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## Introduction

### Working Together to Spread the Word

#### Education.com's Bullying Quick Facts for Parents

Bullying is an ever-present problem in the lives of school kids. There is not a day that goes by where we don't hear from parents about a cruel bullying story – the 1st Grade Boy trapped in the Boys Bathroom, the 3rd Grade girl who is excluded from her former friends during every recess, the 5th Grade Boy who came home with a sign taped to his back that read "call me weirdo," or the 8th Grade girl who was the victim of an untrue rumor that she had sex. This could be your child? – one out of three students are bullied every year. Parents of bystanders, children who bully, and victims all must take a proactive stand against these statistics by getting involved in their school and in their community.

Our hope at Education.com is that this Quick Facts PDF Book summarizing our research based special edition: [www.education.com/special-edition/bullying](http://www.education.com/special-edition/bullying) will provide insight into what can be done to reduce the destructive behaviors and conditions that cause bullying.

We've partnered with two leading national organizations in hopes of reaching as many parents as we can with this quick guide – the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and Norton™ Security Software. The AASA's membership includes over 70% of America's superintendents and is dedicated to helping our schools provide the best educational resources to help our children be successful in all facets of their school lives. Norton is a trusted leader of Internet safety products, including their recently announced Norton Online Family product that provides parents with the tools to connect with and protect their children online. Norton recognizes the interconnection between bullying at school and online, and is committed to reducing all forms of bullying.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge our guest editors, world-renowned in the field of bullying. Shelley Hymel, Ph.D. (Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology, and Special Education at The University of British Columbia) and Susan Swearer, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Licensed Psychologist, and Co-Director of the Nebraska Internship Consortium in Professional Psychology) made these parent quick facts possible by inviting bullying researchers from all over the world to generously contribute research based articles and ensuring that long standing myths on bullying would not be propagated.

If you have further comments or questions, please write to us at: [info@education.com](mailto:info@education.com).

## Spread the Word: Let's End Bullying

### Ten Actions ALL Parents Can Take to Help Eliminate Bullying

The latest research shows that *more than half of all children are, at least on occasion, directly involved in bullying as a perpetrator, victim, or both*. And many of those who are not directly involved witness others being bullied on a regular basis. No child is immune - kids of every race, gender, grade and socio-economic sector are impacted. But it doesn't have to be this way. As parents we have the power to help reduce bullying. Here are Education.com's top ten actions you can take to help address bullying:

1. **Talk with and listen to your kids - everyday.** Research shows that parents are often the last to know when their child has bullied or been bullied. You can encourage your children to buck that trend by engaging in frequent conversations about their social lives. Spend a few minutes every day asking open ended questions about who they spend time with at school and in the neighborhood, what they do in between classes and at recess, who they have lunch with, or what happens on the way to and from school. If your children feel comfortable talking to you about their peers before they're involved in a bullying event, they'll be much more likely to get you involved after.
2. **Spend time at school and recess.** Research shows that 67% of bullying happens when adults are not present. Schools don't have the resources to do it all and need parents' help in reducing bullying. Whether you can volunteer once a week or once a month, you can make a real difference just by being present and helping to organize games and activities that encourage kids to play with new friends. Be sure to coordinate your on-campus volunteer time with your child's teacher and/or principal.
3. **Be a good example of kindness and leadership.** Your kids learn a lot about power relationships from watching you. When you get angry at a waiter, a sales clerk, another driver on the road, or even your child, you have a great opportunity to model effective communication techniques. Don't blow it by blowing your top! Any time you speak to another person in a mean or abusive way, you're teaching your child that bullying is ok.
4. **Learn the signs.** Most children don't tell anyone (especially adults) that they've been bullied. It is therefore important for parents and teachers to learn to recognize possible signs of being victimized such as frequent loss of personal belongings, complaints of headaches or stomachaches, avoiding recess or school activities, getting to school very late or very early. If you suspect that a child might be bullied, talk with the child's teacher or find ways to observe his or her peer interactions to determine whether or not your suspicions might be correct. Talk directly to your child about the situation.
5. **Create healthy anti-bullying habits early.** Help develop anti-bullying and anti-victimization habits early in your children, as early as kindergarten. Coach your children what not to do - hitting, pushing, teasing, "saying na-na-na-na-na," being mean to others. Help your child to focus on how such actions might feel to the child on the receiving end (e.g., "How do you think you would feel if that happened to you?"). Such strategies can enhance empathy for others. Equally if not more important, teach your children what to



do -- kindness, empathy, fair play, and turn-taking are critical skills for good peer relations. Children also need to learn how to say "no" firmly, and how to avoid being mean to others. Coach your child about what to do if other kids are mean - get an adult right away, tell the child who is teasing or bullying to "stop," walk away and ignore the bully. It may help to role play what to do with your child. And repetition helps: go over these techniques periodically with your Kindergarten and early Elementary school aged children.

6. **Help your child's school address bullying effectively.** Whether your children have been bullied or not, you should know what their school is doing to address bullying. Research shows that "zero-tolerance" policies aren't effective. What works better are ongoing educational programs that help create a healthy social climate in the school. This means teaching kids at every grade level how to be inclusive leaders and how to be empathic towards others and teaching victims effective resistance techniques. If your school does not have effective bullying strategies and policies in place, talk to the principal and advocate for change.
7. **Establish household rules about bullying.** Your children need to hear from you explicitly that it's not normal, ok, or tolerable for them to bully, to be bullied, or to stand by and just watch other kids be bullied. Make sure they know that if they are bullied physically, verbally, or socially (at school, by a sibling, in your neighborhood, or online) it's safe and important for them to tell you about it and that you will help. They also need to know just what bullying is (many children do not know that they are bullying others), and that such behavior is harmful to others and not acceptable. You can help your children find other ways to exert their personal power, status, and leadership at school, and that you will work with them, their teachers, and their principal to implement a kindness plan at school.
8. **Teach your child how to be a good witness.** Research shows that kids who witness bullying feel powerless and seldom intervene. However, kids who take action can have a powerful and positive effect on the situation. Although it's never a child's responsibility to put him or herself in danger, kids can often effectively diffuse a bullying situation by yelling "Stop! You're bullying!" Kids can also help each other by providing support to the victim, not giving extra attention to the bully, and/or reporting what they witnessed to an adult.
9. **Teach your child about cyberbullying.** Children often do not realize what cyberbullying is. Cyberbullying includes sending mean, rude, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person; pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; and intentionally excluding someone from an online group. These acts are as harmful as physical violence and must not be tolerated. We know from research that the more time a teen spends online, the more likely they will be cyberbullied – so limit online time.
10. **Spread the word that bullying should not be a normal part of childhood.** Some adults hesitate to act when they observe or hear about bullying because they think of bullying as a typical phase of childhood that must be endured or that it can help children "toughen up". It is important for all adults to understand that bullying does not have to be a normal part of childhood. All forms of bullying are harmful to the perpetrator, the victim, and to witnesses and the effects last well into adulthood (and can include depression, anxiety,

substance abuse, family violence and criminal behavior). Efforts to effectively address bullying require the collaboration of school, home, and community. Forward this list and articles you've read to all the parents, teachers, administrators, after school care programs, camp counselors, and spiritual leaders you know. Bullying is an enormous problem but if we all work together, it's one we can impact.

## Five Actions Parents Can Take If Their Child Has Been Involved in Bullying

**If you think your child is being bullied, take action now.** Bullying is not something that just goes away on its own, it is not something that children can work out amongst themselves, and it is not something kids will just naturally outgrow. If you know (or think) that your child is bullying or being bullied, believe them and intervene immediately. Some suggested actions include:

1. Talk with your child's principal and classroom teacher about the problem and see if they have noticed anything.
2. Have your principal notify other teachers, recess aids, hallway monitors, and cafeteria staff so that everyone who comes in contact with your child can be on the lookout and poised to intervene should an episode be repeated.
3. Arrange opportunities for your child to socialize with friends outside of school to help build and maintain a strong support system.
4. Encourage your child to stick with a friend at recess, lunch, in the hallways, on the bus, or walking home because kids are more likely to be targeted when they are alone.
5. If your child is taking part in cyberbullying, make sure that they are aware that such behavior is not acceptable. Many children fail to realize that saying mean things about someone on the Internet or through text messaging is a form of bullying. If your child is victim to cyberbullying, teach them to not respond to the message, and bring it to the attention of an adult.

## Get Informed About Bullying

### How widespread is bullying?

Bullying is a problem that affects ALL of our children - those who bully, those who are victimized, and those who are witnesses to interpersonal violence.

Statistics on the rates of bullying and cyberbullying vary between studies due to the measures used, the questions asked, and the population studied. However, the general consensus is that one out of three children are bullied at school, in the neighborhood, or online and that one out of three children bully others.

Additionally, the rates of bullying vary considerably across countries. Approximately 9% to 73% of students reported that they have bullied another child, and 2% to 36% of students said that they were the victim of bullying behaviors. When young people, aged 11, 13 and 15 were asked to report on their experiences with bullying and victimization within the preceding two months, prevalence rates ranged from 1% to 50% across 25 countries in Europe and North America.<sup>1</sup>

References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Shelley Hymel, Susan M. Swearer. *Bullying: An age-old problem that needs new solutions.*

### What is bullying and how does it differ in boys and girls?

#### What is bullying? <sup>1</sup>

- An intentional act. The child who bullies wants to harm the victim; it is no accident.
- Characterized by repeat occurrences. Bullying is not generally considered a random act, nor a single incident.
- A power differential. A fight between two kids of equal power is not bullying; bullying is a fight where the child who bullies has some advantage or power over the child who is victimized.

#### Strategies students use to bully others: <sup>1</sup>

- Physical - hitting, kicking, beating up, pushing, spitting, property damage, and/or theft.
- Verbal - teasing, mocking, name calling, verbal humiliation, verbal intimidation, threats, coercion, extortion, and/or racist, sexist or homophobic taunts.
- Social - gossip, rumor spreading, embarrassment, alienation or exclusion from the group, and/or setting the other up to take the blame.
- Cyber or electronic - using the Internet, email or text messaging to threaten, hurt, single out, embarrass, spread rumors, and/or reveal secrets about others.

#### Bullying and gender: <sup>2</sup>

- Boys tend to be physically aggressive.
- Boys may be more accepting of bullying than girls.
- Boys are more likely to both bully and be bullied than girls.

- Girls tend to bully other girls indirectly through peer groups. Rather than bully a targeted child directly, girls more often share with others hurtful information about the targeted child.
- Girls experience sexual bullying more often than boys (for example, spreading rumors about sexual activity or being targeted as the recipient of sexual messages.)

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Shelley Hymel, Susan M. Swearer. [Bullying: An age-old problem that needs new solutions.](#)
2. Tanya Beran. [Bullying: What are the Differences between Boys and Girls and How Can You Help?](#)

## Why must we stop bullying?

It is important for all adults to understand that bullying does not have to be a normal part of childhood. All forms of bullying are harmful to the bully, the victim, and to witnesses. The effects can last well into adulthood.

### 1. **Impact on Victims:** Children who are bullied are at risk of the following: <sup>1</sup>

- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social self-competence
- Depression
- Psychosomatic symptoms
- Social withdrawal
- Physical health complaints
- Running away from home
- Alcohol and drug use
- Suicide
- Poor academic performance.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. **Impact on Bullies:** Children and youth who frequently bully are more likely to: <sup>3</sup>

- Get into frequent fights
- Be injured in a fight
- Vandalize property
- Steal property
- Drink alcohol
- Smoke
- Be truant from school
- Drop out of school

- Carry a weapon
- Become a criminal. In one study, 60% of those who bullied had at least one criminal conviction by age 24.<sup>1</sup>

**3. Impact on Bystanders, Witnesses and Assistants.** Children can be influenced indirectly by being witnesses to interpersonal violence.<sup>4</sup> Witnessing others being victimized can significantly heighten feelings of vulnerability and lower feelings of personal safety.<sup>5</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Patricia McDougall, Tracy Vaillancourt, Shelley Hymel. What Happens Over Time To Those Who Bully And Those Who Are Victimized?
2. Adrienne Nishina. Can Sticks and Stones and Names Really Make Youth Sick?
3. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Children Who Bully
4. Shelley Hymel, Susan M. Swearer. Bullying: An age-old problem that needs new solutions
5. Linda A. Cedeno, Maurice J. Elias. How Do You Know When Your Student Or Child Is Being Victimized and How Can You Help

## Why do kids bully?

There is no one single cause of bullying among children; individual, family, peer, school, and community factors can place a child or youth at risk for bullying. These factors work individually, or collectively, to contribute to a child's likelihood of bullying.

#### **Family** risk factors for bullying:

- A lack of warmth and involvement on the part of parents.
- Overly-permissive parenting (including a lack of limits for children's behavior).
- A lack of supervision by parents.
- Harsh, physical discipline.
- Parent modeling of bullying behavior.<sup>1</sup>
- Victimization by older brothers.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Peer** risk factors for bullying:

- Friends who bully.
- Friends who have positive attitudes about violence.<sup>1</sup>
- Some aggressive children who take on high status roles may use bullying as a way to enhance their social power and protect their prestige with peers.
- Some children with low social status may use bullying as a way to deflect taunting and aggression that is directed towards them, or to enhance their social position with higher status peers.<sup>3,4</sup>

#### **Other** Factors:

- Bullying thrives in schools where faculty and staff do not address bullying, where there is no policy against bullying, and where there is little supervision of students—especially during lunch, bathroom breaks, and recesses.

- Models of bullying behavior are prevalent throughout society, especially in television, movies, and video games.<sup>5</sup>
- When children are aggregated together, they associate with others who are similar to them or who have qualities or characteristics that in some way support their own behaviors.
- For teenage girls, social aggression can be a way of creating excitement or alleviating boredom. It is also used as a method of gaining attention from other girls in order to secure friendships.<sup>6</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Children Who Bully.
2. E. Menesini. Is Bullying Learned at Home?
3. Thomas W. Farmer, Cristin M. Hall. Bullying in School: An Exploration of Peer Group Dynamics
4. Christina Salmivalli. Bullying is a Group Phenomenon – What Does It Mean And Why Does It Matter?
5. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Bullying Among Children and Youth.
6. Laurence Owens. Indirect Aggression Amongst Teenage Girls and How Parents Can Help.

## Is bullying on the rise?

The last several years have brought a number of high profile bullying and cyberbullying cases to the attention of the media. The severity of the incidents has generated speculation that the prevalence of victimization between children and teens has increased.

Despite the media frenzy around events such as school shootings, suicides, and filmed beatings on YouTube, there is no definitive evidence that bullying is on the rise. More research studies that consider rates of bullying over time are needed. Why might bullying be on the rise?

- There is greater awareness of the seriousness of bullying, which could be due to higher reporting rates by students.
- The addition of cyberbullying as a new, easy, and round-the-clock place to bully.<sup>1</sup>
- There are a number of early childhood risk factors that have increased that might also increase a child's vulnerability to bully or be bullied, such as an insecure attachment to a primary care giver or lack of parental supervision.<sup>2</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Shelley Hymel, Susan M. Swearer. Bullying: An age-old problem that needs new solutions.
2. Ken Rigby. Children, Parents and School Bullying

## Why is bullying an age-old problem?

Bullying is one of the most traumatic aspects of childhood. It also happens to be one of the oldest. This is due to several reasons:

- **Children are afraid of retribution and consequences.** Often adults do not handle bullying situations in a manner that maintains the trust and respect of the victim. Adults must assure the victim and follow through until the bullying stops.<sup>1</sup>
- **Bystanders seldom intervene.** To combat bullying, both parent/adult and child witnesses need to intervene.<sup>2</sup>
- **Adults are not always present.** Most bullying happens when adults are not present. Adult presence at school recess for example, school aids and parent volunteers could make a huge difference.<sup>3</sup>
- **Adults don't always provide positive models of authority and may act aggressively themselves.** Bullying is difficult to eradicate in schools and in modern culture because it is so often effectively used by both children and adults.<sup>4</sup> Adults should avoid aggressive, intimidating, and abusive behaviors, and instead model the social and emotional behaviors that they would like to see reflected by our youth.<sup>1</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Linda A. Cedeno, Maurice J. Elias. [How Do You Know When Your Student Or Child Is Being Victimized and How Can You Help?](#)
2. Christina Salmivalli. [Bullying is a Group Phenomenon – What Does It Mean And Why Does It Matter?](#)
3. [Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention.](#)
4. Thomas W. Farmer, Cristin M. Hall. [Bullying in School: An Exploration of Peer Group Dynamics.](#)

## Why is bullying hard to change?

Bullying is a complex and age-old problem with many factors causing its prevalence in our schools. Understanding these factors is the first step to solving the problem of bullying. Also understanding the powers struggles that lead to bullying means a greater chance of finding methods to help stop it.

- **Bullying others is a way of feeling powerful.** Children need a positive way to feel their personal power.<sup>1</sup>
- **Bullying others is a tool for gaining popularity.** Children need a different way to feel popular. The challenge is to redirect the child's leadership potential from negative bullying behaviors to positive leadership skills and opportunities.<sup>2</sup>
- **It takes two.** The aggressor-victim relationship can involve a complex dynamic between two children. Aggressor-victim relationships may form when a potential aggressor finds a victim who can be successfully dominated because the victim is weaker, has few friends who will stick up for the him or her , and shows signs of suffering (such as crying).<sup>3</sup>
- **Social aggression is learned behavior.** Research documented from early childhood through mid-adolescence suggests that social aggression or bullying may be more of a learned behavior than physical aggression.<sup>4</sup>
- **Peer group reputations stay the same.** The reputation of a child or adolescent in the peer group tends to be stable over time (whether a victim or a bully).

- **The rewards of bullying stay the same.** Bullies do not work alone. The bully forms a coalition with other children in their peer group, which increases their status and helps the bully stay in charge. Because of such rewards, the bullying continues.
- **What peers expect of bullies and victims stays the same.** Children expect their peers to behave in the same way they always do - for bullies to continue bullying and for victims to continue on the path of victimization. As a result of this, they unintentionally help them to continue their behavior.<sup>5</sup>

References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Dagmar Strohmeier. Bullying and its Underlying Mechanisms.
2. Debra Pepler, Wendy M. Craig. Bullying, Interventions, and The Role of Adults.
3. Noel A. Card. It Takes Two: Rethinking the Aggressor-Victim Relationship.
4. Mara Brendgen. Shoving, Gossip, and Beyond: How Environment Shapes Bullies.
5. Antonius Cillessen. Why is Bullying Difficult to Change?



## Warning Signs of Bullying

### What are the signs that a child is being bullied?

The pain and embarrassment of being bullied often causes victims to hide what is going on. But, there are a variety of ways to tell if your child is being bullied. Symptoms include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Safety concerns
- Sadness
- Aggression
- Academic issues
- Low self-esteem
- Deficits in peer relations
- Substance use

Other possible warning signs may include:

- Numerous lost belongings
- Frequent injuries or damage to clothes or property
- Spends time primarily with younger students (may indicate a problem with peers)
- Avoids recess (*i.e.*, playground) before, during and/or after school
- Arrives to school late or just at the starting bell
- Appears to be alone most of the time at school
- Obtains an excessive or insufficient amount of sleep
- Somatic complaints (*i.e.*, headaches, stomachaches, *etc.*)

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. [Linda A. Cedeno, Maurice J. Elias. How Do You Know When Your Student Or Child Is Being Victimized and How Can You Help?](#)

### What are the signs that a child is bullying others?

It is difficult to come to terms with the fact that children so young can display such acts of violence. It can sometimes be difficult to tell if a child bullies. Here are some common signs.

- Children who bully tend to have: <sup>1</sup>
  - Average or above average self-esteem.
  - Impulsive personalities.
  - Lack of empathy.
  - Difficulty conforming to rules.
  - Positive attitudes toward violence.

- Some bullies are quite popular, enjoying high status and esteem from their peers, and even teachers. These are called “Hidden bullies” - popular children who exhibit aggression (persistent arguing, fighting, getting in trouble).<sup>2</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Children Who Bully.
2. Philip C. Rodkin, Ramin Karimpour. What's a Hidden Bully?

## What are the signs of a “bully-victim”?

It is not uncommon for a child to have bullied and also been the victim of bullying. These are known as bully-victims. Bully-victims often experience behavioral and emotional difficulties.<sup>1</sup>

Bully-victims may:

- Struggle to control their emotions.
- Unintentionally prompt children to bully them again by reacting very emotionally to teasing.
- Have problems controlling feelings of anger and frustration, predisposing them to retaliatory aggression.
- Show social and emotional problems that are frequently present in victims of bullying, such as anxiety, depression, peer rejection, and a lack of close friendships.
- Greater acceptance of rule-breaking behavior and hyperactivity.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Zopito Marini, Andrew Dane, Tony Volk. What's a Bully-Victim?

## Bullying: How to Help Your Child

### What do I do if I suspect that my child is being bullied?

What are parents to do if their child tells them that he is being bullied?

- First, listen; gauge the seriousness of the incident and whether there is a history of such bullying.
- Then find out what has been tried and work out options with your child - such as being more assertive, avoiding people and places, and seeking help through the school.
- It is tempting to confront the bully's parents or even the bully. Don't. It seldom pays and commonly makes matters worse. When bullying occurs at school, work through your teacher and principal.
- When help is needed, call on the school. It has the prime responsibility for keeping students safe. Schools can help, especially if parents work closely with them.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important things that a parent can do in this situation is to talk with your child. Tell your child that you are concerned and that you'd like to help. Here are some questions that can get the discussion going:

- I'm worried about you. Are there any kids at school who may be picking on you or bullying you?
- Are there any kids at school who tease you in a mean way?
- Are there any kids at school who leave you out or exclude you on purpose?

Sometimes, more subtle questions are needed:

- Do you have any special friends at school this year? Who are they? Who do you hang out with?
- Who do you sit with at lunch and on the bus?
- Are there any kids at school who you really don't like? Why don't you like them? Do they ever pick on you or leave you out of things?

It is also important that parents talk with staff at school. Share your concerns about your child and ask the teacher such questions as:

- How does my child get along with other students in his or her class?
- With whom does he or she spend free time?
- Have you noticed or have you ever suspected that my child is bullied by other students? Give examples of some ways that children can be bullied to be sure that the teacher is not focusing only on one kind of bullying (such as physical bullying).<sup>2</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Ken Rigby, *Children, Parents and Social Bullying*
2. *Stop Bullying Now!* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Warning Signs that a Child is Being Bullied.*

## What do I do if my child tells me that he or she is being bullied?

### Communicate With and Support Your Child

- First, focus on your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying.<sup>1</sup>
  - Reassure your child that sharing this information is not the same as tattling.<sup>2</sup>
  - Adults must ensure that the trust implicit in disclosures of bullying is not violated.<sup>3</sup>
  - Address these experiences as soon as they arise. For example, checking in with children at the end of the day can include conversation about academic subjects as well as peer relationships. Questions such as:
    - "What did you do at recess today?"
    - "How is your friend (name) doing these days?" may encourage children to discuss their friendship experiences with their parents.<sup>4</sup>
- **When children express negative emotions about their peers, it is helpful to acknowledge these feelings**, encourage them that it's normal to feel this way, and discuss practical strategies together, especially those that the child considers most helpful.<sup>4</sup>
- **Help your child become more resilient to bullying.**
  - Help to develop talents or positive attributes of your child. Doing so may help your child be more confident among his or her peers.
  - Make sure your child has a safe and loving home environment where he or she can take shelter, physically and emotionally.
  - Always maintain open lines of communication with your child.<sup>1</sup>
- **Encourage your child to stick with a friend** at recess, lunch, in the hallways, on the bus or walking home because she is more likely to be targeted when she is alone.
- **Arrange opportunities for your child to socialize with his or her friends outside of school** to help him or her maintain a strong social support system
- **Pay attention to how your child is sleeping, eating, feeling and doing in school.** If you notice changes in any of these areas, have your child see the school counselor.<sup>2</sup>
- **Teach your child to say "Stop!"** Most bullies stop bullying within 10 seconds, when someone tells him or her to stop.<sup>5</sup>

### Work With Your Child's School

- **Contact your child's teacher or principal and provide specifics on how your child is being bullied.** Parents are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials, but bullying may not stop without the help of adults.
  - Request that the principal and classroom teacher tell other teachers, recess aides, hallway monitors and cafeteria staff, so everyone who comes in contact with your child will be on the lookout and poised to intervene.<sup>1</sup>
  - The incorporation of all levels of school personnel in interventions is a necessary component of the reduction of student aggression and victimization incidents.

- **Parents and teachers must ensure that children are receiving appropriate care** from school-based health care personnel.
- **School-wide interventions that target bullies and victims** with a focus on the development of social and emotional skills are especially helpful.<sup>3</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. What to Do if Your Child is Being Bullied.
2. Laurence Owens. Indirect Aggression Amongst Teenage Girls and How Parents Can Help
3. Linda A. Cedeno, Maurice J. Elias. How Do You Know When Your Student Or Child Is Being Victimized and How Can You Help?
4. Tanya Beran. Bullying: What are the Differences between Boys and Girls and How Can You Help?
5. Wendy Ryan, Mary C. Cappadocia. Four Strategies for Teachers and Parents to Pass on to Kids who Witness Bullying.

## What do I do if my child is bullying others?

Your child needs to hear from you explicitly that it's not normal, okay, or tolerable for him or her to bully, to be bullied, or to watch other kids be bullied.

- Make sure your child knows that if he or she bullies other kids, it is harmful to all kids involved.
- Communicate to your child that you will help them to find other ways to exert his or her personal power, status, and leadership at school, and that you will work with them, their teachers, and their principal to implement a plan at school.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Schedule an appointment to talk with school staff such as your child's teacher(s) and the school counselor.<sup>3</sup> Share your concerns. Work together to send clear messages to your child that his or her bullying must stop.<sup>4</sup>
- Explain to your child that this kind of behavior is unacceptable. Stop any acts of aggression you see, and talk about other ways your child can deal with the situation. Establish appropriate consequences for his or her actions.<sup>3</sup>
- Develop clear and consistent rules within your family for your children's behavior. Praise and reinforce your children for following rules and use non-physical, non hostile consequences for rule violations.<sup>4</sup>
- Examine behavior and interactions in your own home. Is there something going on at home that is encouraging this type of behavior?<sup>3</sup>
- Spend more time with your child and carefully supervise and monitor his or her activities. Find out who your child's friends are and how and where they spend free time.<sup>4</sup>
- Talk with your child about who his or her friends are and what they do together. Peers can be very influential, especially for teens.
- Build on your child's talents by encouraging him or her to get involved in prosocial activities (such as clubs, music lessons, nonviolent sports).<sup>4</sup>
- Model respect, kindness and empathy. You are your child's role model and he or she will learn to treat others with respect by watching you.

- Avoid aggressive, intimidating, and abusive behaviors. Try to model social and emotional behaviors in the classroom and home setting that you would like to see reflected by children and teens.
- Consider talking to your child’s pediatrician about your child’s behavior.
- Be realistic. Your child’s behavior will not change overnight.
- Continue to work and communicate with school staff for as long as it takes. They should be your allies.<sup>3</sup>
- If you or your child needs additional help, talk with a school counselor or mental health professional.<sup>4</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Dagmar Strohmeier, *Bullying and its Underlying Mechanisms*
2. Debra Pepler, Wendy M. Craig, *Bullying, Interventions, and the Role of Adults*
3. OneToughJob. *I Think My Child Is A Bully—What Should I Do?*
4. *Stop Bullying Now!* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Children Who Bully*

## What do I do if my child is a witness to bullying?

### Four strategies for teachers and parents to pass on to kids who witness bullying

#### 1. Stop! You’re Bullying!

Most bullies stop bullying within 10 seconds, when someone tells him or her to stop. A child or youth who witnesses bullying is very likely to make a positive difference simply by saying something like, “What you’re doing is bullying and it isn’t fair!” or “If you don’t stop I am going to report you!” It is important, however, that the witness keeps his/her own safety in mind too.

#### 2. Support the Victim

If the witness feels uncomfortable saying something to the bully, then they may choose to focus on supporting the victim instead.

#### 3. Reduce Attention to the Bully

Research indicates that bullies need an audience, and that passively watching, which may seem harmless, actually encourages the bullying to continue. If the witness feels uncomfortable intervening in a bullying episode, then they can help by just walking away.

#### 4. Report the Bully.

Tell witnesses that they should report any bullying they see to a responsible adult such as a teacher, principal, playground supervisor, or bus driver.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Wendy Ryan, Mary Catherine Cappadocia. *Four Strategies for Teachers and Parents to Pass on to Kids who Witness Bullying.*

## Prevent Bullying at School

### What should parents do if they witness bullying?

1. **Immediately stop the bullying:** Stand between the child or children being bullied and the bully, preferably blocking eye contact between them.
2. Refer to the bullying behavior and to the relevant school rules against bullying. Use a matter-of-fact tone of voice to state what behaviors you saw/heard. Let students know that bullying is unacceptable and against school rules (*e.g.*, “Calling someone names is bullying and is against our school rules,” or “That was bullying. I won’t allow students to push or hurt each other that way”).
3. Support the bullied child in a way that allows him or her to regain self-control, to “save face,” and to feel supported and safe from retaliation.
4. Include bystanders in the conversation and give them guidance about how they might appropriately intervene or get help next time.
5. Do not require the students to meet and “work things out.” Unlike conflicts, bullying involves a power imbalance, which means this strategy will not work.<sup>1</sup>
6. Notify parents of children who are involved, as appropriate. Research shows it is always better to work through your principal and teacher to notify parents.<sup>2</sup>
7. Notify school staff, as appropriate.<sup>1</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. [Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. How to Intervene to Stop Bullying: Tips for On-the-Spot Intervention at School](#)
2. [Ken Rigby. Children, Parents and School Bullying](#)

### How can parents help to prevent bullying at their child's school?

- **Talk with and listen to your kids - every day.** Research shows that approximately half the children who have been bullied never tell their parents about it. Children are often too ashamed of themselves to tell anyone; sometimes they feel that no one can help, not even their parents.<sup>1</sup>
- **Spend time at school and recess.** Research shows that 67% of bullying happens when adults are not present. Whether you can volunteer once a week or once a month, you can make a real difference just by showing up.
- **Be a good example of kindness and leadership.** Your kids learn a lot about power relationships from watching you. Any time you speak to another person in a hurtful or abusive way, you’re teaching your child that bullying is ok.
- **Learn the signs.** If you suspect that your child might be bullied, talk with your child’s teacher or find ways to observe his or her peer interactions to determine whether or not your suspicions might be correct.

- **Create healthy anti-bullying habits early.** Help develop anti-bullying and anti-victimization habits early in your children, as early as kindergarten. Coach your children what not to do - hitting, pushing, teasing, being mean to others. Equally if not more importantly, teach your children what to do - kindness, empathy, fair play, and turn-taking are critical skills for good peer relations.
- **Help your child's school address bullying effectively.** Whether your children have been bullied or not, you should know what their school is doing to address bullying. Research shows that “zero-tolerance” policies aren't effective. What works better are ongoing educational programs that help create a healthy social climate in the school.
- **Establish household rules about bullying.** Your children need to hear from you explicitly that it's not normal, okay, or tolerable for them to bully, to be bullied, or to stand by and watch other kids be bullied. If your child is bullying, you can help him or her find other ways to exert their personal power, status, and leadership at school. Work with your child, his or her teachers, and the principal to implement a kindness plan at school.
- **Teach your child how to be a good witness.** Children can often effectively diffuse a bullying situation by yelling “Stop! You're bullying!” Must bullies stop within 10 seconds when someone tells him or her to stop.
- **Spread the word that bullying should not be a normal part of childhood.** Some adults hesitate to act when they observe or hear about bullying because they think of bullying as a typical phase of childhood that must be endured. It is important for everyone to understand that all forms of bullying - physical, verbal, social (gossip, rumors, exclusion from the group), and cyberbullying are NOT a normal part of childhood.
- **Adults (teachers and parent volunteers) in the classroom should be aware of class social structures.** Which children typically affiliate together? Which children are leaders and socially influential? Which children are socially marginalized? Purposefully pairing and grouping children so that children who bully and those who are victims can work together helps to prevent bullying outside the classroom.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Ken Rigby. [Children, Parents and School Bullying](#).

## What kind of school programs should I advocate for to stop bullying at my child's school?

- **Programs that educate children.** Research shows that “zero-tolerance” policies aren't effective unless they're paired with ongoing educational programs that help create a healthy social climate in the school. This means teaching kids at every grade level how to be inclusive leaders and teaching victims effective resistance techniques.
- **Programs that focus on the social environment of the school.** To reduce bullying, it is important to change the climate of the school so that students understand bullying is not a normal part of school life.
- **Programs where bullying prevention is not the sole responsibility of an administrator, counselor, teacher**—or any single individual at a school. To be most



effective, bullying prevention efforts require a buy-in from the majority of the staff and from parents.

- **Programs that name clear rules and policies related to bullying.** Although many school behavior codes imply that bullying is not allowed, it is much stronger to explicitly use the term bullying. Rules and codes about expectations for kindness should also be clear.
- **Programs to increase adult supervision in hot spots where bullying occurs.** Bullying tends to thrive in locations where adults are not present or are not vigilant.<sup>1</sup>

### **Tips for Parents and Teachers to Prevent Bullying on the Playground**

- It could be useful to tell and remind children to:
  - Establish a “go to” or point person at school, such as a teacher or playground supervisor
  - Avoid bullying hotspots at school (*e.g.*, less well supervised areas on the playground)
  - Participate in structured and supervised activities during school-recess
  - Make good decisions about which activities or groups of friends to join
  - Be nice and kind to others
  - Inform school personnel if a child is being bullied.<sup>2</sup>
  - Lower rates of bullying are associated with the following teacher behaviors:
    - Caring for students
    - Using effective teaching practices
    - Monitoring student behavior
    - Appropriately intervening in cases of student misbehavior.<sup>3</sup>

### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. [Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention.](#)
2. [E. Leff, J. Munro. Bully-Proofing Playgrounds During School Recess.](#)
3. [Wendy Ryan. Tribes: A Way to Improve School Climate and Reduce Bullying?](#)

## Consequences of Bullying

### How is bullying related to self-esteem?

Advocates of the self-esteem movement of the 1980s argued that raising a child's self-esteem was critical to decreasing academic and social problems. For this, and other reasons, a long-standing myth was born that bullies suffer from poor self-concept. The truth is just the opposite:

- Bullies perceive themselves in a positive light, perhaps sometimes displaying inflated self-views. High self-esteem can sometimes encourage bullies to rationalize their antisocial actions.<sup>2</sup>
- Children and youth who are victims are more likely than other children to have low self-esteem.<sup>1</sup>
  - What is not known is whether children with low-esteem are more likely to be bullied or whether bullying damages the self-concept of the victim.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Linda A. Cedeno, Maurice J. Elias. [How Do You Know When Your Student Or Child Is Being Victimized and How Can You Help?](#)
2. Sandra Graham. [Some Myths and Facts about Bullies and Victims.](#)

### What are the long-term effects of bullying?

The physical and emotional consequences of being a victim of bullying can be severe. Children who are bullied are:

- At greater risk of depression and lower self-esteem later in life.<sup>1</sup>
- More likely to report migraine and non-migraine headaches.<sup>2</sup>
- Prone to missing more school because of excused and unexcused absences.
- At higher risk for running away from home.<sup>1</sup>
- More likely to have problems with alcohol and drug use.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Patricia McDougall, Tracy Vaillancourt, Shelley Hymel. [What Happens Over Time To Those Who Bully And Those Who Are Victimized?](#)
2. Adrienne Nishina. [Can Sticks and Stones and Names Really Make Youth Sick?](#)

### What are the long-term effects of being a bully?

- **Aggression in adulthood.** In a research study boys were asked about whether they were bullies at age 14, then 18, and then again at age 32 (18 year span).
  - The findings showed that about one in every five boys (18%) grew into being an "adult bully." They were the boys that saw themselves as being "a bit of a bully" at age 14 and continued to report being a bully at age 32.

- Over half of these adult bullies (61%) at 32 years of age were still aggressive and had been convicted of violence (20%).
- **Criminality.** There appears to be a connection between bullying and later criminality. In one study, 60% of those who bullied in grades 6 and/or 9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24; 35-40% had three or more convictions (as compared to a group of non-bullying boys).

References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Patricia McDougall, Tracy Vaillancourt, Shelley Hymel. What Happens Over Time To Those Who Bully And Those Who Are Victimized?

## Get Informed About Cyberbullying

### What does cyberbullying look like?

- Cyberbullying can involve varying forms of technology:
  - Mobile phone calls
  - Text messages
  - Picture/video clips
  - E-mail
  - Instant messaging
  - Chat rooms
  - Websites
  - Gaming
- In a recent study, cyberbullying most commonly involved phone calls, texts and instant messages<sup>1</sup>
- The nature of electronic bullying or cyberbullying often includes:
  - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images online or via text
  - Posting sensitive, private information or pictures about another person
  - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group
  - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad <sup>2</sup>
  - Spreading lies and rumors about victims
  - Tricking someone into revealing personal information
- The nature of gaming as a place where cyberbullying occurs, can happen through gaming websites or PC and console games with online components (*e.g.* Nintendo Wii, Xbox 360, and Playstation 3).
  - Cyberbullying in gaming is usually referred to as "griefing" and is fairly common among young gamers who use IM, chat, and voice chat features to tease and taunt other players.<sup>3</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Neil Tippet, Fran Thompson, Peter K Smith. Research on Cyberbullying: Key findings and practical suggestions.
2. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Cyberbullying.
3. Netsmartz. What to do When Your Child Is the Victim of Cyberbullying.

## How is bullying at school related to cyberbullying?

- **Cyberbullying is a whole-school and community issue.** Bullying at school, at home, in the neighborhood, and online are all connected. Schools and communities can work in unison to reduce the threat of cyberbullying among children and youth.<sup>1</sup>
- **Bullying is about the abuse of power.** When we think of bullying, we typically think of physical power. However, power can take many forms both offline and online. Using the Internet, e-mail or text messaging to threaten, hurt, single out, embarrass, spread rumors or reveal secrets about others are all components of cyberbullying.<sup>2</sup>
- **Children who are a part of "offline" bullying are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying.**<sup>3</sup> Children who bully face-to-face also bully online and it may be that some victims of face-to-face bullying become bullies online.<sup>1</sup>
- **Cyberbullying is distinguished from face-to-face bullying** in four ways:
  1. Students who are victimized have no place to hide, and can be targeted anytime and anyplace.
  2. Cyberbullying can involve a very wide audience (*e.g.*, through the circulation of video clips on the Internet).
  3. Students who cyberbully others are relatively protected by the anonymity of electronic forms of contact, which can safeguard them from punishment or retaliation.
  4. As with some indirect traditional bullying, students who cyberbully do not usually see the response of the victim, changing the nature of the satisfaction or inhibition normally generated by bullying.<sup>1</sup>

### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Neil Tippett, Fran Thompson, Peter K. Smith. [Research on Cyberbullying: Key findings and practical suggestions.](#)
2. Shelley Hymel, Susan M. Swearer. [Bullying: An age-old problem that needs new solutions.](#)
3. Kelly M. Lister, Eric F. Dubow. [Aggression and Victimization in Instant Messaging, Blogging, and Face-to-Face Interactions](#)

## Why must we stop cyberbullying?

- Bullying of all kinds can seriously affect the mental health, academic work, and physical health of children who are targeted.<sup>1</sup>
- We must try to end all forms of bullying, particularly the new emerging problem of cyberbullying because:
  - Cyberbullying can occur at any time of the day or night
  - Cyberbullying messages and images can be distributed quickly to a very wide audience
  - Children and youth can be anonymous when cyberbullying, which makes it difficult (and sometimes impossible) to trace them.<sup>2</sup>

- Research examining the harm caused by cyberbullying media in comparison to traditional bullying found that although most forms of cyberbullying were rated as having a similar impact, pictures and video clips were perceived to cause much greater harm than traditional bullying.<sup>2</sup>

References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. What We Know About Bullying.
2. Neil Tippett, Fran Thompson, Peter K Smith. Research on Cyberbullying: Key findings and practical suggestions.

## Cyberbullying Warning Signs

### What are the signs that my child is being bullied online?

Although cyberbullying has the potential to be a very public form of victimization, depending upon the reach of the type of media used, many victims of cyberbullying are likely to suffer in silence.

Warning signs that someone you know may be the victim of cyberbullying include the following:

- Avoiding the computer, cell phone, and other technological devices or appearing stressed when receiving an e-mail, instant message, or text.
- Withdrawing from family and friends, or acting reluctant to attend school and social events.
- Avoiding conversations about computer use.<sup>1</sup>
- Displaying numerous negative feelings, including sadness, anger, frustration, reduced tolerance and worry.<sup>2</sup>
- Grades beginning to decline.
- Lack of eating or sleeping.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Netsmartz. *What to do When Your Child Is the Victim of Cyberbullying*.
2. Tippett, Thompson, & Smith. *Research on Cyberbullying: Key Findings and Practical Suggestions*

### What are the signs that my child may be bullying others online?

No parent wants to learn that their child is involved in bullying other children, but some children find bullying to be an effective method for gaining strength and power.<sup>1</sup> Learn the signs that your child may be bullying others:

- Has been involved in bullying incidents at school or has been the target of bullies in the past.<sup>2</sup>
- Avoiding conversations about computer and cell phone activities.
- Quickly switching screens or closing programs when you walk by the computer.
- Laughing excessively while using the computer or cell phone.
- Using multiple online accounts, or an account that is not his or her own.
- Spending an unusual amount of time using the computer or cell phone.
- Becoming upset when access to the computer or cell phone is denied.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Dagmar Strohmeier. *Bullying and its Underlying Mechanisms*.
2. Netsmartz: *What to do When Your Child Is the Victim of Cyberbullying*.

## Cyberbullying: How to Help Your Child

### What do I do if my child is experiencing cyberbullying?

Although technology allows bullies to target their victims anonymously, there are a number of steps that victims and their families can take:

- **Advise your child to ignore the message. Do not ignore the problem.**
  - Don't respond to the message.<sup>1</sup>
  - Save the evidence.
  - Tell a trusted adult.
  - Don't forward it.<sup>2</sup>
  - Show kids how to block cyberbullies and to delete messages without reading them.
  - Never encourage your children to seek revenge and further escalate the cyberbullying problem.
  - Remind kids to keep their passwords secret.
  - Assure kids that cyberbullying is never their fault.
- **Consider setting up new email, IM, gaming, or cell phone accounts** and only share the new contact information with trusted friends.<sup>1</sup>
- **When cyberbullying occurs in the context of online gaming:**<sup>2</sup>
  - For this kind of cyberbullying, parents should teach kids to ignore "griefers," block or ban them, take a break from the game to calm down, and, if necessary, set up new gaming accounts.
  - Parents should also monitor their child's gaming and consider disabling voice chat if they are concerned their child is being bullied or is bullying other gamers.

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Netsmartz. *What to do When Your Child Is the Victim of Cyberbullying*.
2. National Crime Prevention Council. *Bullying Prevention: At School and Online*.

### What do I do if my child is bullying other kids online?

- **Increase your supervision** of your child's online behaviors.<sup>1</sup>
- Spend more time with your child and find out who your child's friends are.<sup>2</sup> Talk with your child about his or her friends and what they do together. Peers can be very influential, especially for teens.<sup>3</sup>
- Develop clear and consistent rules within your family for your children's behavior. Praise and reinforce your children for following rules and use non-physical, non-hostile consequences for rule violations.<sup>2</sup>



- **Increase your knowledge of technology.** Parents may be unaware of the full range of technologies used by their children. Guidance should include information on relevant legal issues and on ways of contacting mobile phone companies and Internet service providers.<sup>4</sup>
- **Explain to your child that this kind of behavior is unacceptable.** Stop any show of aggression you see, and talk about other ways your child can deal with the situation. Providing ideas for things to do online that are constructive can be useful to a child. Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously and that you will not tolerate this behavior.
- **Examine behavior and interactions in your own home.** Is there something going on at home that is encouraging this type of behavior?
- **Model respect, kindness and empathy.** You are your child's role model and he or she will learn to treat others with respect by watching you.
- **Be realistic.** Your child's behavior will not change overnight.<sup>3</sup>
- Build on your child's talents by encouraging him or her to get involved in prosocial activities (such as clubs, music lessons, nonviolent sports).
- Share your concerns with your child's teacher, counselor, or principal. Work together to send clear messages to your child that his or her bullying must stop.
- If you or your child needs additional help, talk with a school counselor or mental health professional.<sup>2</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Kelly M. Lister, Eric F. Dubow. Aggression and Victimization in Instant Messaging, Blogging, and Face-to-Face Interactions.
2. Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Children Who Bully
3. OneToughJob. I Think My Child Is A Bully—What Should I Do?
4. Neil Tippett, Fran Thompson, Peter K Smith. Research on Cyberbullying: Key findings and practical suggestions.

## Preventing Cyberbullying

### How can I work with my school to prevent cyberbullying?

- **Support the school** and advocate for anti-bullying interventions and school policies.
- **Increase adults' knowledge of technology.** Parents and staff may be unaware of the full range of technologies used by their children. Efforts are needed to enhance their knowledge of the dangers as well as the benefits associated with such technologies. Such awareness and guidance should include information on relevant legal issues and on ways of contacting mobile phone companies and Internet service providers.
- **Encourage the use of new technologies** to report both bullying and cyberbullying behavior. These may include school websites, bully inboxes, [www.textsomeone.com](http://www.textsomeone.com), as well as Peer Mentors in virtual situations (*e.g.* ChildLine call centers or the B-Friend 4 U project). The anonymity that is afforded to the bully by new technologies can be used more constructively to provide both help and support for victims of cyberbullying.
- **Help circulate literature.** Advisory and support materials need to be circulated widely among schools and communities, as cyberbullying can take place anywhere and anytime.<sup>1</sup>
- **Encourage your child's school to utilize educational programs** designed to teach kids about cyberbullying, such as NetSmartz.<sup>2</sup>

#### References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. Neil Tippett, Fran Thompson, Peter K Smith. [Research on Cyberbullying: Key findings and practical suggestions.](#)
2. NetSmartz. [What do do When Your Child is the Victim of Cyberbullying.](#)

### What can I do in my home to prevent cyberbullying?

- Keep your home computer(s) in easily viewable places, such as a family room or kitchen.<sup>1</sup>
- Talk regularly with your child about the online activities he or she is involved in.
  - Talk specifically about cyberbullying and encourage your child to tell you immediately if he or she is the victim of cyberbullying, cyberstalking, or other illegal or troublesome on-line behavior.
  - Encourage your child to tell you if he or she is aware of others who may be the victims of such behavior.
  - Explain that cyberbullying is harmful and unacceptable behavior. Outline your expectations for responsible online behavior and make it clear that there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior.
- Although adults must respect the privacy of children and youth, concerns for your child's safety may sometimes override these privacy concerns. Tell your child that you may review his or her on-line communications if you think there is reason for concern.
- Consider installing parental control filtering software and/or tracking programs, but don't rely solely on these tools.

References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. [Stop Bullying Now! U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Cyberbullying.](#)

## What questions can I ask my child to start a discussion about cyberbullying?

As children and youth continue to adopt technology in high numbers, the potential for abuse and misuse of the phone and cell phone to victimize peers (*e.g.*, cyberbullying) increases dramatically.<sup>1</sup> Empower your children with information. Start a dialog at home and make sure your children understand what is considered cyberbullying and what isn't.

- Here are a few questions you can ask your child to start a fruitful discussion:<sup>2</sup>
  - Why do you think people harass or cyberbully?
  - How would harassment make you feel? Have you ever felt that way?
  - Have you ever sent an e-mail, text, or an IM out of anger?
  - How would you react if someone created a fake profile mocking a peer on a social networking site?
  - How can you prevent yourself from being cyberbullied?
- Talk about the possible effects and consequences of cyberbullying.
- Focus on prevention methods they may not have been considered, such as not posting personal information or provocative photos that someone could use against your child, and not sharing passwords with friends.

References on [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

1. [Tippett, Thompson & Smith. Research on Cyberbullying: Key Findings and Practical Suggestions](#)
2. [Netsmartz, What to do When Your Child Is the Victim of Cyberbullying.](#)

## Contact Information

### Education.com

Education.com can be found at:

- [www.education.com](http://www.education.com)
- [www.education.com/special-edition/bullying](http://www.education.com/special-edition/bullying)

or you can write to us at:

- [info@education.com](mailto:info@education.com)



### AASA

The American Association of School Administrators can be found at:

- [www.aasa.org](http://www.aasa.org)

or you can write to them at:

- [info@aasa.org](mailto:info@aasa.org)



### Norton

Symantec makers of Norton, is a leader in family security products for the Internet. The company's Online Family safety product can be found at:

- <https://security.symantec.com/NortonOnlineFamily/welcome.asp?pid=edu02>

or you can write to their Family Blogger, Marian Merritt at:

- [marian@norton.com](mailto:marian@norton.com)



### Dr. Shelley Hymel and Dr. Sue Swearer

World-renowned experts on Bullying, Dr. Hymel and Dr. Swearer can be contacted through the JustAsk product at Education.com. You can ask them questions at:

- [www.education.com/answers/school-bullying-teasing](http://www.education.com/answers/school-bullying-teasing)