

TIPS FOR PARENTS ON BULLYING

When Your Child Is Bullied

- 1 Listen to their feelings. Be empathetic without rescuing. When discussing, use the word, "target" instead of "victim." Validate your child's experiences and take them seriously. Do not belittle or minimize their struggle.
- 2 Affirm and give encouragement when your child handles a difficult situation with courage. Give them the consistent message, "You are bigger than the problem. You can handle this."
- 3 Empower your child with new skills and help them develop a plan. Role-playing different scenarios with your child to prepare him or her for the unexpected can be very helpful.
- 4 Enroll your child in a sport or martial art class where he or she can develop strength and confidence.
- 5 Teach your child how to connect with others and how to break into groups of children in a pleasant and fun way.
- 6 Teach your child positive, outgoing body language. For example, standing tall, holding your head up high, making eye contact, etc.
- 7 Examine your own behavior. Do you model the behavior of a "victim" or tease and overpower your children in a way that hurts?
- 8 Encourage children to develop good friends and stick together. When they walk home, teach them to walk with a buddy or a group of friends. Bullies are more likely to go after someone alone.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE BODY LANGUAGE

- Pull shoulders back
- Plant feet shoulder width apart
- Look at the middle of the person's forehead.
(The person thinks you are looking him or her in the eyes but it is less threatening to the one being bullied.)

When Your Child Displays Bullying Behavior

- 1 Find out people in their life who may be bullying them and take necessary action, i.e., talk to a teacher and/or minimize contact.
- 2 Find out what the child's goal is when he or she bullies and if the goal was accomplished. Brainstorm together better ways to achieve that goal.
- 3 Create areas in the child's life where he or she can feel powerful in appropriate ways.
- 4 Model handling your own anger in healthy ways.

→ Turn over for more tips.

- 5 Help your child find appropriate ways to safely express his or her emotions.
- 6 Teach your child kindness and respectfulness. Find activities and groups where your child can learn empathy and compassion for others. *Examples:* helping the handicapped, serving "Meals on Wheels," volunteering with the elderly, teaching a skill to a younger child.
- 7 Examine your own behavior. Do you model bullying behavior in your relationships or tease and overpower your children in a way that hurts.
- 8 Carefully monitor television viewing. Avoid movies with aggressive behavior or violence.

When Your Child Is a Bystander

- 1 Teach children to intervene for younger children and set a good example.
- 2 Encourage acceptance of differences and honoring of uniqueness.
- 3 Let children know how important it is to report abusive behavior to adults.
- 4 Encourage them to befriend new classmates and invite them into groups so no one is left out.
- 5 Teach children that their voice in speaking up for a friend or classmate can sway an outcome and discourage bullying while their silence can encourage bullying.
- 6 Help children understand that they are an active ingredient in the safety of their neighborhoods, playgrounds, and classrooms.