



Bullying 101 for the Elementary School Parent

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Statistics:

- **The National Crime Prevention Council (2010):**
 - 160,000 children won't go to school each day for fear of being bullied.
- **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program-Clemson University (2009):**
 - Nearly 1 in 5 students in an average classroom is experiencing bullying in some way.
- **Ezinearticles.com (2010):**
 - Every seven minutes a child is bullied on a school playground with over 85% of those instances occurring without any intervention.
 - A child commits suicide as a direct result of being bullied once every half hour with 19,000 bullied children attempting to commit suicide over the course of one year.



Statistics:

- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health:
 - Link between bullying and school climate
 - Those involved in bullying have less favorable perceptions of school and feel less connected to school
 - The more frequently involved in bullying, the less safe they feel
 - Bystanders are also negatively affected by bullying



Legislation

- **In 2009 the U.S Department of Education created a Federal Task Force on Bullying.**
- **August, 2010**
 - 1st ever Federal National Bullying Summit in Washington D.C
 - Creation of a website: Bullyinginfo.org
- **October, 2010**
 - The Department of Education recently issued guidance to clarify when student bullying may violate federal education anti-discrimination laws.



Legislation

- **Michigan is one of 5 states without anti-bullying legislation.**
- **Senate Bill 159**
 - Introduced in 2009
 - A vote must come before the current legislative session ends on December 31st or it will fail to become a law
 - The law requires all Michigan school districts to have an anti-bullying policy and within those policies, districts are urged to spell out what is appropriate student behavior and how bullying will be handled.



Gender Differences in Bullying

- Most studies find that boys bully more than girls do
- Boys reported being bullied by boys; girls reported being bullied by boys and girls.
- Boys are more likely than girls to be physically bullied by their peers.
- Girls are more likely to be bullied through rumor-spreading, sexual comments, and social exclusion.



Defining Bullying

- Bullying is repetitive negative actions targeted at a specific victim.
- Bullying is an imbalance of power so that the victim has trouble defending himself or herself. (The imbalance may be the result of physical size or emotional or cognitive capacity.)
- Bullies seek power.
- A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself.



Normal Peer Conflict (What Bullying is Not)

- Conflict is an inevitable part of interaction.
- As children learn the give and take of friendship, of group cooperation, and of social interaction, conflict naturally occurs.
- Social skills are developmental.
- Children gain greater capacity for empathy, for compromise, and for kindness to others as they mature both cognitively and emotionally.



Normal Peer Conflict: The Development of Friendship

- Early elementary Years (K-2)
 - The goal in both friendship and play is egocentric, or self-centered.
 - Playmates are chosen in order to have a good time and maximize excitement.
 - They believe a good friend is one who will do what they want.
- Middle Elementary Years (2-4)
 - Children gradually begin to understand friendship and play as a process that involves fun for all participants.
 - Children of this age do not fully understand or engage in mutuality or compromise.
 - The capacity to listen to and understand another person's point of view is still not fully developed.



Normal Peer Conflict: The Development of Friendship

- Later Elementary Years (4-6)
 - Children evolve gradually toward a consideration of others.
 - Feelings and personal needs are shared.
 - Friendships become exclusive and cliques form.
 - Jealousy and feeling left out are common problems.
 - Mutuality, commitment, and loyalty are hallmarks of social interaction.
 - Compromise is a skill than can be taught and used to solve problems.

Recognizing the Difference

Normal Peer Conflict	Bullying
Equal power or friends	Imbalance of power; not friends
Happens occasionally	Repeated negative actions
Not serious	Serious with threat of physical or emotional harm
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction from victim and little or not emotional reaction from bully
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power, control, or material things
Not trying to get something	Attempt to gain material things or power
Remorse – will take responsibility	No remorse – Blames victim
Effort to solve the problem	No effort to solve problem



Kinds of Bullying

- Physical Bullying
- Verbal Bullying
- Relational Bullying
- Cyber-Bullying



Physical Bullying

- Physical bullies are action-oriented. This type of bullying includes hitting or kicking the victim, or, taking or damaging the victim's property. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying because it is so easy to identify. Physical bullies are soon known to the entire population in the school. As they get older, their attacks usually become more aggressive. These aggressive characteristics manifest themselves as bullies become adults.



Verbal Bullying

- Verbal bullies use words to hurt or humiliate another person. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insulting, making racist comments, and constant teasing. This type of bullying is the easiest to inflict on other children. It is quick and to the point. It can occur in the least amount of time available, and its effects can be more devastating in some ways than physical bullying because there are no visible scars.



Relational Bullying

- Relational or relationship bullies try to convince their peers to exclude or reject a certain person or people and cut the victims off from their social connections. This type of bullying is linked to verbal bullying and usually occurs when children (most often girls) spread nasty rumors about others or exclude an ex-friend from the peer group. The most devastating effect with this type of bullying is the rejection by the over group at a time when children most need their social connections.



Cyber-Bullying

- Cyber-bullying, occurs when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology. Cyber-bullying can occur any time of the day or night. This can include: Sending mean text, email, or instant messages; Posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Web sites; Using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone. Cyber-bullying messages and images can be distributed quickly to a very wide audience. Children and youth can be anonymous when cyber-bullying, which makes it difficult (and sometimes impossible) to trace.



If you know your child is being bullied, take quick action. There is nothing worse than doing nothing, and bullying can have serious effects



Effects of Bullying

- Bullying can have serious consequences. Children who are bullied are more likely than other children to:
- Be depressed, lonely, anxious
- Have low self-esteem
- Be absent from school
- Feel sick
- Think about suicide



Children Who Bully

- **Common Characteristics:**
 - Impulsive, hot-headed, dominant
 - Easily frustrated
 - Lack empathy
 - Have difficulty following rules
 - View violence in a positive way



Children Who Bully

- **Common Myths:**
 - “Children who bully are loners”
 - Research indicates that children who bully are not socially isolated, rather they have an easier time making friends and typically have a small group of friends who support or encourage their bullying.
 - “Children who bully have low self-esteem”
 - Research indicates that children who bully have average to above-average self-esteem.



Parent Interventions

- **For the child who bullies:**
 - Make it clear than you take bullying seriously and that it won't be tolerated.
 - Develop clear and consistent rules within your family for your children's behavior.
 - Spend more time with your child and carefully supervise their activities.



Parent Interventions

- **For the child who bullies:**
 - Encourage your child to get involved in pro-social activities.
 - Share your concerns with your child's teacher, counselor, or principal.
 - If you or your child needs additional help, talk to a mental health professional.



Children Who Are Bullied

- Warning Signs:
 - The child comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings.
 - The child has unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches.
 - The child seems afraid of going to school or taking part in organized school activities with peers.



Children Who Are Bullied

- Warning Signs:
 - Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school.
 - The child appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he/she comes home.
 - Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical ailments.
 - The child frequently appears anxious and /or suffers from low self-esteem.



If Your Child is Being Bullied:

1. Focus on your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying.

- Never tell your child to ignore the bullying.
- Don't blame the child who is being bullied.
- Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying.
- Empathize with your child
- Don't encourage physical retaliation as a solution.
- Check your emotions.



If Your Child is Being Bullied:

2. Contact your child's teacher or principal.

- Don't be reluctant to report bullying, it may not stop without adult help.
- Keep your emotions in check. Give factual information (who, what, when, where, and how).
- Emphasize that you want to work with the school to find a solution.
- Do not contact the parents of the student who bullied your child.
- Expect the bullying to stop.



If Your Child is Being Bullied:

3. Help your child become more resilient to bullying.

- Help to develop talents or positive attributes of your child.
- Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his or her class.
- Help your child to meet new friends outside of the school environment.
- Teach your child safety strategies.
- Always maintain open lines of communication with your child.

Pushing Your Buttons



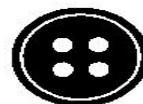
Right Crowd/Wrong Crowd



Racial/Ethnic Taunting



Right Clothes



Hair Color



Family



Size



Weight



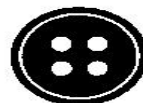
Cries Easily



Worries a Lot



Too Good or Not Good
at Schoolwork



Sexual Taunting



Skills to Disengage

1. Think about what gets to you.

What are your buttons?

2. When you find someone has pushed one of your buttons, try this:

- ▶ Say your multiplication tables in your head
- ▶ Count backward from 30 to 1
- ▶ Think about the last time you were really bored
- ▶ Most of all, do not think about what the other person did or said to you

3. Remember that you are giving control to the other person if you respond. Doing nothing means that you win and they lose because you stayed in control.

Plan for the next time this same person tries to get to you. Remember that there will be a next time. People who like to push the buttons of others usually try again and the second and third time it might be worse. When it happens, remind yourself that

- ▶ It Gets Worse Before It Gets Better
- ▶ Winning Is Not Who Is Best at Put-Downs
- ▶ Winning Is Taking Care of Your Own Emotions

I-Messages

I feel _____

When _____

I want _____

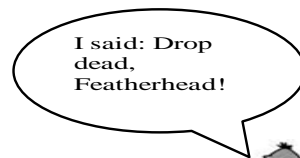
Protecting Yourself From Put-Downs

When you are “put down” you can:

- (a) feel hurt, rejected, and ashamed
- (b) become angry at the other person
and/or
- (c) avoiding both through the images you think of and the things you say to yourself.

Practice the following:

1. Imagine yourself protected from the put-downs by:
 - a. A suit of armor.
 - b. An invisible cape.
 - c. A bullet-proof vest.
2. Imagine the put-down is something you can side step:
 - a. A breeze that sails by without touching you.
 - b. An arrow or bullet that speeds by and misses you.
3. Instead of thinking of what the other person says to you, say things to yourself that are true:
 - a. About the other person:
 - i. “Something must be bugging him.”
 - ii. “Someone who puts others down usually feels bad about him-
herself.”
 - iii. “Poor person. She must not like herself.”
 - iv. “She is trying to impress others. She must need friends.”
 - b. About yourself
 - i. “No matter what they say, I’m still an O.K person.”
 - ii. “I know it isn’t true.”
 - iii. “I won’t let this bother me. I know that I’m a good person.”
 - iv. “Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt
me.”
 - v. “If they really knew me, they wouldn’t say that.”






Learn To Respond

****See Hand-out****

What I Can Do IF . . .

What I Can Do if I am Being Bullied

<p>Help</p>	<p>Seek assistance from an adult, friend, or peer when a potentially threatening situation arises. Seek help also if other strategies aren't working.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Brainstorm all of the sources of help at your school: counselors, teachers, nurse, parent, neighbor, or sibling. ▶ Stress the different ways to get help—<i>anonymously</i>, in a group, a school hotline.
<p>Assert Yourself</p>	<p>Make assertive statements to the bully addressing your feelings about the bully's behavior.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Best strategy for a victim to start with. ▶ Should not be used with severe bullying. ▶ Victim should look bully straight in the eye. ▶ Use "I" statement, ex. "I don't like that."
<p>Humor</p>	<p>Use humor to de-escalate a situation.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use humor in a positive way. ▶ Make sure the joke is about what the bully said, not about the bully.
<p>Avoid</p>	<p>Walk away or avoid certain places in order to avoid bullying.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Best for situations when victim is alone. ▶ Avoid places where the bully hangs out. ▶ Join with others rather than be alone.
<p>Self-Talk </p>	<p>Use positive self-talk to maintain positive self-esteem during a bullying situation.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use as a means to keep feeling good about yourself. ▶ Think positive statements about self and accomplishments. ▶ Rehearse mental strategies to avoid being hooked by the bully.
<p>Own It</p>	<p>"Own" the put-down or belittling comment in order to diffuse it.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Agree with the bully and leave the situation, such as, "OK" or "Thanks for the information." ▶ Combine with humor strategies, such as, "Yeah, this IS a bad haircut. The lawn mower got out of control this weekend." ▶ Combine with assertive strategies, such as, "Yes, I did fail the test and I don't appreciate you looking at my paper."



**“Never be bullied into silence.
Never allow yourself to be
made a victim. Accept no
one's definition of your life,
but define yourself.”**

-Harvey Firestone



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