

School Bullying

School bullying is a serious problem. It can make kids feel scared, sick, lonely, embarrassed, hurt, and/or sad. Bullies may hit, kick, or push. Bullies may use words to call names, to threaten, to tease, or to scare other kids.

WHY DO BULLIES ACT THAT WAY?

Most bullies are looking for attention and trying to make themselves feel more important. Bullies may feel that bullying makes them feel powerful or in control of other students. Many bullies have seen violence in their own communities or at home, such as having seen their parents in a physical fight. Many bullies have been bullied themselves, and some have experienced physical or sexual abuse.

CONCERN THAT YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED AT SCHOOL

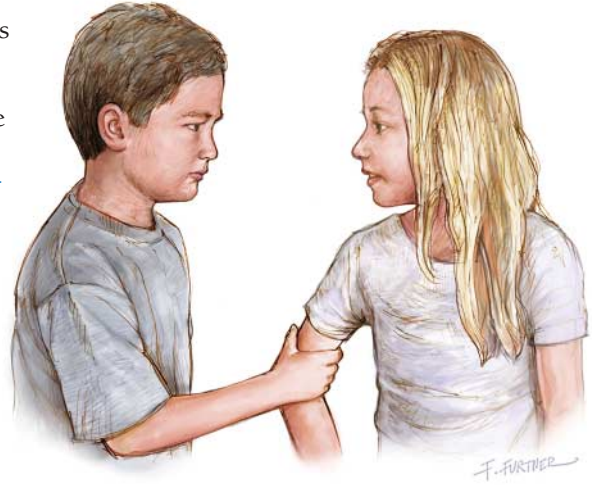
1. As a first step, talk with your child about how he or she is reacting to the bully. Because bullies like to see their victims cry or become scared, this response can lead to further bullying. Talk with your child about keeping calm and walking away from the bully.

2. If your child tries to keep calm and walk away from the bully and it does not work, the next step is to become assertive (a word that describes being brave without being mean). Talk with your child about standing tall and looking the bully in the eyes, then saying something like: "Stop doing that now or I will report you to the teacher," or "I will talk with you but I will not fight, so put your fists down." Sometimes this display of strength will make the situation stop. At home, you can help your child practice what he or she will say.

3. If the situation with the bully continues, talk with your child's teacher or the principal. This may be difficult to do; your child may not want you to do this, or you may worry that, if you help, your child will not know how to handle these situations later on. However, you should not wait too long to step in and get help because your child may lose his or her self-confidence or may get hurt. Your child deserves to go to school in a safe environment, even if you and the school staff have to be involved. Asking the principal or teacher to talk with the bully or his or her parents is often more effective than trying to do so yourself. Most schools have policies that do not tolerate the bullying of children.

CONCERN THAT YOUR CHILD IS BULLYING OTHER CHILDREN

This is a very serious concern. Bullying others in school may predict other behavioral problems and adult criminal behavior. A study in this month's *Archives* found that men who reported bullying their childhood peers in



school were more likely to physically or sexually abuse their female partners as adults.

Talk with your pediatrician about your concerns. Your pediatrician may recommend evaluation or treatment by a psychologist or psychiatrist. Investing in this treatment now may help your child get along better with peers in school and may prevent future potential problems with peers and partners.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Healthy Children and American Academy of Pediatrics:

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/pages/Avoiding-Bullying.aspx>

INFORM YOURSELF

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Sources: Healthy Children and American Academy of Pediatrics

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