

INTERVENTION

“I suspect my child is bullying others - Now What?”

If you think your child may be bullying others, an important first step to putting an end to their behavior is reflecting upon some of the reasons behind their violent and aggressive actions.

Why would your child become aggressive?

- They are coping with a difficult situation.
- They may be encouraged to bully by someone they respect.
- They might be the victim of bullying or abuse and are attempting to exert some personal power and control over their lives.
- They may be mimicking behavior they regularly see.
- There may be a change in family circumstances, like a parent losing a job, a death in the family, divorce, or family violence.
- If a child feels like a failure, they might act aggressively to attract attention, exert power or gain acceptance.

Once you have a bit of an indication behind your child’s bullying behavior – you can begin to determine what strategies you think will work best, and start implementing a few of them. Remember Though! It may take implementing a few different strategies before you find one that works, and it WILL take some time to notice a change in behavior.

Encourage Healthy Relationships

- Ask why - Talk to your child about how bullying affects the victims. Ask your child how they would feel if they were being bullied. Ask why they bully others and what might help to change that behavior.
- Participate in opportunities to help others (volunteering as a family).
- Teach emotional skills, such as empathy and talk about how others feel (discuss an incident from different points of view).
- Expose your children to positive role models.
- Praise sharing and other positive social behaviors.
- Provide opportunities for social skill-building and problem-solving (enrolling kids in after-school activities for example).



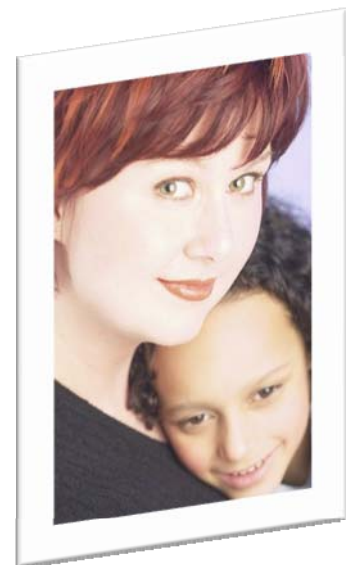
Establish Expectations

- Set rules - Keep an eye on your child's activities, whereabouts and friends. Set clear but reasonable rules, and give immediate feedback on progress.
- Establish expectations surrounding violent and aggressive behaviors, as well as, appropriate consequences for failing to comply with the expectations; such as loss in privileges. Conversely, give children goals for good behavior and reward these.
- Emphasize that bullying is a serious problem and that it won't be tolerated at home.
- Monitor and discuss exposure to media and foster critical thinking skills about what they see and hear online and on-air.
- Be vigilant about (and limit interactions with) people who are not respectful to others and who use manipulation to get their way.



Teach Alternative's to Violence

- Teach your children about building good character (check out the [values](#) section of this web page).
- Work together to brainstorm alternative ways your child could react when faced with situations which provoke him/her; such as taking a time-out, going for a walk, counting to ten.
- Encourage expression - Encourage your child to express his or her feelings. Find out if there is something troubling your child and try to help solve the problem.
- Determine if your child needs additional support with coping from a difficult situation, such as a divorce or death of a loved one. He/she may need someone outside the family unit to talk with.
- Aid reconciliation - Work out a way with your child to help make up to the victim for the bullying.



In addition to the above skills and strategies that you and your child can work on together, there are a few things you can do as a parent to further aid in diffusing the situation:

- Communicate to other parents, that you are aware of the situation and are taking steps to put an end to the behaviors
- Stay calm - Try to get as much information as you can from teachers and others about your child's behavior. Avoid blame and focus on potential solutions.
- Seek Help - Cooperate with the school in working to change your child's aggressive behavior. Keep in touch with teachers/counselors to find out how they are doing.
- Be firm - Let your child know firmly that bullying is not acceptable, and that it must stop. Discuss positive and negative power, and how their actions can be helpful or hurtful. Stress that you still love them and will help them to change the bullying behaviour.
- Spend time - Spend time with your child and offer praise when they show non-violent, responsible behavior. Work with them to find non-violent ways to deal with anger and "let off steam."
- Reflect - Examine your own behavior to see if you are using your power as a parent appropriately. Remember that you are a powerful role model in your child's life. Practice healthy interpersonal skills in your relationship in the family and in the community.
- Promote peaceful, non-racist and gender-free ways of thinking and acting.
- Model respectful behavior and language at all times.
- Make the home feel like a safe place, physically and emotionally



For a helpful aid in working with your child to put an end to his/her bullying behaviors, open the following worksheet: