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# Ideas for Parents

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## What is Bullying and How to Help

*Bullying is usually deliberate, hurtful treatment that is repeated over time. The child who is bullying has more power, physically or emotionally, than the child being bullied. Bullying is not a natural part of childhood. Bullying is a deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, create fear and threaten further aggression.*

### Characteristics of a Child Who is Bullying

- Enjoys feeling powerful and in control, seeks to dominate others
- Tends to be hot tempered, easily angered and has low frustration tolerance
- Difficulty conforming to rules and little tolerance for differences
- Determined to win at everything and is a poor loser
- Blames others for his or her problems
- Described as tough, displays little empathy toward his or her victim
- Average to high self esteem
- May engage in antisocial behaviours

### Characteristics of a Child Who is Being Bullied

- Sudden change in school attendance/ academic performance
- Goes to recess late and comes back early
- Lonely, withdrawn, isolated
- Poor or no social/ interpersonal skills
- Uses 'victim' body language – hunches shoulders, hangs head, won't look people in the eye, backs off from others
- Frequent illness. Frequent complaints of headaches, stomachaches, pains, etc.
- Scratches, bruises, damage to clothes or belongings that don't have obvious explanations
- Sudden stammer or stutter
- Sudden change in mood or behaviour
- Nervous, anxious, worried, fearful, insecure
- Overly concerned about personal safety, spends a lot of time and effort thinking/ worrying about getting safely to and from lunch, the bathroom, lockers, through recess, etc., avoids certain places at school
- Talks about running away
- Talks about suicide (Professional help should be sought)

## **Ways to Help Your Child**

- If your child tells you he or she is being bullied, believe him or her.
- Don't encourage your child to fight back. Bullies are always stronger and more powerful.
- Don't blame your child. Bullying is NEVER the victims fault.
- Do contact the teacher; make a plan for addressing the bullying behavior.
- Make sure your child knows that safety is much more important than possessions.
- Check with your child OFTEN to see how things are going.
- REMEMBER that you are your child's best teacher. Discipline at home should be fair, consistent, age appropriate and respectful. Many children who bully others often come from homes where their parents bully them.