



TALK LINE
FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

8 Tips for Talking to Children about Bullying



Bullying is serious and can cause children to feel anxious, lonely, unhappy, and even physically ill. Bullying may also negatively impact school success and self-esteem. Talking to children about bullying can help prevent it.

1. **Teach children what bullying is** so that they may understand it better.
 - Bullying: When someone repeatedly and purposely says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending him or herself.
2. **Listen to children** to keep the lines of communication open, understand children's concerns, and find opportunities to discuss bullying and other difficult issues.
3. Start conversations on bullying by role-playing, playing the "What If ..." Game (*see* tip sheet on "[Playing the 'What If ...' Game](#)"), referring to events in books or movies, or talking about experiences you or another adult had as a child.
4. **Talk about ways to stand up safely to bullying.**
 - Say, "No!" or "Stop!" firmly and confidently. Then walk away.
 - Try to use humor. Don't show the bully you are scared or upset.
 - Ignore the bully by doing something else or acting uninterested.
 - Don't respond with anger or your own bullying.
5. **Discuss strategies for staying safe and avoiding being bullied.**
 - Play in places where adults are nearby.
 - Stay with a buddy or group of friends.
6. **Encourage children to talk to a trusted adult** (a parent or other family member, teacher, or school counselor) if they are being bullied or see others being bullied.
7. Let children know **they should report bullying**, and that they are doing the right thing when they talk about it. Bullying is never okay, and the person bullying needs help.
8. Assure children that **together you can figure out what to do about bullying.**

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