

Do's and Don'ts for Parents

Taking bullying seriously is one of the most important things parents can do. Children are more likely to tell parents than school authorities that they are being bullied. The more you know about bullying, the better you can protect your child.

- Do start early in teaching your child to be a good friend. Set up regular play dates and intervene if your child needs help learning to communicate or take turns.
- Do make an effort to appreciate social trends in your child's peer group (clothing, hairstyles, lunch boxes), while appreciating individual differences.
- Do talk to your child about his/her day. Coach your child to refuse the bully's demand, leave the area and tell an adult.
- Do take bullying seriously.
- Do reassure your children. Getting bullied is hard on self-esteem. Be sure your children know that you love them and that they have done nothing to deserve such treatment; it's the bully who is at fault.
- Do call the police when bullying escalates to violence or overt threats.
- Do recognize that your child can't deal with problems alone. And, remember that schools need parents to protect children.
- Do know your school's policy on bullying.
- Don't hesitate to contact the school. Encourage school officials to take action. Keep written documentation of all bullying incidents.
- Don't push children for detailed information, but let them know you will stand up for their rights if they need help.

Resources

Treatment and Information Community Mental Health Centers

MISSOURI
Comprehensive Mental Health Services, Inc.
10901 Winner Road
Independence, MO 64052
816-254-3652
www.thecmhs.com

Research Mental Health Services
901 NE Independence
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
816-246-8000

TMC Behavioral Health Network
2211 Charlotte
Kansas City, MO 64108
816-467-1400
www.trumed.org

Swope Parkway Mental Health Centers
3801 Blue Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64130
816-923-5800
www.swopeparkway.org

Tri County Mental Health Services
3100 NE 83rd
Kansas City, MO 64119
816-468-0400

Western Missouri Mental Health
600 E. 22nd Street
Kansas City, MO 64108
816-512-4000

KANSAS
Johnson County Mental Health Center
6000 Lamar, Suite 130
Mission, KS 66202
913-831-2550

Wyandot Center
3615 Eaton Street
Kansas City, KS 66103
913-831-9500
www.kumc.edu/wmhc

Information and Referral

Mental Health Association of the Heartland
739 Minnesota Ave.
Kansas City, KS 66101
913-281-2221
HelpLine 913-281-1234

Alliance for the Mentally Ill Of Greater Kansas City
406 W. 34th Street, #506
Kansas City, MO 64111
816-931-0030

Bully Proof Kids

A project of the
Metropolitan Council
of Community
Mental Health
Centers, Inc. Infonet
Committee.

Did you know?

- Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional and/or sexual in nature. Bullies can act as a group or alone.
- Approximately 77 percent of adolescents in the Midwest report being bullied during their school years.
- Every day over 160,000 students miss school because of bullying situations.
- Bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peak in middle school/junior high and decline during high school years.
- As many as seven percent of America's eighth-graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies.
- Boys are more likely than girls to either bully or be bullied. While both boys and girls use name-calling and threats to bully others, boys are more likely to be physical or sexual while girls are more likely to be verbal and emotional.
- Bullying most often occurs at school where there is minimal or no supervision (e.g. playground, hallways, cafeteria, restrooms).
 - Adults who were victimized as children are more likely to suffer from depression and low self esteem.
 - Children who bully are more likely to wind up with criminal records. Bullies are more likely to be convicted of a crime by age 24 and five times more likely to end up with serious criminal records by the age of 30.

What about the bullies?

It is important to understand the warning signs and know what to do if a child is mistreating other children. Here are some suggestions if you think a child is bullying other children.

- Make it clear that aggression isn't the only option. Teach children other ways of handling frustration and anger. Always step in if a child is bullying another child.
 - Find the underlying cause of the behavior. Try to find out what is bothering the child and how you can help.
 - Ask yourself if children might be imitating behavior they see at home or elsewhere.
 - Monitor TV viewing, video games and the Internet. Violence is heroic, manly, funny and without consequence on TV. Set limits and oversee the child's viewing habits.
 - Consider professional help. Aggressive behavior can be tough for parents to deal with alone. Consult a counselor or psychologist at your child's school or a mental health professional.
 - Teach children to respect the differences of others.
 - Stress the importance of kindness and fairness to siblings.
 - Be aware of cruelty to animals as a warning signal.

Warning Signs For Bullying Targets

Below are some warning signs that a child may be a target of bullying.

- Child seems sad, fearful or nervous.
- Low self-esteem
- Poor relationships with classmates/ difficulty making friends
- Making excuses to avoid attending school
- Returning home with ripped clothing or looking disheveled
- Frequently "losing" lunch money
- Rushing in the door to use the bathroom (this can mean that your child is avoiding bathrooms at school-where a good deal of bullying occurs)

Who's At Risk For Bullying?

Because all children have individual differences, any child can be the target of a bully. However, children who cry, don't stand up for themselves or rewards the bully by showing distress are at a greater risk.

If your child is displaying any of these risks or symptoms, check with your child and his/her teacher to see what you can do to help.