

LifeMatters®

A Newsletter from Your EAP and WorkLife Service

A Parent's Guide to Bullying

At some point in their childhood, many children will encounter a bully. Being targeted by another child (or group of children) and being picked on or even beaten up is an unfortunate but common rite of passage.

Bullying has a far-reaching impact on a child's development. Kids who are bullied often have feelings of low self-worth, symptoms of depression, and poorer mental and physical health than their non-bullied peers. New research indicates that the effects of ongoing bullying worsen over time.

For parents, it is important to recognize the signs of bullying early. While physical injuries are the most obvious indications, other signs include:

- Inventing reasons to avoid going to school or other activities
- Changing routines or routes to school or not wanting take the bus

- Sudden disappearance of favorite belongings
- Dropping grades or poor performance in school

If you have concerns about the impact bullying could have on your child, these steps may help:

- Teach your child the difference between normal teasing and bullying behavior.
- Encourage your child to tell you if he or she feels bullied. Keep in mind that children are sometimes reluctant to reveal bullying because they feel embarrassed.
- If your child tells you about bullying, react with concern, but be careful to avoid going overboard or making promises you can't keep. Let your child know that you are on his or her side.
- Explain to your child that kids who bully are taking their unhappiness out on others.

Make it clear that the bullying is not your child's fault.

- Help your child rehearse appropriate responses to a bully's taunts. Having language to fall back on, such as "I would like you to stop," may be helpful. Encourage your child to stay calm and walk away from the bully whenever possible.
- Remind your child that it is okay to ask for help from a teacher, coach, or other adult.
- If you feel like the bullying is getting to be more than your child can handle, notify your child's teacher or principal. If you know the other child's parents, you may want to have a conversation with them as well — but be certain to stay calm and respectful to avoid escalating the situation further.

For more ideas on how to handle bullying concerns, contact LifeMatters.

Source: Life Advantages



LifeMatters® by Empathia is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

To speak with a professional counselor, call 1-800-367-7474.

Visit **LifeMatters** on the Internet at mylifematters.com.

Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.