



## What to do if your child is the bully

*Learning your child is a bully may be very shocking and uncomfortable. However, it is important to stay calm. Anger and defensiveness will only make the situation worse. Instead, talk to your child about your feelings of disappointment in their behaviour.*

*In many cases, feelings of unhappiness and low self-esteem are the cause of bullying. It is important to try to find out if your child is upset or worried about something.*

### **Ask your child:**

- \* How do you feel about yourself?
- \* Are you being bullied?
- \* How do you treat other children?
- \* How do you think things are going for you at home and at school?
- \* Do you get along with other children?
- \* Why do you think you bully the other children?
- \* What do you think would help you to stop bullying?
- \* You may want to initiate some type of counseling for your child.

## Helping your child to stop bullying

*Although not all bullying stems from family problems, it is always a good idea to take a look at home. If a child is being teased or taunted, or being called names by a sibling, parent or someone else in the home, it may be prompting the aggressive behaviours your child is exhibiting. Children who are bullied tend to become bullies.*

- \* Home should be a safe place, where children are not exposed to harsh criticism from family members and loved ones.
- \* Constant teasing lowers a child's self-esteem; bullying gives them a sense of power.
- \* Use constructive criticism at home - be careful with your words; don't use name calling.
- \* Focus on the behaviour being unacceptable, not the person.
- \* Keeping a positive home atmosphere.
- \* Emphasize that bullying is a serious problem.
- \* Teach your child to treat people who are different with respect and kindness.
- \* Find out if your child's friends are bullying.
- \* Arrange for an effective, non-violent consequence.
- \* Establish a few family rules and stick to them.
- \* Observe your child interacting with others and praise good behaviour.
- \* Talk with the school and ask them to help you change your child's behaviour.
- \* Set realistic goals and don't expect immediate changes.

## **How do I know if my child is bullying other kids?**

**A child who is bullying others may display some of the following signs:**

- \* **Coming home with items which do not belong to them**
- \* **Exhibiting aggressive and manipulative behaviour with siblings**
- \* **Exhibiting aggressive and manipulative behaviour with parents**
- \* **Putting others down in conversations**
- \* **Being unable to play co-operatively**
- \* **Boasting about exploits**
- \* **Being cruel to animals**
- \* **Exhibiting lack of empathy**
- \* **Befriending other aggressive children**

### References

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[www.hwdsb.on.ca](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca)