

A Word to Parents About Bullying

Helping children develop skill and confidence in getting along with others is a valuable, lifelong achievement. Just as your family members can become impatient with one another at times, children may experience occasional problems getting along at school. Bullying differs from everyday conflict because it is intended to cause harm, is repeated over time, and causes an imbalance of power. The tips below can help reduce both bullying and conflict.

**Bullying is defined as repeated words or actions
intending harm, humiliation or intimidation.**

Types of bullying include: verbal, physical, social, gender, racial, or cyber.

10 Things You Can Do To Help

1. Teach your child the importance of speaking up when bullying occurs. Targets of bullying should speak up on their own behalf, and witnesses should act to stop the harmful behavior by seeking help or assisting the target.
2. Find your child's strengths and build on them – athletics, arts, academics, etc. Learning to accept strengths and struggles will help your child accept those of others.
3. Teach your child the value of service to others. This can build empathy.
4. Get involved with your school. This can help you get a more objective view of the world your child experiences each day.
5. Talk to your child about your expectations, and teach them to use the computer, video game system, and cell phone responsibly. Keep computers with Internet in public areas of your home, and use parental controls on cell phones.
6. Encourage your child to refrain from criticizing others for things that are beyond a person's control, such as physical characteristics or mannerisms.
7. Model healthy ways of dealing with conflict. You are the most important teacher to your child - they learn to handle anger by watching how YOU handle it!
8. Teach your child to be a good sport. This means to accept winning and losing.
9. Help children think through alternative solutions to problems. Children repeatedly report that they wish their parents could simply listen to their problems without feeling responsible for solving them. List a variety of options and allow your child to discover the best solution.
10. Refrain from trying to solve problems for your children. Talk to your child's teacher and be open to ways you can help indirectly. Your child is part of the problem – and part of the solution, so empower your child to work with the school and in situations where you are not present. It's an important skill for life.

The *Buddies* bullying prevention program teaches students to understand bullying behavior, stand up for themselves and others, and admit mistakes. For more information about this program, visit www.bjcschooloutreach.org or call 314-286-0460.