



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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Bullying

Now that the school year is in full swing it is important to address the issue of bullying. Unfortunately, bullying is all too common. Studies indicate that 10% of students are bullied on a regular basis and that half of all children are bullied at least once during their school years.

Bullying occurs when a person is teased or harassed relentlessly by an individual or group of people with greater perceived physical or social power than them. There are several forms of bullying including:

Physical – Hitting, pushing, tripping, chasing

Verbal – Teasing, name calling

Social – Spreading hurtful rumors, leaving people out

Cyber – Using technology and social media to virtually bully

Each form of bullying can be extremely painful for a child or adolescent to experience. Bullying can lead to poor performance in school, health problems including stomach pains, depression or anxiety and stunted social development. This occurs because children who are

bullied are living in a constant state of fear, just waiting for the next verbal or physical attack to take place.

It is also important to recognize that bullying occurs regardless of where you live; urban, rural, and suburban communities are all affected. School size is also not a factor; the same percentage of students tends to be bullied in both small and large schools. Boys and girls are just as likely to be involved in bullying; the difference lies in the type of bullying that is most common. Boys *generally* bully others physically, while girls are more *likely* to bully socially.

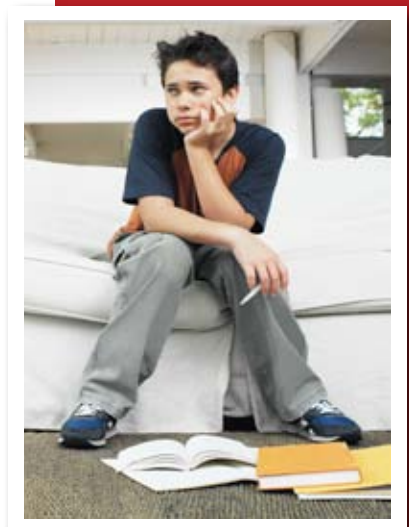
Signs that your Child is Being Bullied:

- Consistently reluctant to go to school
- Becomes withdrawn or depressed
- Avoids certain places
- School performance declines
- Suddenly has fewer or a different group of friends
- Consistently reports lost or damaged belongings
- Has unexplained injuries
- Feels frequently ill, especially from head or stomach aches
- Has trouble sleeping
- Shows changes in eating patterns
- Blames themselves for everything
- Harms themselves or mentions suicide

For more information or support on bullying, contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

1.800.327.2255

eni's BalanceWorks® program is a confidential 24/7 service provided by your employer to help achieve work/life balance.





Signs Your Child May be Bullying Others:

- Spends a great deal of time in the Principal's office or detention
- Gets into many physical or verbal altercations
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions
- Is quick to become violent or angry
- Has extra money or belongings that cannot be explained

Of course these warning signs do not necessarily indicate that your child is being bullied or acting as a bully. There also may be no signs that your child is involved in bullying. It is especially hard to determine if your child is acting as a social bully unless you witness it for yourself. This is why it is so important to speak with your children openly, honestly, and often about bullying. Explain that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Encourage your kids to take a stand if they witness bullying and tell a trusted adult what is going on. Most importantly, tell your children that if they are a victim of bullying it is not their fault and there are resources to help them. By discussing the negative aspects of bullying from a young age, it may help prevent your children from ever becoming involved in either end of a bullying situation.

How You Can Help:

If you suspect that your child is being bullied there are steps you can take to help them. First open the lines of communication. Express your concern and make it clear that you only want to help and that you do not think it is their fault. Reassure them that the situation can be handled privately and that you will not do anything to embarrass them. It also helps to ask them how they would like the situation to be resolved and how they have already tried to stop the bullying.

A good first step is to encourage your child to simply ignore the bullying, walk away and not show a reaction. Classic bullies are looking for a reaction from their victims. If they realize that they cannot upset or anger their subjects they may just move on because the thrill is now gone. Do NOT encourage your child to fight back, this will only fuel the bullying. Help your child practice assertiveness. Bullies often pick on people they think are weak, shy, unconfident. Acting assertive, confident, and aloof will help deter bullying. Bullies only pick on people who they feel are weaker than them. Encourage your child to travel with groups of friends, especially if physical bullying is taking place. Bullies are much more likely to pick on someone when they are alone. Finally, encourage your child to develop their unique interests like art, music, science, etc and join clubs that focus on that interest. This will expose them to people with similar interests to form new friendships with.

Resist the urge to contact the parents of the kids who are bullying your child. This could actually make matters much worse. However, you should feel free to contact the school. Most times administrators will work with you to help deter bullying and protect your child in such a way that the bully will NOT know that your child requested help. Finally, as a parent it may help to get involved in the school or community anti-bullying group.

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