



## **Actions that ALL parents can take to help eliminate bullying.**

**Talk with and listen to your kids every day** – Spend a few minutes every day asking open ended questions about who they spend time with at school and in the neighbourhood, what they do in between classes and at recess, who they have lunch with, or what happens on the way to and from school. If your children feel comfortable talking to you about their peers before they're involved in a bullying event, they'll be much more likely to get you involved after.

**Be the person you want them to be and model positive communication skills** – Your children learn a lot about relationships from watching you. When you get angry at a waiter, a salesperson, another driver on the road, or even your child, you have a great opportunity to model effective communication techniques. Don't blow it by blowing your top! Any time you speak to another person in a mean or abusive way, you're teaching your child that bullying is OK.

**Learn the signs** – Most children don't tell anyone that they are being bullied. It is therefore important for parents to recognise the signs of bullying. Such as frequent loss of personal belongings, complaints of headaches or upset stomachs, avoiding school activities and being late to school.

**Create healthy anti-bullying habits early** – Talk to your children about what not to do – hitting, pushing, teasing, saying 'na-na-na-na', or being mean to others. Help your child to focus on how such actions might feel if your child was being bullied – 'How do you think you would feel if you were on the receiving end?' Such strategies allow children to develop empathy for others. Children also need to learn how to say 'no' firmly if they witness or experience bullying behaviour. Talk to your child about what to do if other children are mean – speak to an adult, tell the child who is bullying you to stop, walk away, ignore the bully, and find another friend to be with.

**Establish household rules about bullying** – Your children need to hear from you explicitly that it's not normal, okay, or tolerable for them to bully, to be bullied, or to stand by and just watch other kids be bullied. Make sure they know that if they are bullied physically, verbally, or socially (at school, by a sibling, in your neighbourhood, or online) it's safe and important for them to tell you about it—and that you will help. They also need to know what bullying is and the difference between bullying and having a disagreement with a friend.

**Teach your child how to be a good witness or positive upstander** – Children who take action can have a powerful and positive effect on a bullying situation. Although it's never a child's responsibility to put themselves in danger, children can often effectively diffuse a bullying situation by yelling "Stop! You're bullying" or "Hey, that's not cool." Kids can also help each other by providing support to the victim, not giving extra attention to the bully, and/or reporting what they witnessed to an adult.

**Teach your child about cyberbullying** – Cyberbullying includes sending mean, rude, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person; pretending to be someone else to make that person look bad; and intentionally excluding someone from an online group. These acts are as harmful as physical violence and must not be tolerated. Research shows that the more time a teen spends online, the more likely they are to be cyberbullied—so limit online time. There's a simple test you can teach your children about online posting: if you wouldn't say it to someone's face or you would not feel comfortable having your parents see it—don't post it or take it down.

**Spread the word that bullying should not be a normal part of childhood** – It is important for all adults to understand that bullying does not have to be a normal part of childhood. All forms of bullying are harmful to the perpetrator, the victim, and to witnesses and the effects last well into adulthood and can include depression and anxiety. **Efforts to effectively address bullying require the collaboration of school, home, and community.**

Adapted from [www.education.com/bullying](http://www.education.com/bullying) - Bullying Special Edition