

TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

TALKING ABOUT BULLYING

Dealing with bullies and bullying are typical problems for lots of kids. Bullying is when a person purposely threatens or hurts an individual or group. Bullying is considered:

- **Physical** (pushing, hitting, shoving, or spitting)
- **Verbal** (taunting, name calling, or sexual remarks)
- **Nonverbal** (shunning or social isolation)
- **Cyber bullying** (sending insulting emails or negative messages)

Bullying happens between children of all races, ethnicities, income levels or geographic areas. Although bullying can happen on the way to school (on the bus) and outside school, it usually occurs on the school grounds in the classroom, hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria and on the playground.

Many times children do not tell their parents about being bullied. They might be ashamed, embarrassed, afraid of a bullies' retaliation or afraid that their concerns are not going to be taken seriously, even by an adult.

Children and teens that are bullied may suffer physical as well as emotional and mental problems, such as: headaches, abdominal pain, sleeping problems, dropping grades, missing school, low self-esteem, loneliness or depression.

Do's and Don'ts for dealing with bullying:

No one wants to hear that his or her child is being bullied. You want to do whatever you can to improve the situation for them. Here are some things to consider:

Do's:

- Help them understand that bullying is not their fault
- Let your child know they can talk to you or another adult they trust about bullying and get help
- Encourage your child to make other friends and to stay in groups while at school
- Try and help your child find activities they are good at to help boost their self-esteem
- Encourage your child to act confidently
- Offer your support and reassurance and let them know bullying is wrong.
- Allow the school to contact the parents of the bullying child. If the bullying occurred off school property, you should consider contacting the parents

Don'ts:

- Don't ask your child to ignore the situation. Bullying won't stop on its own.
- Don't blame or criticize your child for being bullied.
- Don't encourage physical aggression as a response to bullying

Children become bullies for many reasons. They might be bullies because they see their peers as bullies. It might make them feel stronger and better than the person they bully. They may want to be accepted by the "cool crowd." They might feel the safest way of not being bullied is to bully first. They also might bully because they have low self-confidence or esteem or are jealous of the child they're bullying. Whatever the reason is, it isn't right and your child shouldn't have to deal with it. You should let the school know what is going on and try to work with the school to resolve problems your child is having.

If you would like to look at other sources on bullying please consider these Internet sites: www.safeyouth.org
www.nichd.nih.gov www.cfchildren.org www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

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