

Tips For Parents On How To Deal With Bullying

by: News Canada Often a serious problem for kids (NC)-Bullying behaviour may seem rather insignificant compared to the trouble that some kids can get into. In fact, it is often dismissed as just another part of "growing up." It shouldn't be. Statistics show that one in four children who bully will have a criminal record before the age of thirty. Teasing at bus stops, taking other children's lunch money, insults and threats, kicking and punching - it's all fair game to the bully. On the flip side, fear of bullies causes many kids to avoid school or carry and even use weapons for protection. While everyone is a potential bullying target, victims typically tend to be shy, sensitive, anxious, or insecure. Children are picked on for many reasons, including being overweight, being small, having a disability, or being an ethno-cultural minority. If you suspect that one of your children is being bullied, here are some tips on what to do: Listen. Encourage your children to talk about school, social events, other kids in class, and the walk or ride to and from school so you can identify any problems they may be having. Take their complaints of bullying seriously. Probing a seemingly minor incident may uncover something more serious. Children are often afraid or ashamed to tell anyone that they have been bullied. Watch for symptoms of victimization such as withdrawal, a drop in grades, torn clothes, or demands for extra money. Tell the school or day care immediately if you think that your children are being bullied. Work with other parents to ensure that the children in your neighbourhood are supervised on their way to and from school. Don't bully your children yourself, physically or verbally. Use non-physical, consistently-enforced discipline measures. Don't ridicule, yell at, or ignore your children when they misbehave. Teach them the social skills they need to make friends. A confident, resourceful child who has friends is less likely to be bullied or to bully others. Praise kindness toward others. Show children that kindness is valued. Teach children ways to resolve arguments without violent words or actions. Talk about self-protection skills - how to walk confidently, to stay alert to their environment, and to stand up for themselves verbally. Recognize that bullies may be acting out feelings of insecurity, anger, or loneliness. If your child is a bully, try to get to the root of the problem. Seek out specific strategies you can use at home from a teacher, school counsellor, or child psychologist. For more information on bullying and how early childhood intervention programs are helping to reduce bullying in communities across Canada, visit the National Crime Prevention Centre Web site at www.crime-prevention.org or call toll-free 1-877-302-NCPC.

About the Author

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