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Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Beat Bullying!

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Bullying is any type of aggressive behavior that one person (or a group of people) intentionally directs at someone else that causes physical and/or emotional pain.

Bullying can be in the form of hitting or punching, but it can also be in the form of name-calling, staring, mocking, social isolation or "silent treatment," gossiping, taunting about an embarrassing past event, or teasing of others who try to be friends with the victim. A bully might harass another individual about his/her clothes, weight, accent, speech impediment, disability, race, religion, etc.

A type of bullying that is becoming more common is *cyberbullying* which involves verbal insults or threats that are sent via e-mail or text message or that are posted on social Web sites or blogs. All of these forms of bullying can be very damaging to a young person and can lead to serious problems that can affect his/her mental and physical health, as well as his/her school performance.

What You Can Do!

Bullying should not be considered a normal part of growing up, and children should not have to deal with the abuse on their own. Here are some ways that adults can help prevent or stop bullying:

Communicate. Speak regularly with your children about what they do and who they hang out with on the way to school, during lunchtime, at recess, between classes, in the neighborhood, etc. Frequent communication can help your



children feel more comfortable to come to you and talk if they are having a problem with bullying.



Be Aware of Signs. Know the typical signs of bullying since your children may not come right out and tell you that they are being bullied.

These signs include: complaints of headaches or stomachaches; damaged or frequent loss of belongings; depression or anxiety; fear of school or the school bus; avoidance of recess or school activities; bullying of other children or siblings; unexplained bruises; difficulty sleeping; or sudden poor grades.



Be a Role Model. Show your children how you treat others with kindness and respect. Your children will see your interactions with others, like family members or people in the community, and they can then imitate your positive behavior. You can even role-play scenarios with



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(cont.)

your children that teach them how to interact appropriately with others, such as what they should say and what they should do in certain situations or if they have to deal with a bully.



Build Confidence. Involve your children in different activities, such as sports or clubs, to help them build self-esteem as they work with and interact with others outside of the classroom. Being involved in activities also gives children a chance to spend time with supportive friends, which can help build confidence. Another way to build confidence in your children is simply to be supportive. Tell your children that you appreciate them and love them, and let them know that you are there to help them if they end up in a situation with a bully.



Involve the School. Remember that members of the school staff, including the principal, guidance counselor, social worker, and teachers, are there to provide a safe environment for your children. If there is a bullying situation with your children at school, talk with these educators to help resolve the situation. They will have strategies to help deal with the situation, as well as ways to prevent similar behavior in the future.

Your child's school may have an anti-bullying program, so check with your local school for more resources.

For more information on bullying, go to:
www.stopbullying.gov

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