



ECMS Bullying Prevention

Here are 10 things you can do to help.



1. **Talk with and listen to your kids—everyday.** 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*.
2. **Spend time at school.** Research shows that 67% of bullying happens when adults are not present. Whether you can volunteer once a week or once a month, you can make a real difference just by being present. Be sure to coordinate your on-campus volunteer time with your child's teacher and/or principal.
3. **Be a good example of kindness and leadership.** Your kids learn a lot about power relationships from watching you. When you get angry at a waiter, a sales clerk, another driver on the road, or even your child, you have a great opportunity to model effective communication techniques. Any time you speak to another person in a mean or abusive way, you're teaching your child that bullying is OK.
4. **Learn the signs.** Learn to recognize possible signs of being victimized, such as frequent loss of personal belongings, complaints of headaches or stomachaches, avoiding recess or school activities, and getting to school very late or very early. If you suspect that a child might be being bullied, talk directly to your child about what is going on at school.
5. **Create healthy anti-bullying habits early.** Coach your children on what *not* to do—hitting, pushing, teasing, or being mean to others. Help your child to focus on how such actions might feel to the child on the receiving end (e.g., "How do you think you would feel if that happened to you?"). Such strategies can enhance empathy for others. Equally if not more important, teach your children what to *do*—kindness, empathy, fair play, and turn-taking are critical skills for good peer relations. Children also need to learn how to say "no" firmly if they experience or witness bullying behavior. Coach your child about what to do if other kids are mean—get an adult right away, tell the child who is teasing or bullying to "stop," walk away, ignore the bully and find someone else to play with. It may help to role play what to do with your child.
6. **Help your child's school address bullying effectively.** Research shows that "zero-tolerance" policies aren't effective. What works better are ongoing educational programs that help create a healthy social climate in the school. This means teaching kids at every grade level how to be inclusive leaders and how to be empathic towards others and teaching victims effective resistance techniques.
7. **Establish household rules about bullying.** Your children need to hear from you explicitly that it's not normal, OK, 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 neighborhood, or online) it's safe and important for them to tell you about it—and that you will help. They also need to know just what bullying is, and that such behavior is harmful to others and not acceptable.
8. **Teach your child how to be a good witness or positive bystander.** Research shows that kids who witness bullying feel powerless and seldom intervene. However, kids who take action can have a powerful and positive effect on the situation. Although it's never a child's responsibility to put him or herself in danger, kids 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.
9. **Teach your child about cyberbullying.** Cyberbullying is bullying through technology by posting hurtful messages, pictures, threats on the computer social sites, text messages, etc. Cyberbullying is against the law and may be reported for prosecution.
10. **Spread the word that bullying should NOT be a "normal part of childhood."** All forms of bullying are harmful to the perpetrator, the victim, and to witnesses.

Bullying is a serious matter, but if we all work together, it's one we can impact.

For more information about bullying and additional detail about the actions on this list, please visit www.education.com.

Brought to you by the
Elizabeth City Middle School Guidance Department