



What if My Child is a Bully?


Most parents and parenting professionals agree that disagreements, arguments, and fallings-out between friends are all normal and part of life. We can't always protect our kids from pain and frustration. Behavior that crosses the line into bullying, however, is not normal. If you determine that there is a problem, it's best to let your child know the behavior is unacceptable and, if necessary, seek help from a professional such as a doctor or psychologist. In addition, here are some ideas to help address bullying behavior adapted from the Pacer Center.¹


Everyday STEPS for Addressing Bullying Behavior:

 **Listen. Don't Judge.** Talk with your child, and find out what's going on. Are her or his friends also bullying? Is your child struggling with an issue or perhaps a disability? Start by listening and not judging.

 **Teach empathy, respect, and compassion.** Try to understand your child's feelings and talk about what the victim might be experiencing. Is your child aware of the impact of the behavior?

 **Draw Clear Boundaries.** Make your expectations and the consequences for violating them clear. Let your child know that bullying is never acceptable and that the consequences, such as loss of privileges or a face-to-face apology to the victim will be enforced.

 **Teach by example.** Model nonviolent behavior, practice constructive resolution of difficult situations, and give positive feedback when you notice healthy choices.

 **Show Love and Support.** Offer and seek support for your child. Behavior change will take time. Give your child love and support, even if you are angry and upset, and seek out the help of others who can partner with you in your efforts to put a stop to the bullying.

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1. Pacer Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 952-838-9000. www.pacer.org. All rights reserved.
 2. For more information on bullying, visit www.parentfurther.com/high-risk-behaviors/bullying.