

# How You Can Help Your Child Avoid & Address Bullying

---

 [healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Avoiding-Bullying.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Avoiding-Bullying.aspx)



Whether on the school playground or in the neighborhood park, children sometimes find themselves the target of bullies. When that happens, these bullies can:

- Frighten a child
- Make a child feel less important
- Spoil a child's playtime
- Cause bodily injury
- Cause ongoing mental health problems

Avoiding a bully can be one reason your child may not want to go to school. Perhaps, he is being forced to give up his lunch money to a bully. He might also be fearful of physical harm. If you suspect a problem like this, you need to take action to ensure your child's safety and well-being.

## Things You Can Try To Do With Your Child That May Help Make Her Be & Feel Safer:

---

- **Tell your child not to react to the bully and not give into his demands.** A bully likes scaring others and often tries to get his victim to cry or become visibly upset in other ways. Getting that response usually makes the bullying behavior continue. Your child should try to keep calm and simply walk away. Then, your child should tell an adult about what is going on as soon as possible.
- **If your child's attempts at ignoring a bully's taunts are not effective, she should become firm with the bully.** Suggest that your child stands tall, looks the bully in the eyes, and clearly and loudly makes a statement like, *"Stop doing that now. If you keep on*

*bothering me, I'm going to report you to the principal (or another adult who happens to be nearby)." Or, "I'll talk to you, but I'm not going to fight."* Sometimes, a strong statement will make the situation better, and the bully will leave your child alone. If your child is not used to talking firmly, help her rehearse what she will say if she is in a bullying situation.

- **Your child may also benefit from talking to his pediatrician.** Your child's pediatrician can decide if your child has any mental health concerns as a result of being bullied and may refer your child to a mental health provider for further evaluation and treatment.
- **Encourage your child to form strong friendships.** A child who has loyal friends is less likely to be bullied, and he'll have some peers who stand up for him if he does get bullied.
- **Talk to your child's teacher, school counselor, or to the principal of the school if the situation with the bully does not stop.** You might not want to get involved because you think your child is embarrassed to have you do so, or because you believe your child needs to learn to deal with these situations on her own. On the other hand, you do not want your child's physical or mental health and well-being to be negatively affected. Your child deserves to attend school in a safe, supportive, and positive environment, even if it means both you and the school staff need to become more involved.
- **Let the principal or teacher talk to the bully when she sees the inappropriate behavior taking place on the school grounds.** This is generally a better approach than having you speak with the bullying child or his parents.

## Additional Information:

---

### Last Updated

11/21/2015

### Source

Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health (Copyright © 2014 American Academy of Pediatrics)

The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.