

## HELPING CHILDREN WITH BULLYING

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### Tips for a child who bullies others:

1. Take every incident or report of bullying behaviour seriously: don't dismiss any as a one-time incident.
2. Supervise the child's interactions and play more closely. Intervene to redirect or stop any behaviour that is inappropriate.
3. Do not tolerate behaviour that hurts others.
  - Respond swiftly and consistently with negative consequences (e.g., restrict time with others)
  - Focus on helping the child understand the consequences of his or her actions.
  - Practice actions or words that might make the other person feel better or to make amends.
  - Help the child recognize how and when their behaviour crosses the line from being acceptable to unacceptable.
4. Teach the child ways to recognize internal signals that he or she is about to lose control
5. Use real-life situations to practice kind or friendly alternatives to unfriendly or bullying behaviour.
6. Teach the child positive ways to get what he or she wants. Offer reasonable and acceptable alternatives for the child to have power and control.
7. Praise and reward positive interactions and negotiation.
8. Do not label a child as a bully. Teach the child that bullying is behaviour that can be changed – and it takes courage to change.
9. Get at the root of the bullying behaviour. Use school specialists and other professionals as resources.
10. BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL. When adults use words or actions to bully or shame children or others, children learn that those behaviours are acceptable. Avoid using physical punishment.

### Tips for helping a child who is bullied:

1. When a child tells you about a bullying problem:
    - Listen to what the child has to say. Find out what support the child needs – and what help he or she would like from you.
    - Avoid blaming the child. This is not a time to focus on what the child should or could have done differently (even if the child “provoked” the incident).
      - Keep a written record of the incidents and make sure to report them to the appropriate school personnel.
      - Do not encourage the child to fight back.
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  2. Observe how the child talks and plays with other children. Help him or her to develop skills to make and sustain friendships.
  3. Teach the child to be assertive and to say “NO!” or “Leave me alone!” in a clear, firm voice when feeling pressured or uncomfortable.
  4. Help the identify social supports and practice ways to stay safe (e.g. play or walk with a friend, identify and play near children who could help or step, avoid eye contact with bullies, etc.).
  5. Teach the child to recognize “vibes” and body language that could signal danger. Always encourage children to walk away if a situation feels dangerous or out of their control.
  6. Practice how to handle specific situations.
  7. Encourage the child to ask for adult help. Reinforce the difference between telling and tattling.
  8. Teach the child strategies for staying calm and confident if teased or bullied.
- Help the child to develop techniques for diverting a bully's attention away from hurting him or her (e.g. verbal retorts, humour or stalling tactics).