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Turning Crisis Into Opportunity

Presents

BULLYPROOF

*A guide to protecting your child from becoming the
target of bullying*



Bullyproofing Your Child

Parents and caregivers want to protect their children from the pain and embarrassment that a bully can inflict on their target. But, as prevalent as bullying has become at school, on the playground and in sports, there is a strong possibility that your child will come face to face with a bully at one time or another.

While you cannot always protect your child from potential bullying, there are steps you can take to “bullyproof” your child.

- help them **seem less appealing to bullies**.
- help them **stand up to bullies**.
- help them **avoid situations** where they're alone with bullies.
- help ensure they're **surrounded by allies** so if they encounter a bully, they have a strong support system.
- make sure they're **not part of the bullying problem**.

Ensure your child has several different positive peer groups.

If your child struggles with peers at school, when they know they have a strong group of friends somewhere else it can be invaluable to their self-esteem.

Peer socialization helps children to understand cultures, values and social norms. Peer groups create a sense of camaraderie and mitigate feelings of social isolation.



Your child needs to understand that mean kids and bullies are not the norm.

Your child also needs to know there's nothing “wrong” with them, and they are worthy of and deserve valid, genuine, long-lasting friendships.

Your child should find positive friendship groups at religious school, in scouts, and on sports teams in addition to friends they have at school

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Get to know your child's friends.

Arrange playdates, hangouts or study sessions. Allow your child to invite other kids over often. You can listen in and “audit” the friends your child spends time with. Who's in charge? Who encourages reckless/thoughtless behavior? Who succumbs to peer pressure? It's all valuable information. Talk with the children that visit your home. Get to know them as individuals as well as part of the group.

Encourage children to want to come to your house.

Create a fun place where they all want to gather. Have fun games and tasty snacks available when they visit. Talk to your child about what they and their friends are interested in and like to do. Here are some things you might consider having on hand:

- board games
- art project kits or supplies
- extra sports equipment
- outside toys
- extra helmets
- extra scooters

Listen in while they are doing activities. Because when you know these children well, you'll know which of them will be allies. These kids will be your child's buffer on the playground and in the cafeteria. When kids have someone to play with during social situations, they're less likely to be alone and bullies tend to target kids who are alone.



Volunteer in your child's classroom so you see them at school in their classroom environment and get to know their classmates.

Volunteering consistently can potentially deflect any bully if they know that an adult is watching. Volunteering creates a better working relationship with your child's teacher. This can be helpful if your child is bullied at school.

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Teach your child to stand up to peer pressure.

Remind them they don't always have to say 'yes' to their friends. A lot of children get peer pressured into, "If you don't do this, I won't be your friend anymore" situations.

Help your child prepare for these kinds of situations. Role play tricky situations and give them the words they will need to stand up to their friends or walk away.

"I won't do that." "That's not okay." "I'm leaving." "You need to stop." "If you're really my friend, you won't make me do something I don't want to do."

Children who are manipulated by peers or desperate to please their peers to fit in, will do whatever is asked of them, even if it harms themselves or another person.

Talk with your child about their day.

After school, at the dinner table or during their nighttime routine, ask your child to talk about three things from their day. If they don't respond, here are a few open-ended questions to ask them:

- What did you do today that made you feel proud of yourself?
- How did you help someone today? How did someone help you today?
- Who did you sit with at lunch today? Who did you play with on the playground?
- What was the hardest rule to follow today?
- What is your best/worst memory from today?



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Encourage your child to include others.

Often, bullies pick on children who are alone—the child who sits alone, plays alone, or is emotionally isolated from their peers.

Teach your child that if they see a kid sitting off to the side, playing by themselves or eating alone, invite them over. Teach them to be an includer at recess, on the playground, and in the cafeteria.

Model the same behavior and invite other parents to join your activities.

Follow your own advice and model how you want your child to treat others. Introduce yourself to the new parent. Invite the quieter parent over for some wine. Introduce yourself to the parent standing off to the side alone.

Teach your child that it's okay to be different.

Talk about differences and how we should value them. Point out differences and discuss often how it's okay to be different. Value the differences and celebrate them.

When your child values and appreciates differences, they won't be discouraged by them.

They won't get talked into using other kids' differences as an excuse to bully or be a passive bystander while the "different" kid gets bullied.

Teach your child the difference between tattling and telling.

It is important that your child knows that when they're hurt, or someone else is hurt, or when someone is about to get hurt, they need to report it to an adult. Telling is the right thing to do. No matter what the person hurting them says.



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Encourage your child to tell you how they're feeling.



Encourage your child to talk about how they're feeling. They need to know it's okay to be mad or sad or embarrassed. Let them know they can come and tell you anything.

They should know this before they're in a tricky situation with a bully. They should understand that you'll be a safe place for them to come to.

Encourage them to talk about their feelings. Let them cry. Let them hit their pillow. Remind them it will be okay.

Teach your child that 'no' means 'no' and 'stop' means 'stop.'

This is a message for all our children for a myriad of safety reasons. It's a message our children need to hear from a very young age.

Teach your child that they oversee their own bodies. They decide when enough is enough.

Pour into your child so that they know home is a safe place.

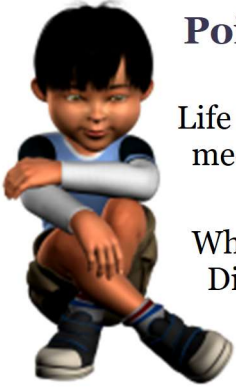
Your child needs to know home is where they can be themselves and find love. Ensure that they feel your love every single day.

You know that you love your child. But in the daily routine of homework and chores and dinner, we don't always remember to show them we love them. It is imperative they know they are valued and wanted and worthy.

Show your child love by spending time with them. Nothing you do every day is as important as connecting with your child and letting them know you are their biggest fan. When you spend quality time with your child and work to create a strong family identity, they will be vaccinated against a bully's hurtful words.

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Point out injustices when you see them.

Life is unfair. We see it all the time. Adults harass and bully other adults on social media, news broadcasts, TV sitcoms, and in real life.

When you see it, and it's appropriate to discuss it, point it out to your child. Discuss what you would do or say if you were standing right there. Talk about what is kind and what isn't. Talk about ways we can stand up for people who need a voice.

Praise kindness and make it one of the family rules.

When you see kindness happening, point that out to your child. Discuss what you saw that showed above and beyond kindness. Compliment perfect strangers when you see their kindness to show your kids and the strangers that their kind acts are valued.

Kindness is contagious. If you teach kindness in your home, it will spread to the schools and sports teams and the larger community and it may even spread to potential bullies who need someone to do something nice for them.

Starting the conversation with your child about bullying behavior is not always easy. We are here to help you! If you would like additional information about bullying, help talking to your child about bullying, or if you are ready to take the next step by enrolling in classes...visit our website today or contact our founder directly at Debbie@BullyCrisis.com.

#bullyfreebeginswithme