

Teach the Following Life Lesson Principles to Your Child

- A. Never give another individual the power to make you angry or upset.
- B. Never give another individual the power by attacking back.
- C. It can be hard to deal with a bully. Avoid bullies and crowds of children you do not know.
- D. Showing anger or crying reinforces the bully and increases the chances of him repeating the behavior. Stay cool and act calm no matter how mad you may get.
- E. Always tell an adult you are being bullied or see bullying taking place.



What is Bullying?

Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate, hostile, and repeating behavior by one or more people, which is intended to harm others. Bullying can take many forms, and it can include many different behaviors. Studies have shown that students bully for a variety of reasons. Sometimes they pick on other students because they need a victim—someone who seems emotionally or physically weaker, or just acts or appears different in some way—to feel more important, popular, or in control. Although some bullies are bigger or stronger than their victims, that's not always the case. Sometimes students torment others because that's the way they've been treated. They may think their behavior is normal because they come from families or other settings where everyone regularly gets angry, shouts, or calls names. Some popular TV shows even seem to promote meanness—people are “voted off,” shunned, or ridiculed for their appearance or lack of talent. Other reasons may include: the student has a low self-esteem, or the student does not know how to draw upon a variety of alternative behaviors when he or she is upset or angry.

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Bully-Proofing Strategies for Parents



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Know the Signs of a Child Being Bullied

The child:

- A. Loses interest in school work. Grades begin to drop.
- B. Does not want to go to school and has excuses for it. (Fifteen percent of all school absenteeism is directly related to fears about being bullied.)
- C. Avoids talking about school.
- D. Seems more emotional than usual and is sad or preoccupied.
- E. Loses his appetite, loses sleep, or has nightmares.
- F. Has little interaction with others and has a hard time keeping friends.
- G. Has unusual social, behavioral, or academic problems at school.



Prevent Cyber-Bullying

- A. Teach your child not to give out cell phone numbers, passwords, and e-mail addresses.
- B. Teach your child not to respond to online bullying. This only fuels the problem.
- C. Teach your child not to respond in anger to cyber-bullying in any form.
- D. Use software that tracks where your children go on the Internet.

Bully-Proof the Home Environment

- A. The best armor parents can outfit their children with is to feel good about themselves. Make deliberate efforts to model and praise good character.
- B. Never use sarcasm or insult your child. They will learn the same and use it on others.
- C. Do not allow older siblings to pick-on or bully younger children.
- D. Mirror what your child tells you about a bullying incident without showing anger. Let him know you understand first, and then decide a strategy later.
- E. Limit your child's access to violent television or video games.
- F. Avoid screaming at or throwing things at family members.

Teach, Role-Play, and Practice Positive Comebacks to the Bully's Behavior

They are designed to convey to the bully that the actions do not bother the victim. Remember, the person who doesn't care usually has the power. Children need a strategy to use when confronted by a bully, and they need to select the one they are most comfortable with. These seven strategies are designed to avoid reinforcing the bully's actions.

- A. The best comeback is to ignore their words and go to friends or adults.
- B. Agree with the bully and mirror the insult. "You're right. I couldn't catch a ball if I had two gloves."
- C. Change the subject.
- D. Distract the bully by asking an unrelated question. "What time is lunch?"
- E. Act surprised and walk away. "I'm disappointed you feel that way."
- F. Use "I" statements and tell the bully how you feel. "I don't like being called names and would appreciate it if you would stop."

