



## What Adults Can Do to Prevent and Stop Bullying

Thousands of kids live in fear of bullying, suffering humiliation, poor grades and crushed spirits. And if you think it's just something kids have to go through, you're wrong. There is a lot you can do to bully-proof the children in your life.

**Bullying happens once every seven minutes on the playground and once every 25 minutes in the classroom.**

(Pepler et al., 1997)

### What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as a conscious, willful, deliberate and repeated hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm, and/or a threat of aggression. When bullying goes from bad to worse, it may lead to a feeling of terror on the part of the person being bullied. Often there are contrasting feelings between the child who bullies and the target as a result of the bullying. The person who bullies may feel excited, powerful, or amused while the target feels afraid, embarrassed, or hurt.

**Bullying is not a discipline problem, it's a relationship problem.**

If you think about it, most people have been a target of bullying at some point in their lives. They may have also been the person who was doing the bullying or, most certainly, seen someone being bullied.

**Bullying can take different forms, including:**

**Verbal:** taunts, name-calling and put-downs, threats and intimidation

**Social:** exclusion from peer groups, ganging up, or group teasing.

**Physical:** assault

**Cyber:** using the computer or other technology to harass or threaten

**Bullying is hurtful and harmful and is NOT a normal part of growing up.**

### How to tell if a child is being bullied

Children don't always speak up when they're being bullied because they're embarrassed or afraid the person who is bullying will get back at them. Children sometimes believe they must remain silent in order to belong. The child's behaviour may be a clue to bullying even before they are willing to talk about it.

*Need to talk to someone about bullying?  
Call 1-888-456-2323.*

Children's Services and Education are proud to lead Alberta's Strategy for the Prevention of Bullying.

**Alberta**



### Warning signs

- Being afraid to go to school or complaining about feeling ill in the mornings.
- Skipping school or starting to do poorly in school.
- “Losing” belongings or coming home with clothes or books destroyed.
- Coming home, or to school, with unexplained bruises or cuts.
- Having nightmares, becoming withdrawn or beginning to bully other children.
- Attempting or talking about suicide.

climate where all students are safe, cared for and can come for help if it is needed.

- 3. Make arrangements for safety.** If the bullying happens on the way to school, parents can arrange for their child to go with older, supportive children, or personally take them to school until the threat of bullying is gone. Talk to the child in your life about making sure they are part of a group and are not isolated.

- 4. Help develop confidence.** Children who bully tend to pick on children who are isolated, so helping children develop confidence in their social skills can make a big difference. Encourage them to participate in clubs or social groups that share similar interests.

Everyone has a role to play in making our communities, homes and schools hopeful and happy places to be.

### What you can do

If you suspect a child is being bullied, ask them directly. If the answer is yes - here are seven ways you can help immediately:

- 1. Offer comfort.** Let the child know you are there to support them and that you will do all you can to help them feel safe. Let the child know that the bullying is not his/her fault. Encourage the child to ask for help and not to stop until they get it!
- 2. Work together.** Schools and parents should work together to prevent and stop the bullying. Parents should contact the school immediately to make sure the situation will be monitored so their child will be safe. Schools should develop a plan for supervision and intervention during recess and noon hour and foster a

- 5. Practice effective responses.** Work with a child in your life to practice what to say to someone who is bullying them. For example, a child could say, “Stop it. I don’t like it” firmly and walk away.

- 6. Build self-esteem.** Create opportunities for a child in your life to do something well – a task, a sport or hobby – and praise him/her for it to help build self-esteem.

- 7. Communicate –** Encourage a child in your life to talk with you about their feelings and ideas. This may take numerous attempts before he or she is able to break free from the fear of tattling.

For more information about bullying, visit [www.bullyfreealberta.ca](http://www.bullyfreealberta.ca).

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