



## Teaching Kids Not to Bully

It can be shocking and upsetting to learn that your child has gotten in trouble for picking on others or been labeled a bully.

As difficult as it may be to process this news, it's important to deal with it right away. Whether the bullying is physical or verbal, if it's not stopped it can lead to more aggressive antisocial behavior and interfere with your child's success in school and ability to form and sustain friendships.

### Understanding Bullying Behavior

Kids bully for many reasons. Some bully because they feel insecure. Picking on someone who seems emotionally or physically weaker provides a feeling of being more important, popular, or in control. In other cases, kids bully because they simply don't know that it's unacceptable to pick on kids who are different because of size, looks, race, or religion.

In some cases bullying is a part of an ongoing pattern of defiant or aggressive behavior. These kids are likely to need help learning to manage anger and hurt, frustration, or other strong emotions. They may not have the skills they need to cooperate with others. Professional counseling can often help them learn to deal with their feelings, curb their bullying, and improve their social skills.

Some kids who bully at school and in settings with their peers are copying behavior that they see at home. Kids who are exposed to aggressive and unkind interactions in the family often learn to treat others the same way. And kids who are on the receiving end of taunting learn that bullying can translate into control over children they perceive as weak.

### Helping Kids Stop Bullying

Let your child know that bullying is unacceptable and that there will be serious consequences at home, school, and in the community if it continues.

Try to understand the reasons behind your child's behavior. In some cases, kids bully because they have trouble managing strong emotions like anger, frustration, or insecurity. In other cases, kids haven't learned cooperative ways to work out conflicts and understand differences.

















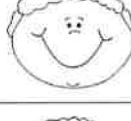



Be sure to:

- **Take bullying seriously.** Make sure your kids understand that you will not tolerate bullying at home or anywhere else. Establish rules about bullying and stick to them. If you punish your child by taking away privileges, be sure it's meaningful. For example, if your child bullies other kids via email, text messages, or a social networking site, dock phone or computer privileges for a period of time. If your child acts aggressively at home, with siblings or others, put a stop to it. Teach more appropriate (and nonviolent) ways to react, like walking away.
- **Teach kids to treat others with respect and kindness.** Teach your child that it is wrong to ridicule differences (i.e., race, religion, appearance, special needs, gender, economic status)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Buddy or Bully?

Read each statement. If it describes a buddy, color in the happy face. If it describes a bully, color in the sad face.

Cares about how other people feel.		
Laughs when other people mess up.		
Takes turns and shares.		
Plays with everyone.		
Is kind and respectful.		
Tries to make others look dumb or not cool.		
Uses polite or nice words.		
Pushes, hits or punches other people.		
Calls people mean names.		
Helps other people.		

## Ways To Combat Bullying

The “**HAHA SO**” method - from consultant Martin Fleming.

**Help** – Tell an adult about the situation.

**Assert** - Look the bully straight in the eye, stand tall, speak with a firm tone and start sentences with the word “I”. (ie. “I don’t like it when you make fun of my heritage.”)

**Humor** - Laugh at a bully’s comment and come back with a joke. (ie. “I know my ears are big, you should see my mom’s.”)

**Avoid** - Avoid the areas where bullies hang out.

**Self-talk** - Tell yourself positive things and don’t let others get you down.

**Own it** - Take a bully’s comment and give it your own twist. (ie. “I know these are weird jeans. So what?”).