



Bullying e-Journal

Issue No. 2; 2008-09

TAKE A STAND WITH THE UTAH PARENT CENTER DURING NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION AWARENESS WEEK OCTOBER 4 - 10, 2009

Watch for a new, FREE workshop to be offered by the Utah Parent Center...“Is Your Child a Target of Bullying? Intervention and Strategies for Parent of Children with Disabilities”

It takes a community to prevent bullying of children. The Fourth Annual National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, October 4-10, 2009 encourages communities nationwide to work together to increase awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying on all children.

We encourage families, students, schools, organizations and other groups to become better informed about the issues around bullying. Unite with the Utah Parent Center (UPC) and our sister organization the PACER Center to prevent bullying in several ways. Read and become informed about bullying, its impact, and strategies for prevention and remediating the effects. Electronic copies of this e-Journal, fact sheets, and materials on related topics are available on the UPC’s website. Engage in conversations at your child’s school to better understand what is happening to prevent bullying and address it when it occurs.

The Utah Parent Center primarily serves families of children, youth, and young adults with all disabilities. We provide resources such as publications, workshops, and individualized assistance and help families make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for their child. The UPC’s website is www.utahparentcenter.org and its phone numbers are 801-272-1051 and 800-468-1160 (UT toll free).

TELL US YOUR STORIES

We need to hear your stories!
Send us an email to upcinfo@utahparentcenter.org to tell us about your successes and challenges about bullying.

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SAY “NO” TO BULLYING!

By: Jody Jones, Parent Consultant, Utah Parent Center

What is bullying?

Bullying involves a power imbalance, intent to harm, a distressed target, and repeated negative actions. Almost 30% of youth in the United States (or over 5.7 million) are estimated to be involved in bullying as either a bully, a target of bullying, or both. In a recent national survey of students in grades 6-10, 13% reported bullying others, 11% reported being the target of bullies, and another 6% said that they bullied others and were bullied themselves. Bullying is a national problem in public schools.

Who is at risk?

Bullying can happen to anyone, but a Utah survey suggests that children with disabilities are easy targets and need to learn to respond effectively to unfriendly teasing attempts. Children who talk, act, or think differently are frequent targets of bullying and children with autism can be particularly vulnerable to specific bullying situations because of a general lack of social awareness.



What does bullying look like?

Saying hurtful and unpleasant things, making fun of others, using mean and hurtful nicknames, completely overlooking someone, deliberately excluding someone from a group of friends, hitting, kicking, pulling hair, or pushing, telling lies, spreading false rumors, sending mean notes, or trying to get other students to dislike another person. One anti-bullying website describes 5 types of bullying.

- ❖ **Social** (leaving someone out of a game or group on purpose):
“I was bullied in my old school. It was hard. I was left out. They would not play with me. They chatted with each other but not to me. That made me feel sad because I wanted to be friends with them.” –Anna, 14
- ❖ **Verbal** (name-calling):
*“It depends really; there are some people I don’t like. I don’t think I get bullied as such....I’m not really sure if I get bullied or not. I know people make fun of me and call me names” *Mikey, 15*
- ❖ **Physical** (punching, pushing, pinching, hitting):
“It’s the same group of people just annoy me all the time. They do a range of different stuff-chucking stuff at me, paper and stuff in class...not usually in break time...Happy slapping me once, that got seriously dealt with...They got detention and badly shouted at.” Hugh, 14
- ❖ **Extortion** (stealing someone’s money or toys):
*“It just seemed like every time I got something new she would want to be my friend, it would disappear. After I would hear her laughing and talking about me, but I didn’t know how to stop it.” *Jenny, 12*
- ❖ **Cyber bullying** (using computers, the Internet, mobile phones, etc.. to bully, threaten, make fun of or intentionally cause harm)

"One night, my daughters phone received a text message. I about died when I read the threat that was on it. She said it was no big deal that kids do it all the time, but it was a very big deal to me!" *Suzi, 37

What are the effects on an individual that is bullied?

Bullying can affect self-esteem, mental health, relationships, social skills, school attendance, physical health, education and concentration. Students who are bullied may appear anxious, insecure, and cautious, sick or worried and may have a difficulty sleeping or engage in self harm. They rarely defend themselves or retaliate. These effects can last into adulthood with a higher risk of depression and a lower self esteem than other adults.

What can you do?

Learn as much as you can about bullying. Talk to your children about bullying and your expectations of their behavior. Be involved in their lives. Be watchful of the signs of bullying. Teach them what bullying might look like. Role play with them and give them strategies to deal with a bully. Take immediate action if you suspect bullying. Encourage your school/community to take action. When there is a school-wide commitment to end bullying, it can be reduced by up to 50%.

*Name has been changed.

Bullying Fast Facts

- Bullying is the most common form of violence; between 15 percent and 30 percent of students are bullies or victims. Some 3.7 million youth engage in it, and more than 3.2 million are victims of bullying annually.
- Since 1992, there have been more than 250 violent deaths in schools, and bullying has been a factor in virtually every school shooting.
- Direct physical bullying increases in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and declines in high school. Verbal abuse, on the other hand, remains constant.
- More than two-thirds of students believe that schools respond poorly to bullying, with a high percentage of students believing that adult help is infrequent and ineffective.
- 25 percent of teachers see nothing wrong with bullying or putdowns and consequently intervene in only 4 percent of bullying incidents.

(Cohn & Cantor, 2003; Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association, 2002)

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References:

- UPDC, The Special Educator, February 2008, September 2004, December 2000
- www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
- www.bullying.org
- www.safeyouth.org
- www.wikipedia.com

PACER CENTER'S NATIONAL CENTER FOR BULLYING PREVENTION

The National Center for Bullying Prevention, a project of the PACER Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota offers activities and materials such as contests, toolkits, and online bullying prevention training on the website <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/index.asp> to reduce bullying in schools, recreational programs, and community organizations. PACER is also the creator of two wonderful interactive websites designed for kids and teens:

**YOU GOTTA SEE
THESE WEBSITES!
CHECK 'EM OUT!**

Kids Against Bullying

Kids Against Bullying is a Web site created for elementary school children. It is a creative and informative resource to educate students about bullying prevention and provide methods to respond to bullying situations. The site features an animated cast of characters, information, celebrity videos, Webisodes, games, animation, contest and other activities. Parents and professionals will find helpful tips, intervention strategies, and resources for use at home or school.
www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org



Teens Against Bullying Website

Launched August 8, 2009

PACER's Teens Against Bullying Web site is a relevant, edgy, and unique educational resource for bullying prevention designed to engage, empower and educate all teens. Information is presented in an innovative, engaging and interactive style. There are solutions—creative resources that all teens—can use to educate other teens and young people and to raise awareness

in their community or to help other teens in bullying situations. Demi Lovato, actress, singer, and songwriter best known for her role as Mitchie Torres in the Disney Channel Original Movie *Camp Rock* and Sonny Munroe in *Sonny With a Chance* signed on to the movement this year. Learn more by going to the site. PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org

Beyond Sticks and Stones: How to Help Your Child with a Disability Deal with Bullying

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This book can help you define what bullying is and determine if our child may be a target. It provides specific, practical steps you can take to stop the bullying or prevent it. You will find things you and your child can do immediately at home and at school, as well as suggestions for longer-term strategies. \$6 – Order through the PACER website:
<http://www.pacer.org/publications/bullying.asp>.

COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS AND FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

In spite of the significant impact that bullying can have on a target, it often continues to be viewed as acceptable behavior. There are many misperceptions that adults may have about bullying, all of which can lead to minimizing the behavior. A few of them include:

Misperception: Words will never hurt you.

FACT: Studies have shown even though words don't leave bruises or broken bones, they may leave deep emotional scars that can have lifelong implications. Children learn at a very early age that words can hurt other children.

Misperception: Bullying is a natural part of childhood.

FACT: There is nothing natural about being bullied. Bullying is often considered a normal part of childhood because it is such a common experience. Physical or emotional aggression toward others should not be tolerated as a consequence of childhood.

Misperception: Telling a teacher about bullying is tattling.

FACT: Children need to know the difference between tattling and telling. The secrecy of bullying only serves to protect the bully and to perpetuate the behavior.

For more misconceptions and facts, visit <http://www.utahparentcenter.org>.

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"These negative behaviors influence their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships. There also appears to be a strong relationship between bullying other students and experiencing later legal and criminal problems as an adult. In one study, 60% of those characterized as bullies in grades 6 – 9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24."

Dakota County Website www.co.dakota.mn.us
Preventing Youth Violence and Bullying



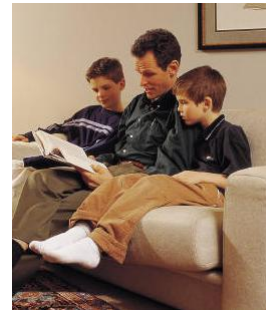
Bullying can have serious consequences. Children and youth who are bullied are more likely than other children to:

- Be depressed, lonely, anxious;
- Have low self-esteem;
- Experience headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, poor appetites;
- Be absent from school and dislike school; and
- Think about suicide.

See *Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs* for more information.
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

TALK WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT BULLYING

Parents can prepare themselves to talk with their children by considering how they are going to handle their child's questions and emotions. They can also decide what information they would like to give their child about bullying.



Parents should be ready to:

- **Listen.** It is the child's story; let him or her tell it. The child may be in emotional pain about the way he or she is being treated.
- **Believe.** The knowledge that a child is being bullied can be shocking. To be effective advocates, parents need to react in a way that encourages the child to trust.
- **Be supportive.** Tell the child it is not his fault and that he does not deserve to be bullied. Parents need to empower their child by telling him how terrific he is. Parents need to avoid judgmental comments about their child or the child who bullies. Their child may already be feeling isolated and hearing negative statements from parents may only further isolate him.
- **Be patient.** Children may not be ready to open up right away. Talking about the bullying may be difficult as they may fear retaliation from the bully or think that even if they tell an adult that nothing will change. The child might be feeling insecure, withdrawn, frightened, or ashamed.
- **Provide information.** Parents should educate their child about bullying by providing information at a level that the child can understand.
- **Explore options for intervention strategies.** Parents can discuss with their child options they may have in dealing with bullying behavior.

Questions to Ask Your Child about Bullying

Parents can help their child recognize bullying behavior by asking them questions about their situation. The following questions may be helpful:

- Did the child hurt you on purpose?
 - Was it done more than once?
 - Did it make you feel bad or angry? or How do you feel about the behavior?
 - Did the child know you were being hurt?
 - Is the other child more powerful (i.e. bigger, scarier) than you in some way?
- (Adapted from "Your Child: Bully or Victim," Peter Sheras, Ph.D., 2002)*

Other options for helping your child discuss bullying include:

- reading stories with the child about bullying situations,
- talking about recent events in the news, or
- discussing bullying incidents on TV or in a movie.

Refer to the Resource List for young readers on page 24.

Variations of these questions for the child who is reluctant to talk about the situation may include:

- How was the bus ride today?
- Who did you sit by at lunch?
- I notice that you seem to be feeling sick a lot and wanting to stay home: please tell me about that.
- Are kids making fun of you?
- Are there a lot of cliques at school? What do you think about them?
- Has anyone touched you in a way that did not feel right?

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WHAT EVERY KID NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT BULLYING

Bullying is never okay. Here's how you can be a kid against bullying!

Bullying can happen anywhere—on the playground, on the bus, in the hallways, even in the bathroom.

Bullying can be lots of things. It is hitting, pushing, name calling, threatening, teasing, sending mean e-mails, taking or ruining another person's things, leaving someone out – and lots of other nasty stuff that's done on purpose to hurt someone.

How can you tell if something is bullying? Just remember this:

**It's bullying if...
Someone is hurting another person on purpose and
the kid who is doing it has more power.**

Bullying is not cool and it's not fair. No one deserves to be bullied.

What can you do if you are being bullied or see bullying happen? A lot!

Speak Up!

- When someone is willing to say they think something is wrong, they can make a difference. If you tell other kids that bullying is not cool, they will be more willing to speak up, too.
- If you see bullying, you can tell a grown-up. Telling is not tattling. It's okay to tell.

Reach Out!

- Tell the kid who is being bullied that they don't deserve to be treated that way.
- No one does.
- Ask your friends to join you in being a kid against bullying.

Be a Friend!

- Invite the kid who is being bullied to play with you.
- Create a "bully-free zone" on the playground where everyone is welcome.

Learn more about what you can do to stop bullying at: www.PacerKidsAgainstBullying.org.

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SchoolTipline

Hoping to combat the "snitch" label, several Utah schools are utilizing a national website that allows students to anonymously report bullies and bullying incidents. To see if your school participates or to invite the administration to do so, go to <http://www.schooltipline.com/en/>.

MY STORY: SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND

By Kaleena, 10 years old

Sometimes when you get bullied you don't even notice it. When I was in 3rd grade, I had a best friend that I loved to be around and play with. About every other week or so, she would tell me that we had to have a time-out from each other. She always said when we were broke up and when we could be friends. I never understood it and tried to just do what she said. I would sometimes cry because I felt alone. When we were broken up, she would play with other kids and I was left alone.

In 4th grade, she began to be more and more bossy. She would say things to me that were not very nice and after a while she told me that we weren't very good friends so we were done playing together. After we broke up she started to play with some of the kids that had been friends with both of us and she made some new friends. She told them not to talk to me and they all began to be pretty rude to me. One of the girls secretly told me what was going on and that she was sorry but didn't know what to do.

"My mom and I talked about it that night and it felt good to tell her. She helped me feel better and told me that she would help me take care of it."

Sometimes during recess I had no one to play with so they would walk by me and give me these mean looks and laugh at me. I thought this was really rude. It made me feel very sad and alone that they were treating me like this.

After a couple weeks, I got a new friend. It was fun. She was very different. We both took turns choosing the games and playing. The other girls stayed away a little more now, but sometimes I would see them give me a mean look or laugh at me. I just tried to ignore them.

One day, they had to stay inside their classroom and missed recess. I noticed that they were not around and it was nice to have no one was being mean to me. The next recess was different. As I was headed outside, she bumped into me hard. I knew it was on purpose and she just gave me a mean smile and walked on.

I was scared to tell my mom and dad, so I told my older sister what was happening. She said that we needed to tell my mom. My mom and I talked about it that night and it felt good to tell her. She helped me feel better and told me that she would help me take care of it.

The next day my mom and I went into the school and talked to my teachers and principal. I was scared that when the girl found out, that it would not be good, and she would hurt me more. The teacher and Principal were really nice. We agreed that my teacher would talk with the girls and me at morning recess. After that, it did stop, but I was always afraid and still wondering if she was going to do it again. A few days after they stopped bullying me, she wrote me a note that said she was sorry. We still were not friends again but the note made me feel better. When she moved that made it turn out great!

IS YOUR CHILD BEING BULLIED IN CYBERSPACE?

By Marcia Kelly

If the word “bullying” makes you think of one child picking on another in the schoolyard, it may be time to update your image of this important problem. While such face-to-face harassment certainly still exists, new ways of bullying have emerged. With the proliferation of cell phones, instant messaging, social networking Web sites such as MySpace, and other technologies, bullying has muscled its way into cyberspace. Cyberbullying, as this new technological danger is called, may already have happened to your child. According to a study done by wiredsafety.org, 90 percent of middle-school students say they have been the victims of this new form of bullying. Perhaps more sobering, only 15 percent of parents even know what cyberbullying is, according to another study by the group.

Cyberbullying: What it is and how it works

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, hurt, embarrass, humiliate, or intimidate another person. It can be done anonymously, which makes it easy for one child to hurt another and not be held accountable or see the impact of his or her actions. Because this technology reaches a wider audience than just the person who is targeted, its effects can be devastating.

This form of bullying can take place in many ways. For example, some young people have discovered sites where they can create a free Web page—including one intended to bully another child. Embarrassing pictures, private instant messaging (IM) exchanges, and hateful or threatening messages can be posted on these sites. Some young people also post mean comments at legitimate Web sites’ guest books. Others post blogs (short for “Web logs”), information that is instantly published to a Web site. Bullies have found blogging to be a powerful tool when encouraging peers to gang up on another child.

Cyberbullies, like schoolyard bullies, look for targets who are vulnerable, socially isolated, and may not understand social norms.

Many children with disabilities have these characteristics, and so they may be especially vulnerable to cyberbullying.

Your 3-step plan to protect your children from cyberbullying Today’s children are the first generation to experience cyberbullying. Today’s parents are the first to figure out how to respond to the problem.



As you venture into this new territory, here are some tips that you may find helpful, says Julie Hertzog, PACER's bullying prevention project coordinator.

1. Raise the topic of cyberbullying with your children.

Many children are afraid to initiate such a conversation because they fear that their access to the Web and cell phones will be eliminated; others are scared to admit that they are being bullied. Open the subject for discussion and let your children know that you want them to have some cyber freedom—but that it needs to be safe.

2. Set cyber safety rules.

You set safety rules for your children in the physical world. Do the same in cyberspace. Remind your children that they never really know who is on the other end of cyber communication. It could be the person they think it is, or it could be a predator or a bully.

With that in mind, two good guidelines are, "Don't do or say anything online that you wouldn't do or say in person. Don't reveal anything that you wouldn't tell a stranger."

Specific advice for your children might include:

- Never give out your e-mail password, a photo, or any personal data, such as a physical description, phone number, or address. A bully could use that information to harass you in many ways.
- Never share too many personal details. For example, if you keep an online diary, someone could use that information to bully or ridicule you.
- Never share your IM account password with anyone, even your best friend. That friend may share it with other people, or the friendship may end—and your private messages could suddenly become very public. Also, a cyberbully with your password can sign on, pretend to be you, and behave inappropriately with others to embarrass and humiliate you.

3. Know what your children are doing online.

Privacy is important, but safety is more important. As a parent, you have a responsibility to know what your children are doing online. Keep your children's computer in an open spot, such as the family room, where you can supervise Web activity. If your children have an account on a social networking site such as MySpace or Facebook, for example, know how to access it so you can monitor the communications. If you do discover that your children are subjected to cyberbullying, document it by printing the e-mails or Web pages, saving electronic copies, and contacting your children's school or the police.

Technology offers your children many advantages and benefits—and, occasionally, some risks. The solution is not to remove their access to technology but rather to manage the risks. You can do that by being aware of your children's cyber activities, learning about new technologies, and adding "cyber parenting" to your list of talents.

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CYBERLIFE BY THE NUMBERS – A NEW WORLD FOR MANY PARENTS

Cyberbullying

- 22% of students know someone who has been bullied online.*
- 19% of students admit to saying something hurtful to others online.*
- 12% of students have personally become upset by strangers online.*

* Based on a 2005–06 survey of 13,000 students in grades 5-12.

Kids Online

- 58% of students admit to using the Internet unsafely, inappropriately, or illegally.
- 55% of students report having given out personal information (e.g. name, age, gender, home address) to someone they have only met online.***
- 31% of students have a personal Web page. ***

** Based on a 2005–06 survey of 11,900 students in grades 5-12.

*** Based on a 2005–06 survey of 12,000 students in grades 5 - 12.

Digital Divide

- 93% of parents say they have established rules for their child’s Internet activity.*
- 37% of students report being given no rules from their parents on using the Internet.**
- 95% of parents say they know “some” or “a lot” about where their children go or what their children do on the Internet.*
- 41% of students do not share where they go or what they do on the Internet with their parents.**
- 26% of students believe their parents would be concerned if they knew what they did on the Internet.**

* Based on a 2004–05 pre-assessment survey of 1,350 parents.

** Based on a 2005–06 pre-assessment survey of
12,650 students in grades 5-12.

Statistics from the Internet safety organization i-safe and its sister group, Teenangels.
Learn more at www.isafe.org and www.teenangels.org.

WHAT IF YOUR CHILD IS THE BULLY?

The word “bullying” often conjures up an image of a schoolyard scene, with a big, intimidating student towering over a small, cowering child. That’s just one face of bullying—and of children who bully.

“Children who bully suffer as much as those they target. They are significantly more likely than others to lead lives marked by school failure, depression, violence, crime, and other problems, according to experts.”

Another face of a bully might be...that of your child. Surprised? Many parents are.

Often they have no idea that their child is harassing other children. Yet knowing the facts—and acting to change the situation—is vitally important in making the future safer for your child and all children.

Here’s why. Children who bully suffer as much as those they target. They are significantly more likely than others to lead lives marked by school failure, depression, violence, crime, and other problems, according to experts. The message is clear: Bullying is too important to ignore.

Could your child be bullying others? Would you know? Once you found out, would you know what to do? Here is some information that can help.

What is bullying?

Bullying is different from the routine conflicts of childhood. It is intentional behavior that is meant to hurt and dominate another person.

Characterized by an imbalance of power between the child who bullies and the target, bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional (social), or sexual. It includes harassment via e-mail and instant messaging.

Who does it?

Children who bully come in a variety of packages—the waif-like second grader, the big sixth-grade boy, the child with a disability, the popular girl, the loner. They can come from any background, race, income level, family situation, gender, or religion. Research has shown that despite their differences children who bully typically have one or more of the following traits. They may:

- be quick to blame others and unwilling to accept responsibility for their actions
- lack empathy, compassion, and understanding for others’ feelings
- be bullied themselves
- have immature social and interpersonal skills
- want to be in control
- be frustrated and anxious
- come from families where parents or siblings bully
- find themselves trying to fit in with a peer group that encourages bullying
- have parents who are unable to set limits, are inconsistent with discipline, do not provide supervision, or do not take an interest in their child’s life.

If you see these traits in your child or hear from others that your child is bullying, you may want to look into the issue. If your child is bullying, take heart. There’s a lot you can do to help correct the problem. Remember, bullying is a learned behavior—and it can be “unlearned.” By talking with your child and seeking help, you can teach your child more appropriate ways of handling feelings, peer pressure, and conflicts. Here are some ideas.

HELP YOUR CHILD TO STOP BULLYING

1. **Talk with your child.** Find out why he or she is bullying others. You might explore how your child is feeling about himself or herself, ask if he or she is being bullied by someone else, and invite discussion about bullying. Find out if your child's friends are also bullying. Ask how you can help.
2. **Confirm that your child's behavior is bullying and not the result of a disability.** Sometimes, children with disabilities bully other children. Other times, children with certain behavioral disorders or limited social skills may act in ways that are mistaken for bullying.
3. **Whether the behavior is intentional bullying or is due to a disability, it still needs to be addressed.** If your child with a disability is bullying, you may want to include bullying prevention goals in his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP).
4. **Teach empathy, respect, and compassion.** Children who bully often lack awareness of how others feel. Try to understand your child's feelings, and help your child appreciate how others feel when they are bullied. Let your child know that everyone has feelings and that feelings matter.
5. **Make your expectations clear.** Let your child know that bullying is not okay under any circumstances and that you will not tolerate it. Take immediate action if you learn that he or she is involved in a bullying incident.
6. **Provide clear, consistent consequences for bullying.** Be specific about what will happen if the bullying continues. Try to find meaningful consequences, such as loss of privileges or a face-to-face meeting with the child being bullied.
7. **Teach by example.** Model nonviolent behavior and encourage cooperative, noncompetitive play. Help your child learn different ways to resolve conflict and deal with feelings such as anger, insecurity, or frustration. Teach and reward appropriate behavior.
8. **Role play.** Help your child practice different ways of handling situations. You can take turns playing the part of the child who does the bullying and the one who is bullied. Doing so will help your child understand what it's like to be in the other person's shoes.
9. **Provide positive feedback.** When your child handles conflict well, shows compassion for others, or finds a positive way to deal with feelings, provide praise and recognition. Positive reinforcement goes a long way toward improving behavior. It is more effective than punishment.
10. **Be realistic.** It takes time to change behavior. Be patient as your child learns new ways of handling feelings and conflict. Keep your love and support visible.
11. **Seek help.** Your child's doctor, teacher, school principal, school social worker, or a psychologist can help you and your child learn how to understand and deal with bullying behavior. Ask if your school offers a bullying prevention program. Bullying hurts everyone. Parents can play a significant role in stopping the behavior, and the rewards will be immeasurable for all.

For more information and ideas, go to **Teaching Kids Not to Bully** http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/no_bullying.html.

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RECORD KEEPING AND BULLYING

Billy, a 12-year-old diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, had been a target of bullying since the first day in his new school. He told his parents about the behavior right away. Billy's dad bought a journal and has recorded each of Billy's conversations about the bullying incidents. Billy's father started a second section of the journal after he began having conversations with Billy's teachers and other school personnel. When the parents decided to write the school a letter, they were able to easily refer to the journal for an accurate and thorough account of the events.

When a child is a target of bullying, parents need to document the events and develop a record (or history) of what is happening to their child. This record is useful when talking with school educators, law enforcement personnel, or other individuals who may need to assist parents in intervening against bullying. Parents, as the most invested party, should do their best to keep track of events. In this way, emotions alone do not drive the discussion.

Records can help parents keep a concise, accurate timeline of events. Parents may think they are going to remember the events, but it is easier to use a written record when referring to events versus trying to recreate them afterward. The record can also help in determining if the bullying behavior has increased or decreased in frequency or duration. The record should be factual and based on actual events. Do not add opinions or emotional statements. Data is important. Remember – **if it is not in writing, it does not exist.**

Content should include:

- written information about the bullying incidents
- the date of the event,
- the persons involved,
- and the child's account of the event.

Also include:

- all communication with professionals (teachers, administrators, etc.)
- the date of the communication
- discussion (summary) of the event
- the responses of the professional
- the action taken
- reports filed by the school in accordance with the school district policy

Other methods for recording events may include pictures taken of the child after a bullying incident to document any physical evidence, health care records that indicate bullying, or a tape recording of the child talking about the bullying.

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PARTICIPATE IN A SURVEY ON BULLYING AWARENESS AND INTERVENTION

by going to

<http://www.updc.org/abc/>

and clicking on the link in the lower
right-hand corner of the webpage.

THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) AND BULLYING

Will, a 12-year-old boy with autism, is in middle school. During his IEP meeting it was decided that Will would have a paraprofessional aid him in the classroom, but Will would be responsible for moving between classes. During the first week, Will handled the transition well. Early in the second week, a group of students in the hallway walked by Will, whose mannerisms often drew attention. A student jumped in front of him and screamed as if to startle him. Will's eyes welled up with tears, he plugged his ears with his fingers, and sat down in the hallway. Will was frozen, fearful, and unable to recognize what he should do next. Will remained seated in the middle of the hall until the class period began and his paraprofessional came to look for him. Will's IEP team met again to consider supplementary aids and services, program modifications and supports to address Will's sensitivity to loud noises and crowded, socially confusing situations, such as the school hallway.

Children with disabilities who are eligible for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will have an IEP (Individualized Education Program). The IEP team can work together to develop goals, benchmarks or short-term objectives, and identify supplementary aids and services or program modifications or supports to help prevent and intervene against bullying. Include the child in the decision-making, as this can improve the likelihood of the child meeting his or her IEP goals.



For example, the IEP could include **goals and objectives** that address the following:

- Improve social skills such as sharing, taking turns, or thinking before acting
- Develop ability to carry on a 2-way conversation
- Identify social norms for the child who does not catch on to them by him or herself
- Participate in friendship group to practice social skills with peers under direction of school staff
- Increase self-advocacy skills so child can say “no” or “stop that”
- Improve speech intelligibility so child can interact with peers
- Identify and practice direct and indirect ways to react to, handle, and avoid bullying behavior

Examples of **supplementary aids and services, program modifications or supports**:

- Hallway or playground monitoring by school staff
- Allowing child to leave class early to avoid hallway incidents
- Use social stories to help child understand difficult situations when they occur
- In-service school staff to understand child's disability and vulnerability
- In-service classroom peers to help them understand child's disability and/or child's use of assistive technology,
- paraprofessional, or interpreter (i.e. things that are “different”)
- Educate peers about school district policies on bullying behavior
- Set up no-questions-asked procedure for child to remove him or herself from a situation where bullying
- behavior occurs

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TELLING CLASSMATES ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DISABILITY MAY FOSTER ACCEPTANCE

Parents often become experts on their child's disability. Through their own learning process, many see the value of teaching their child's classmates about the affect of the disability at school. Parents and professionals find that if classmates understand a child's disability, they may become allies in helping the child. The children may also be less likely to view accommodations or individual support as unfair advantages.

One of the best ways to teach children about a disability is to talk to them at school. For many families, presenting at school is an annual event. Sometimes, an IEP team writes it into a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) document. The event is an opportunity to:

- discuss why a child may look or behave differently from other children in the class
- point out the many ways in which the child is like classmates
- offer classmates tips for interacting with the child.

"I found that children rose to the occasion when they understood the reasons for my son's challenges," said one mother. "When there's an obvious difference and no one is talking about it, children become confused and think there must be something 'bad' about it. When the children understood that the disability was not bad, but just different, many were eager to help him."

View the entire fact sheet "Telling Classmates About Your Child's Disability May Foster Acceptance" on the Utah Parent Center website (www.utahparentcenter.org) for suggestions on ways to do this – how to begin, work with the teacher or school, ways to present, and possible results.



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UTAH'S LAWS, RULES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Utah has a State law passed in 2008 (HB 325) to amend Title 53A, the State System of Public Education, to enact provisions, and require adoption of school policies, related to bullying and hazing.

USBOE Rule

On October 2, 2009, the Utah State Board of Education gave final approval to a new rule R277-613 School District and Charter School Bullying and Hazing Policies and Training. The rule prohibits bullying and hazing in public schools and requires districts and charter schools to develop policies and provide regular training.

District Policies and Procedures


In accordance with the requirements of both State law and State Board of Education Rule, local school districts and charter schools must implement bullying and hazing policies, provide for regular and meaningful training of school employees and students, and provide for enforcement of the policies in schools. These policies are to be posted on its website. Parents should be aware of the policies.

Copies of the law, the State Board rule, and district policies and procedures are available to any interested individual. Many schools, districts and charter schools have policies and procedures in place to complement their existing safe and drug free school policies and school harassment and hazing policies.

See your school or district's website or contact the administrative office for copies of the policies that apply to your school.

Federal Laws That Apply in Utah

Students with disabilities may also have protections under several federal laws, Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and, if they are eligible and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004*.



Can bullying of my child [with a disability] be illegal?

Yes. Bullying behavior may cross the line to become “disability harassment,” which is illegal under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* and Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*. According to the U.S. Department of Education, disability harassment is “intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on disability that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student’s participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the institution’s programs” (U.S. Department of Education, 2000)...When a school finds out that harassment may have occurred, staff must investigate the incident(s) promptly and respond appropriately.

What if the bullying or harassment does not stop?

If your school district does not take reasonable, appropriate steps to end the bullying or harassment of your child, the district may be violating federal, state, and local laws.

See *Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs* for more information.
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov



BULLYING – NOTIFYING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF INCIDENTS AND CONCERNS

By Helen W. Post, Executive Director, Utah Parent Center

Emotions can run high when a child has been bullied. If you learn your child is being bullied, you may immediately want to protect your child and confront the aggressor. You may feel embarrassed and want your child to toughen up, to get in there and fight back. You may feel helpless yourself. Fears about causing more trouble for your child or sore feelings between the school and your family are common. It is important that we recognize that the schools want to provide a safe environment for all students and need your help in preventing and reducing the number of bullying encounters for your child and others.

Bullying is not acceptable, and requires action on the part of each community member to insure it does not take place or continue. We must insist on zero-tolerance of bullying behaviors.

There are specific bullying policies in place in every school district in Utah to help keep children safe at school. Each situation is important and different and needs to be dealt with appropriately. You and your child have a right to a safe learning environment.

What can you do?

Here are steps a parent/guardian can take to help a child who has been bullied.

1. Talk to your child and write down details about the interactions/incidents.

Communicate empathetically with your child about what happened. Take brief notes to help you stay on track as you prepare to document the incident and speak to officials about this emotional experience.

2. Contact the teacher and principal of your school as soon as possible.

An important place to start is to contact the teacher and principal for a conversation to facilitate communication about what occurred. At the same time, it is important to use the documentation you created from listening and talking to your child to write a letter to a specific person and date the letter. Write the letter to a person who has the authority to investigate and the authority to correct the wrong. Describe the circumstances and explain as well as you can, what you would like the school to do to stop the harassment and to remediate the harm the bullying has done to your child.

Advice for Parents of Both Victims and Bullies

- *Promote honesty. Ask questions. Listen with an open mind and focus on understanding. Children may be too embarrassed, scared, or ashamed to admit to being a victim or bully, and might deny it. They need to know they can trust you and look to you for help.*
- *Allow children to express how they feel, and treat a child's feelings with respect.*
- *Teach children to identify and focus on "the problem", rather than attacking "the Person." Tell them conflicts are a way of life, but violence doesn't have to be.*
- *Teach them positive ways to handle conflicts.*

Sometimes no one observed the contact or was aware of the nature of the interaction. The principal, any teachers or aides, the bus driver, or any other school personnel who were in the vicinity need to be made aware of what is going on.

In your letter state your understanding that your child has protections under state and federal laws, Utah State Board of Education Rules and district policies and procedures. Also indicate the date that you expect a response to your letter and to receive documentation regarding the action that will be taken.

It may take the school 24 hours to get back to you. If they do not contact you within 24 hours, call them again. If necessary, you may choose to inform the principal that you want to involve district administrators with the responsibility to oversee the implementation of policies and procedures related to bullying.

3. If you are not satisfied with the principal's actions, call the school district main phone number and speak with the individual responsible for the enforcement of district policies and procedures related to bullying.

The person you want to speak to in each district will vary. Finding this person may require being passed to a few people when making contacts to resolve your concerns. Do not explain the full story to each person you are transferred to. Briefly explain what the issue is (i.e. a need for information or clarification about the district's policies and procedures, assistance with resolving a concern related to a bullying incident, a disagreement with the way your principal handled a bullying incident, etc.) and what you want to see happen (i.e. assistance for the local school in addressing the incident, the involvement of district leadership in resolving the concerns, etc.). When you reach the person who can directly impact the situation, be prepared to share the details related to your concerns, what you want to see happen and how they can help.

Remember to write down the name of the person you speak to, the date and time, what was discussed, who will do what, and when and how you will hear back from them.

4. Consider if the police should be involved.

The principal should know how policies and procedures guide how this decision to notify the police is made. If you are not happy with the decision, call our local police station, briefly explain the situation, and ask them for their opinion. Typically for incidents involving assault, the police should be notified.

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- Adapted from *Bullying – Notifying School Administrators of Harassment Concerns*, The National ALLIANCE for Parent Centers, Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers, a project of PACER Center, Inc. ©2003. Used with Permission.
- Adapted from *Has Your Child Been Bullied at School?*, Utah Parent Center.

BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED

By: Jody Jones, Parent Consultant, Utah Parent Center

Bullying exists in the adult world. Bullying does not only happen to children, in fact, chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviors into adulthood taking them into the community and the workplace. As young adults with disabilities and special needs enter the workplace, they may encounter bullying. Adults with disabilities may be at a higher risk of experiencing these types of bullying from people who target their different styles of communicating, accomplishing tasks, or lack of social appropriateness.

Workplace bullying is the tendency of individuals or groups to use persistent aggressive or unreasonable behavior against a co-worker. Workplace bullying can be verbal, nonverbal, physical, psychological, or humiliation, often in front of others. It can take a wide variety of forms, from being rude or belligerent, screaming, cursing, spreading rumors, gossiping, destruction of property, social isolation, and even physical assault. Unlike childhood bullying however, it is far more common for a combination of tactics to be used.

Examples of bullying behaviors that might be experienced in the workplace are:

- Unwarranted or invalid criticism.
- Blame without factual justification.
- Being treated differently than the rest of the work group.
- Being cursed at.
- Exclusion or social isolation.
- Being shouted at or being humiliated.
- Being the target of practical jokes.
- Excessive monitoring.

Statistics from the Waitt Institute for Violence Prevention show that one in three employees personally experiences bullying at some point in their working lives. At any given time, 1 out of every 10 employees is a target of workplace bullying. Nearly half of all American workers (49%) have been affected by workplace bullying, either being a target themselves or having witnessed abusive behavior against a co-worker.

Bullying jeopardizes worker safety as well as professional careers and ruins work-family balance for those targeted. Co-workers who witness workplace bullying can also experience negative effects, such as fear, stress, and emotional exhaustion. Those who witness repetitive workplace abuse often choose to leave the place of employment where the abuse took place. Workplace bullying can also hinder the organizational dynamics such as group cohesion, peer communication, and overall performance.

What can you do if you are being bullied in the workplace?

Here are some tips, but if you are being physically threatened don't waste a minute before you report it to both your employer and, if appropriate, the police.

- Seek the advice of a trusted mentor.
- If you can, confront the bully in a professional manner, but only if your physical safety isn't threatened. Don't sink to his or her level. Stay as calm as possible. Don't yell or threaten. Often bullies are looking for this type of confrontation and it will encourage them to come back for more. Don't cry or show weakness either. That's usually what the bully is after in the first place.
- Don't try to win over other people to your side, allow them to make their own judgments.
- Don't allow the bully to intimidate you or make you feel bad about yourself. You know your true worth. Don't forget what that is.
- Do your job and do it well. The workplace bully wants you to fail and when you don't he or she will be defeated.
- Make sure your superiors are aware of your work. Workplace bullies often try to spread the word that you are not doing your job well and will even go as far as to report the smallest infractions to your boss. Your actions will carry more weight than his or her words.
- Don't allow the bully to isolate you from your colleagues. Keep up your workplace friendships.

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Websites

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Bullying Prevention website for Kids
- PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org
Bullying Prevention website for Teens
- www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
This website has webisodes that are excellent for kids and families and include follow-up questions.
- www.bullying.org
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Utah Parent Center Information Disclaimer

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Utah Family Voices - Family to Family Health Information Center
Autism Information Resources at the Utah Parent Center*

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Our Mission: To help parents help their children with disabilities to live included, productive lives as members of the community. We accomplish this through the provision of information, training, and peer support.

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