

**When Your Child Is Bullied: Real Solutions for Families**  
**By: J.E. DiMarco and M.K. Newman**

# Tip List



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### Tip List:

- Do not ignore the signs that may indicate your child is being bullied. Be watchful for changes in social behaviors, online activity shifts (increases or severe reduction), general anxiety about school events/other children, increased jitters, desire to be at home much more, changes in sleep and/or eating habits, increased sick days, mood swings and refusal to participate in social activities.
- Do not assume it is “kid stuff” or “boys will be boys; girls will be girls.”
- Do not tell your child to ignore the bullying. Occasionally, albeit rare, if a child ignores a bully the first time, the bully will move on. More often than not, when a child ignores a bully, the bully feels emboldened and encouraged to continue bullying. Ignoring bullying behavior acts as a permission slip for the bully. Both the bully and the bystanders will feel it is acceptable to bully your child if your child does not call it out as wrong/hurtful or asks them politely to stop.
- Take time to discern if it is bullying or not. If both children are participating equally, they could be bullying each other. If it is a situation where one child holds more power, than it becomes bullying. Investigate thoroughly so you know how your child has reacted to the other child and if you need to coach them on their responses.
- **Important to Remember:** If your child has asked another child to stop a behavior that is making them uncomfortable and the other child does not stop, on the second occasion it becomes bullying. Period.
- Get down to the bottom of it by talking with your child. Try not to make your child feel quizzed, and do more listening than talking. Most importantly, get all the facts straight.
- Reassure your child that he has not done anything wrong and that he has nothing to be ashamed of because the bully is the one with the problem. Assure your child that bullying is never “asked for” or “invited.” Bullying is unhealthy behavior and is not acceptable for any reason.
- Document all facts of each instance of bullying.
- Once you identify that the behavior is bullying, take action quickly and comprehensively. Involve the school and make certain the parents of the bully are contacted.

- Remember to stay calm and stick to the facts when contacting the school or discussing it with the parents of the bully. Be a role model for your child.
- Discuss with your child how to advocate for and defend themselves. Role-play potential scenarios with them. Provide them with responses and comebacks.
- Make sure your child stays close to friends or children that will protect him.
- Use all of your community resources:
  - a. School social workers
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Superintendent
  - d. School Board
  - e. School nurse
  - f. Therapists
  - g. Coaches
- Develop a plan to stop the bullying with the school. Ask the school how it is going to be resolved, when it going to be resolved, when the teachers and school staff will be informed, when the other parents are going to be contacted and consequences/punishments for future incidents of bullying. Inform the school on what day and time you are going to contact them for a follow up meeting.
- If the bullying continues after the school has made attempts to help, know your rights and the laws in your state. Visit your local law enforcement for counsel and help.
- Call school board members and the superintendent if you are not making progress with your school administrator in a timely fashion.
- File a criminal complaint, if necessary, with your local law enforcement.
- Think twice and consider your child's maturity and vulnerability before allowing your child to have an electronic online device or a social media account. It is very easy to be bullied anonymously via the Internet or using devices.
- If your child shows signs of depression or anxiety, seek professional help immediately.
- **Act quickly and professionally.** The longer the bullying goes on, the more difficult the situation becomes for your child and your family.
- If you stop the bullying early and comprehensively, it will not go viral throughout the school and become "acceptable to bully your child."