



Taking Charge and Stopping Your Child's Torment

By Marie Newman on April 23, 2011

It could not be more frustrating - Bullying. It is heartbreaking, complicated and challenging. Only those that have been through it with a child really understand how demoralizing bullying can be and the incredibly negative long-term impact it can have on the victim as well as the victim's family, particularly with extended periods of bullying.

I understand. After my son's prolonged bout with being constantly tormented by a large group of bullies, I decided being frustrated and angry was not getting me anywhere.

I stopped asking "why" and started asking, "how do I stop this?"

As a result, my co-author and I researched the topic exhaustively, lived through the experience, worked with experts and actually, now work with both parents and schools to solve these issues.

Parents really do have a great deal of power and leverage in stopping bullying. The first step is to take charge of the situation and make it your mission.

First Things First about bullying.....

Understanding the following will enable parents to be successful:

1. A parent/guardian is a child's strongest and most powerful advocate.
2. Partnering with the school and working collaboratively is critical.
3. Parents need to make it clear that they are dedicated to a comprehensive solution and truly appreciate the school's assistance and support.
4. Parents need to help the school understand that as parents of the victim, you are going to be actively involved in the solution, expect all parties to be accountable and that positive results are expected.
5. As upsetting at bullying is, staying calm throughout the process really engenders respect. Staying positive and demonstrating respect will go a long way toward motivating school staff to work hard on your child's situation.

Develop A Plan

A plan will act as a checklist of activities designed to comprehensively stop the bullying and prevent it from coming back.

To that end, it does not hurt to put it in writing in the form of a "to-do" list or more formally, as a list of tasks for the school and for the family of the bullied child to accomplish. This keeps everybody accountable.

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1. First and foremost, tell the bullied child they did not “invite or deserve” this situation. The bully is acting abnormally, not the victim. Repeat this statement often. Make certain the child feels protected and loved.
2. Ask to see the existing anti-bullying protocols and procedures at school. From there, ask them to execute those procedures fully.
3. If there are not any procedures or too few and/or too vague, ask them to develop a procedure/process for this specific case.
4. Request the following from the administrators:
 - I. The victimized child should never have to meet with the bully ever. This old-fashioned peer-to-peer discussion only re-victimizes the bullied child and humiliates them again. The bully simply states what the adults want to hear in these sessions and then completely ignores anything that was supposed to be learned. Peer-to-peer resolution is futile.
 - II. The bullied child should never ever be told to ignore the taunting, name-calling, aggressive exclusion, online bullying, physical bullying or any form of disrespect. Ignoring the bullying tells the bully that it is acceptable to be bullied and the bully will take that as a permission slip to keep bullying. Further, the bystanders will assume it is acceptable to bully that child as well.
 - III. Make certain there is a key administrator who is the parental liaison and contact throughout the school year. This person should be responsive and be a decision maker.
 - IV. Require that the parents/guardians of the bully are called and fully informed of the incidents as well as the consequences their child will be receiving.
 - V. Require that the child who was bullying receive a real consequence that helps him understand why bullying is detrimental to both the victim as well as himself.
 - VI. Mandate that the bully and the bully’s parents/guardians commit to completely stopping the torment, gossiping, online/cyber-bullying and all bullying activities. They also must promise to never discuss the victim and/or the incidents ever again. (Sometimes a written contract can be helpful here).
 - VII. Further, the bully needs to guarantee he will not recruit others to bully the victim or there will be consequences.
 - VIII. Clearly explain the state’s antibullying laws and the consequences to the bully.
 - IX. Itemize the escalating consequences for the bully if he chooses to bully again/continue.
 - X. Make certain all bullies affecting the child are addressed and understand all of the above.
5. If the school claims they can’t help, very politely, calmly and respectfully remind them that you pay taxes or tuition and therefore, they must help.
6. If you meet with resistance at the school level, elevate it to the superintendent and school board by emailing and calling one or all of them.
7. Make certain all teachers or adults in control of the environment where the bullying is occurring are consulted and asked to play a key role in protecting the victim.
8. Protecting the victim:
 - I. The victimized child should have a few “safe people” he can go to during the day when he feels threatened.
 - II. Make certain the teachers and staff are apprised and commit to keeping a watchful eye over the child as well as intervening immediately.
 - III. Make certain the bullied child has friends or kind children around him when he feels vulnerable (the school can help facilitate this).
9. All of the above should be checked daily and weekly. A quick chat with your child at the end of each day and a brief call to your key school contact will suffice.
10. If all of the above is not working, contact a local member of law enforcement or an attorney to counsel you on options.
11. Finally, make certain the school commits to a mutually agreed-upon timeline for all steps. Make certain the school feels the urgency, but also feels that you are understanding of their schedules. Compromise, but do not give in.
12. Always, make certain your child is receiving professional counseling if they show even the slightest signs of anxiety or depression.

In most cases, once the plan is implemented, the bullying stops.

But there are more stubborn situations. In which case, seeking help from the media, attorneys or community leaders may be necessary.

Please visit our website, solutionsforbullying.com, for free resources designed to help parents and educators.

When Your Child Is Being Bullied: Real Solutions

By Jacqui DiMarco and Marie Newman



Marie Newman:

**Anti-bullying Expert/Activist, Writer,
Mother and Business Owner**

Ms. Newman is a passionate advocate for bullied children and their families. Those who know her, describe Marie's problem-solving skills as unparalleled and completely committed to workable solutions. Her 24-year professional background includes copywriter, marketing executive and private consultancy owner.

She has written and co-produced several anti-bullying tools/resources including "Bullies 101", an educational film and support system. Marie is a member of state/regional anti-bullying task forces and speaks on anti-bullying topics regularly at schools, parental meetings and corporate events.

Her book, "When Your Child Is Being Bullied: Real Solutions" will be available 6/15/11.

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Dr. Kathryn Seifert

April 24, 2011 at 10:11 pm | [Permalink](#) | [Reply](#)

What a great plan for helping young people when they are being bullied. I would further advise printing this out and taking to the school. The schools respond to expert advice.

Dr. kathy

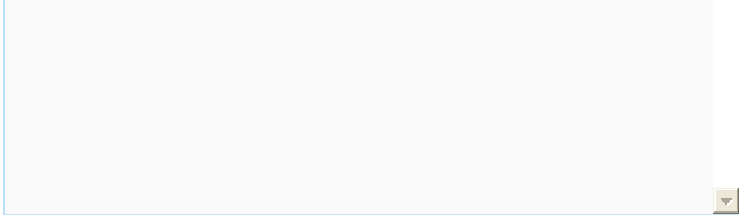
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