



himaya , in collaboration with **Moms & to Be** , aims to break the silence on children abuse which is still considered a taboo. This section is to help you recognize different forms of abuse and stop them from happening to ensure the safety and welfare of a child.

## What Not To Do When Detecting Bullying

Bullying is stressful for everyone involved. Here are the top six mistakes parents make when it comes to reacting to bullying in their child's life. Missing the warning signs: These subtle signs include everything from frequent complaints about stomachaches and headaches as well as not wanting to go to school. Sometimes kids will allude to bullying without ever using the word. For instance, they may say there is a lot of "drama" at school or some kids are "messing" with them. These phrases are often subtle hints that bullying may be taking place. It's especially important that parents can identify the warning signs because most kids don't tell anyone that they are being bullied. Ignoring the bullying:

Sometimes parents think that if they ignore a situation it will go away. Or worse yet, they minimize the situation by making light of it or telling their child to toughen up. If you are one of the few parents whose kids will tell them about bullying, make sure you take the time to listen to what they are saying. Gather as much information as you can and then make a commitment to help resolve the issue.

Be sure you avoid getting emotional. In fact, research shows that if you remain calm and choose your words carefully, you are taking the first step in helping your child cope with bullying.

Dramatizing situations:

Some parents go to the opposite extreme and

dramatize every mean thing a person does or label every conflict as bullying.

They immediately call the school, the teacher, the coach or the principal without giving their child a chance to navigate the situation. What's more, parents need to learn to differentiate between bullying and normal conflict. They also need to recognize the difference between unkind behavior and bullying. For something to constitute bullying, there must be three components: a power imbalance, an intent to harm your child and repeated incidents. If these are not present, it may not be bullying your child is experiencing.

Focusing on the wrong things:

Sometimes parents get so wrapped up in the idea of bullying, that they focus more on getting justice, or revenge. In this case, they lose sight of what is really important and that is helping their child move beyond the bullying incident. As parents, the main focus should not be on the punishment the bully receives, but determining whether or not the bullying has stopped and whether or not your child is safe. If the bullying is continuing and the school is not taking steps to protect your child, then you do need to follow up with the school.

Not helping the child overcome bullying:

When bullying occurs, your number one priority as a parent should be to help your child overcome the experience. You also need to look for ways to prevent future bullying incidents.



Talk to your kids about how to avoid bullies. Build their self-esteem and resiliency. Teach them how to be assertive. Help them develop friendships.

Gossiping about the bully:

One of the worst things a parent can do when their child is bullied is to gossip or spread rumors about the bully. Again, this is something that takes away from helping your child. And, it can only complicate things. Remember that a bully is someone's child and you should treat him with the same respect that you expect your child to be treated with.

Siblings Bullying:

Conflicts among siblings are normal. But sometimes these disagreements can go too far. When normal conflict turns into bullying, parents need to step in. Allowing your kids to fight it out is not the best approach, especially if one child has more power than the other. If you discover that one of your kids is bullying the other, here are some things you can do to confront sibling bullying.

Put an end to aggressive behavior:

If your children react to one another in aggressive ways including hitting and pushing and even name-calling, you need to intervene immediately.

Tell them that aggressive and mean behavior will not be tolerated. Then, discipline your child for bullying. Teach your kids how to treat one another with respect even when they disagree. And show them how to relate with one another in healthy ways. When you do so, you are giving them the opportunity to practice healthy relationship skills in a safe environment with people that love them unconditionally.

Hold the bully responsible:

It is essential that your kids know that the choice to bully is theirs, regardless of the reason behind it. Emphasize that bullying causes pain for their brothers and sisters and encourage them to take responsibility for their actions. To ensure that they understand this, be sure your children can repeat back what they did wrong. Then implement appropriate consequences.

Diffuse jealousy:

Although jealousy is a normal human emotion, it can be exacerbated if you don't praise your children equally.

Be sure that each child receives recognition, love and acceptance and avoid comparisons at all cost. You also should avoid labeling or categorizing your children. In other words, do not call them "the athletic one", "the smart one", and so on. Doing so only breeds envy and contempt.

Always point out your kids' good characteristics. Mention concrete things that you saw or heard them do. Let them know you value their efforts as much as their siblings' efforts. Remember, when your kids receive compliments from you, what they experience is affection. The more compliments you give your children, the more affection they feel. They also will feel like they are being recognized and that their needs are being met. When this happens, there is less need to bully others.

Teach and model respect:

The first step in teaching respect, is for parents to model that behavior by acting supportively toward one another. Additionally, you should talk to your kids about what constitutes a healthy friendship and encourage them to take steps to be a good friend to their siblings. You also may want to adopt a family philosophy that encourages family members to help and support one another.

Instill empathy:

When a child feels empathy toward other people, it goes a long way in preventing bullying. Kids who are empathetic will be able to see that bullying hurts other people and will learn to refrain from it. In fact, empathy, along with emotional intelligence, is the cornerstone of bullying prevention.

Empower them with problem-solving skills:

Kids do not automatically know how to problem-

solve. Many times, they will default to unhealthy methods instead. Consequently, work on problem-solving techniques and stress collaboration. Give your kids situations to work out or create opportunities where they have to work together to get a job done. Just be sure to supervise them to ensure one sibling is not taking advantage of another.

Prevent future bullying incidents:

Sometimes when bullying is caught early, it won't happen again. But do not assume this is always the case. Instead, continue to monitor the situation, correcting bullying or unkind behaviors immediately. And remember if one sibling bullies the other, this does not mean you are a bad parent. Kids are still learning what is acceptable and what isn't. Be firm and consistent. You and your kids will get through this and come out stronger in the end.

There is little doubt that bullies are not kind to others. But not every unkind thing kids do constitutes bullying. Kids, especially young kids, are still learning how to get along with others. They need parents, teachers and other adults to model kindness, conflict resolution, inclusion and responsibility. Try to distinguish between hurtful or unkind behavior and bullying behavior.

For something to constitute bullying, it must contain three elements. These include an imbalance of power, a repetition of hurtful behaviors and an intention to inflict harm. In other words, bullies usually are bigger, older or have more social power than their targets. They also do or say more than one mean thing to the target. An example might include mocking, name-calling and insulting the target consistently. And finally, the goal of the bully is to harm the other person in some way so that they have more control and power over the victim.

