

Bullying: A Guide for Caregivers

Talking to your child about bullying can be difficult to navigate. It is important for caregivers to maintain an open and trusting line of communication with their children, especially when it comes to bullying involvement. When establishing trusting communicative habits, caregivers should make sure that they are genuine, allow their child to take the lead, and set aside time to talk without distractions. The following are signs that your children may be experiencing some social and emotional challenges, including bullying. Also included are some talking points to initiate conversations.

WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs that your child may be bullying others:

❖ Gets into physical or verbal fights	❖ Has friends who bully others
❖ Has unexplained extra money or new belongings	❖ Is sent to the principal's office or detention frequently
❖ Shows increasingly aggressive behavior	❖ Blames others for their problems
❖ Doesn't accept responsibility for their actions	❖ Is overly competitive and worries about their popularity
❖ Displays self-destructive behaviors	

Warning signs that your child may be a target of bullying:

❖ Unexplained injuries	❖ Lost or destroyed personal items
❖ Frequent headaches or stomachaches	❖ Changes in eating habits
❖ Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares	❖ Decreased self-esteem
❖ Declining grades or loss of interest in school	❖ Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
❖ Display self-destructive behaviors	

TIPS

These are general tips to help you be successful when communicating with your child.

Tips to communicate with your child:

❖ Affirm your child for sharing their feelings or asking for help.	❖ Being open, relaxed, and genuine will help your child to be the same way.
❖ If you don't know an answer, be willing to find the answers for your child.	❖ Let your child take the lead on a conversation.
❖ Do not lie about important topics.	❖ Do not dismiss your child or their feelings about things.
❖ Set specific times to intentionally talk to one another (e.g., family meal time or fun activity).	❖ Stay focused on your child by decreasing any distractions.
❖ Communication should be a two-way street; talk to your child about your day too.	❖ Pay attention to nonverbal body language.
❖ Build off of what your child is telling you; it will let them know that you're actively listening.	❖ Regularly talk about healthy coping skills and safety protocols.

Conversation Starting Examples

❖ What made you laugh today?	❖ Tell me one thing that was exciting today.
❖ What did you play at recess?	❖ Who did you play with at recess today?
❖ Who decided what you played at recess today?	❖ Tell me one thing that you read today.
❖ What made today a good day at school?	❖ Did you talk to anybody new today?

Tips for caregivers to prevent bullying:

❖ Realize that your involvement matters!	❖ Start discussions early.
❖ Be aware of what's going on in your child's life.	❖ Promote taking different perspectives and empathy.
❖ Ask your child how you can support them the best and if necessary, how you can intervene in situations.	❖ Empower your child with confidence.
❖ Process your own emotions.	❖ Collaborate with schools.
❖ Involve more than one caregiver.	❖ Avoid authoritarian parenting.

Cyberbullying: A Guide for Caregivers

Talking to your child about cyberbullying can be difficult to navigate. It is important for caregivers to maintain an open and trusting line of communication with their children, especially when it comes to cyberbullying. The digital space is a space in which your child, a digital native, inhabits with ease. Due to this, it is vital to establish trusting and communicative relationships and habits. Caregivers should make sure that they are genuine, allow their child to take the lead, and set aside time to talk without distractions. The following are signs that your children may be experiencing some social and emotional challenges, including cyberbullying. Also included are some talking points to initiate conversations.

WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs that your child may be cyberbullying others:

❖ Quickly switches screens or hides device when adult is near	❖ Gets unusually upset if they cannot have their device
❖ Demonstrates increased insensitivity towards others	❖ Increased disciplinary actions due to behavior problems
❖ Appears overly concerned about popularity	❖ Appears overly conceited about technology skills
❖ Seems to be using multiple online accounts	❖ Increasingly withdrawn from family

Warning signs that your child may be a target of cyberbullying:

❖ Unexpected changes in device use	❖ Appears nervous about attending school
❖ Changes in mood, behavior, or performance	❖ Becomes abnormally withdrawn
❖ Changes in eating or sleeping habits	❖ Frequently asks to leave school
❖ Avoids discussions about what they are doing online	❖ Desires to spend more time with caregivers than peers
❖ Becomes secretive, especially when it comes to online activity	

TIPS

These are general tips to help you be successful and informed when talking and making decisions about the online space.

Tips to prevent cyberbullying:

❖ Have device screens visible.	❖ Have meaningful conversations about their time online.
❖ Monitor their online activity in a respectful manner.	❖ Establish joint rules and guidelines with mutual trust.
❖ Inform yourself on currently used apps.	❖ Don't underreact to your child sharing their feelings.
❖ Encourage activities away from electronics.	❖ Keep the line of communication open.
❖ Use parental controls.	

Discussion tips for talking about online socialization:

Be intentional about having meaningful conversations! Building regular communication and a trusting relationship will yield the best and most successful results.

❖ How do you spend time online?	❖ How much time do you spend online?
❖ How do you spend your time when you're not online?	❖ Do you have any close friends online?
❖ Has someone ever asked you for any personal information online?	❖ Have you ever felt uncomfortable talking to someone online?
❖ Who do you trust at school to talk about cyberbullying?	