



Helping When Your Child is Bullied

- Listen to what your child tells you and don't dismiss it. It's important that they know that you believe them and are taking them seriously
- Discuss with them why they think they are being picked on - by working out what is making them a target; they can work on strategies to overcome the problem. Make sure they know that you don't think they are being bullied because of anything they have done.
- Don't take any action yourself unless your child agrees - although if they are being physically hurt, or the bullying has continued despite the strategies you have given your child to manage it, you may have to do something whether they want you to or not. Verbal bullying can be just as damaging long term to a child as physical bullying.
- Help them work on some coping strategies - what they can do or say that may help their situation.
- Don't label your child or offer reasons that they may be being bullied - they need your support, not more proof of their lack of worth.
- Encourage them to ignore any name-calling - if they are the type of child who cries easily, try to help them understand that name-calling can't hurt them if they don't let it. They may get strength by visualising an invisible wall around them that will protect them from sharp words.
- Indulge them if they want to plan a new way to get to school to avoid a bully - if, by doing this, they can deal with the bully and feel safe, then you should support them as long as this is a practical option for you and your child.
- Contact your child's school, if the bullying is happening there. They will have an anti-bullying policy and should be receptive to your concerns. It would also be beneficial to your child to organise a meeting with your child's teacher and attend with them to discuss the problem. By supporting your child in verbalising the bullying behaviour themselves, you are empowering them that they have taken action themselves against the bullying.
- If you suspect that it's your child's lack of confidence that is making them a target, encourage their self-confidence by focussing on the things they do well.