

Bullying

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What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as an unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time.

Types of bullying

- **Verbal:** This is the most common type of bullying and the easiest to inflict on other children. It includes saying or writing mean things and can include:
 - Teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, making threats against a target, taunting, threatening to cause harm spreading rumors
- **Physical:** This can be the easiest type of bullying to recognize. Physical bullying can include:
 - Hitting, kicking, pushing, talking or damaging property, and forced or unwelcomed contact (spitting, pulling hair, and throwing object).
 - It is not considered bullying unless the child realizes his or her actions can cause another person pain.
- **Emotional (social):** This is a sophisticated type of bullying; it is usually done in groups. Examples include:
 - Alienating or excluding from other groups, manipulating others to prevent someone's acceptance into a group, damaging another's reputation, publicly humiliating others or making fun of their appearance or behavior, or creating a sense of unease for the target.
 - The behavior becomes bullying when the intent is to cause another person pain.
- **Sexual:** This is the most difficult type of bullying to discuss. Examples include:
 - Sexually-charged comments, inappropriate or lewd glances, inappropriate physical contact, exhibitionism (indecent exposure), and sexual assault.
- **Cyberbullying:** defined as when the Internet, cell phone, or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.
 - Cyberbullying encompasses many activities and is difficult because it can happen anywhere at any time.

What can adults and parents do?

- **Recognize bullying:** tell your children what bullying is. Indicators that your child is being bullied include: a desire to stay home from school, increased anxiety, unexplained stomachaches or headaches, withdrawal, damage to personal belongings, change in sleep routine.
- **Action Steps for parents:**
 - Keep a record of any incident that includes who, what, when, and where the bullying occurred. Inform the school in writing.
 - Talk to your child about bullying: listen, believe, be supportive, be patient.
 - Help your child become a self-advocate and speak up-even if one adult doesn't listen, don't give up.
 - Your child should know their rights. Tell them to report the situation, move away from the bully or the situation, quote school policy, and don't fight back.
 - For additional information see: www.pacer.org/bullying

