

Bullying: Tips for parents

Despite what we read in the news every day, many families are still unaware of bullying. What most parents ignore isn't the social problem itself, but recognizing that their own child might be having trouble with bullying.

As a matter of fact, bullied children **rarely tell adults** about their being victimized. **They become withdrawn**, are unwilling to talk about their day, avoid to mention those episodes that cause them continuous suffering. Most of the times this happens because they are scared that if the bully finds out that they told, things will get worse.

But this behaviour can also originate from another reason, which is even more subtle and consequently harder to overcome: bullied kids feel ashamed of their weakness, of their incapacity to react, of being the target of those kids who are considered leaders by the others, and last but not least, they are ashamed of being themselves. Most of the times children with an obvious physical characteristic, such as **being overweight** or **wearing eyeglasses**, can become targets and, as a consequence, they may blame themselves. What they think is: "I'm different from the others and this is why I'm the victim of the bully at school."

What children should learn is that **there is nothing wrong with them**: what is wrong is bullying itself.

The family has an important part to play. Parents must learn to understand their children more than they can do by themselves, to recognize the signs of a possible unease, to find out whether their children are involved in bullying and avoid they become bullies themselves.

What to do to help your child become resilient to bullying:

- Improve your child's self-esteem.
- Encourage your child to develop his/her positive attitudes and talents.
- Help your child making friends with peers rather than isolating herself/himself.

And more

It is important to know that not to become a bully themselves, children should be taught:

- To express anger in a healthy and positive manner
- To communicate in a sincere manner
- To be capable of putting themselves in somebody else's shoes and understand the consequences of their actions.
- To base their role model on what they see at home.

Parents should also learn how to understand any warning signs that children may give or conceal.

Signs of being bullied:

- Not wanting to go to school or begging you to be driven to school.
- Often asking for money.
- Changes in their mood, becoming nervous, whining, unhappy, especially after school.
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches, damaged clothing.
- Having trouble sleeping or bedwetting.
- Telling you that they have no friends.
- Refuse to tell you what happens at school.

In cooperation with Guidagenitori

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