

# When Your Child Tells You They Are Being Bullied

Children all over the country have climbed back on the school bus with new backpacks, new clothes, and new hopes for a good school year.

Unfortunately, the new school year also means that many students will become targets of bullying. Up to one-third of the nation's students will be bullied during the school year and each day more than 60 percent of students will witness bullying situations.

To end the bullying, students often need help from adults, but many are reluctant to talk with an adult because they may:

- See adults as ineffective in stopping bullying or fear that they might make the situation worse.
- Have been blamed for the bullying, not believed, or given advice that didn't work.
- Believe that adults don't care about bullying. They may have seen adults witness bullying without intervening.
- Believe that they need to solve the situation on their own, and may feel ashamed or think that they will be judged.
- Think that telling an adult is a sign of immaturity and that only younger kids "tell."
- Have received misguided messages such as: "telling is tattling" or "ignore it and it will go away."
- Have lower self esteem because of bullying and think they deserve what is happening to them or feel helpless to change the situation.

What can you do?

1. Avoid overreacting. Your first reaction might be to offer to "fix" the situation for your child, but it is important that you allow your child to be a part of the solution. Listen, without judgment, to what your child has to say. Then brainstorm options that allow your child the opportunity to address the issue. Solutions will be more effective when the child is a part of creating them.
2. Follow through. Many times bullying is something that children can not stop on their own. They need the help of a parent or other adult. Don't assume that the bullying has stopped if your child is not talking about it. If you and your child had decided on a response strategy, ask them if it worked. If not, brainstorm other solutions. Let them know that what is happening to them is not their fault and that no one deserves to be bullied.

3. Parents with elementary school children can visit: [www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org](http://www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org), a bullying prevention Web site. This creative and informative resource educates students about bullying prevention and provides methods to respond to bullying situations. The site features an animated cast of characters, information, celebrity videos, Webisodes, games, animation, contests and other activities. Parents and professionals will find helpful tips, intervention strategies, and resources for use at home or school.

PACER is also launching an animated, interactive bullying prevention Web site for teens in the fall. The site will feature student produced videos, interactive role plays, animated activities, video interviews, and music, poetry and stories written by students.

“When 160,000 children in the United States miss school each day as a result of being bullied, it’s time to take action,” said Paula F. Goldberg, executive director of PACER, a national parent center located in Minnesota. “Teachers, parents, students and adults throughout each community must work together to create a climate that doesn’t accept bullying. When bullying is reduced, communities will see more students with higher self-esteem, better school attendance, less physical and mental stress and better school performance.”

This information is provided by PACER Center, a national parent center located in Minneapolis, Minn. PACER’s Center’s Bullying Prevention Project is for all children, including children with disabilities. It promotes bullying awareness and teaches effective ways to respond to bullying. PACER Center primarily serves families of children and youth with disabilities. It provides resources such as publications, workshops, and individualized assistance and helps families make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for their child. Its primary Web site is [www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org), its phone numbers are 952-838-9000; 800-53-PACER (MN toll free); and 888-248-0822 (national toll free).

*Editor: This news release can be downloaded at [pacer.org/bullying/bpaw/media/index.asp](http://pacer.org/bullying/bpaw/media/index.asp). Experts are available through PACER for media interviews on topics, such as:*

- *How can parents help their child who is being bullied?*
- *What can schools and organizations do to prevent bullying and increase awareness of the issue?*
- *What role do bystanders play in preventing bullying and what are methods to engage them?*

**For More Information, contact:**

Julie Hertzog

952.838.9000

[Julie.Hertzog@PACER.org](mailto:Julie.Hertzog@PACER.org)