



Stop Bullying Before it Starts:

Arming Our Children with Emotional Intelligence

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Understanding Bullying & Emotional Intelligence

What is Bullying?

Behavior with the intent to **Hurt**, **Harass**, **Humiliate**, **Harm**, and **Hold** power over others.

Why Does a Bully Bully?

- Wants to feel powerful and to be in control of others
- Typically only knows how to express anger through action
- Suffers from low self-esteem and may have been a victim of aggressive or violent behavior
- Bullies lack empathy and emotional awareness skills that contribute to positive social interactions

Bullying Facts*:

- 13 million children will be bullied in the US this year
- 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of bullying
- 1 out of every 4 children will be bullied at some point during their adolescence
- 80% of children who see bullying do nothing to stop it
- Teenagers on the autism spectrum are bullied 4x as often
- Victims of bullying are twice as likely to commit suicide

What Is Emotional Intelligence?

An enhanced self-awareness of one's emotions, ability to manage and deal with the intensity of one's emotions, and sensitivity to the emotions of others.

Emotional Intelligence and Bullying?

- Bullies lack emotional intelligence
- Emotional intelligence is necessary in developing empathy, compassion, and understanding of how to deal with and manage emotions successfully
- Emotional intelligence skills give bullied children skills to stand up and say no
- Cultivating a healthy emotional intelligence goes hand in hand with education for character and moral development

*Source of bullying facts: Thebullyproject.com, Dosomething.org, Huffingtonpost.com, American Justice Department, Family Resource Facilitation Program

Key to Bullying Prevention: Emotional Intelligence

Proactive prevention is needed through education and teaching of emotional competencies.

- Cultivating emotional intelligence skills in kids early on is crucial because arming them with social and emotional skills to deal with feelings and situations will help mitigate bullying down the road
- Teaching emotional skills from the beginning of a child's life is most critical because it's the first few years of life that the child's brain is most impressionable to adopting these teachings and behavior

How to identify if Your Child is Being Bullied or Is a Bully

Warning signs that your child is being bullied (especially changes in behavior):

- Doesn't want to go to school and tries to avoid all school related activities
- Has become withdrawn, or is more anxious than is usual for the child
- Change in sleeping habits and appetite
- Come home with torn, damaged, or missing clothing, books, or other items
- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical ailments
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem

Signs that a child might be a bully:

- Typically uses aggression/violence to express anger
- Lacks sympathy, empathy
- Has an exaggerated sense of self
- Marked need to control and dominate others and situations
- Hot tempered, impulsive, easily frustrated
- Often tests limits or breaks rules
- Good at talking their way out of difficult situations

Bullying Resources:

- Education Development Center, www.EDC.org
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: <http://www.aacap.org/cs/Bullying.ResourceCenter>
- Mass Anti-Bullying Legislation: <http://malegislature.gov/Bills/187/Senate/S00219>
- Kid Power, a charitable educational organization: www.kidpower.org/bullying.html
- Kids against Bullying produced by the PACER Center: www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/html/parentsPros.asp
- CASEL Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: <http://casel.org/in-schools/bullying/>

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