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**If your child is being bullied – 20 top tips for parents**

**By Derek Randel**

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Keith is now in the fourth grade and he dislikes school. For a fourth grader, this does not sound right. The reason Keith dislikes school though does not have anything to do with academics. Keith is being bullied before school, at school, and on the school bus. Who can blame him for not wanting to go into that environment?

The basic definition of bullying is when someone keeps doing or saying things to have power over another person. Bullying involves crossing into one's space without permission.

Isn't bullying just something that happens to all children and we're just making a fuss over this? The children will get over it, right? Shouldn't we tell Keith to grow up and handle it? Wrong. Bullying happens to far too many children and adults shouldn't be ignoring it.

#### WHAT CAN A PARENT DO?

If Keith is being bullied and he is not reporting it to his parents then there are some very important questions to address.

- Why wouldn't he tell his parents?
- What message have Keith's parents sent to him about bullies?
- Does Keith's parents have a history of dismissing what he says?
- Possibly Keith's parents have had a habit of getting too involved in solving his problems.

Tips for parents:

- Encourage your child to report any bullying incidents to you.

## If your child is being bullied – 20 top tips for parents

- Validate your child's feelings. It is normal for your child to feel hurt, sad, and angry.
- Ask your child how he/she has tried to stop the bullying. Asking questions is a wonderful way to have your child do the thinking.
- Ask how is he/she going to solve this. We want the child to do the thinking before we jump in. See how many options he can come up with.
- Coach your child in alternatives. Ideally the best solution is having your child solve this without anyone interfering. Most of the time unfortunately, this isn't possible. Share these strategies: avoidance is often an excellent strategy, playing in a different place, play a different game, stay near a supervisor, look for new friends, join social activities outside of school.
- Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure they are aware of what is

going on.

- Encourage your child to seek help from other school personnel.
- Volunteer to help supervise activities at school.
- Do not ignore your child's reports. Ignoring them sends the wrong message.
- Do not confront the bully or the bullies' family.
- Teach your child how to defend him or herself.
- Teach self-respect.
- Give numerous positive comments to your child.
- Avoid labeling or name-calling.
- Let your child know it is okay to express their anger. There are positive and negative ways to express anger, we want to teach and model the positive ways.
- Let your children stand up to you now and then. It makes it more likely they will stand up to a bully.
- Stress the importance of body language.
- Teach your child to use 'I' statements.
- Teach positive self-talk.
- Teach how to use humor, 'out crazy' them. For example, if the bully says to Keith, "Hey, boy you're ugly." Keith can respond in a couple different ways:
  - "Thanks for sharing"
  - "Yes, I know, I always have been"
  - "Yes, today's lunch was disgusting" then walk away.

There is many other aspects of bullying to look at: Why your child is the victim, why people bully, what you child can do if he/she is bullied, signs your child is being bullied, what the schools should be doing, handling the school bus issues. All of these are addressed in *The Shameful Epidemic*, – How to protect your child from bullies and school violence.

Visit [www.stoppingschoolviolence.com](http://www.stoppingschoolviolence.com) to learn what is possible. There are solutions.

Derek and Gail Randel M.D. are parent coaches who have customized programs for corporations, schools, and parent groups. They can be reached at Parent Smart from theHeart, 1-866-89-SMART, [www.parentsmartfromtheheart.com](http://www.parentsmartfromtheheart.com), [www.stoppingschoolviolence.com](http://www.stoppingschoolviolence.com) or [info@randelconsulting.com](mailto:info@randelconsulting.com)

## **Tips For Parents On How To Deal With Bullying**

### **By News Canada**

Often a serious problem for kids

(NC)—Bullying behaviour may seem rather insignificant compared to the trouble that some kids can get into. In fact, it is often dismissed as just another part of "growing up."

It shouldn't be.

Statistics show that one in four children who bully will have a criminal record before the age of thirty. Teasing at bus stops, taking other children's lunch money, insults and threats, kicking and punching – it's all fair game to the bully. On the flip side, fear of bullies causes many kids to avoid school or carry and even use weapons for protection. While everyone is a potential bullying target, victims typically tend to be shy, sensitive, anxious, or insecure. Children are picked on for many reasons, including being overweight, being small, having a disability, or being an ethno-cultural minority.

If you suspect that one of your children is being bullied, here are some tips on what to do:

Listen. Encourage your children to talk about school, social events, other kids in class, and the walk or ride to and from school so you can identify any problems they may be having.

Take their complaints of bullying seriously. Probing a seemingly minor incident may uncover something more serious. Children are often afraid or ashamed to tell anyone that they have been bullied.

Watch for symptoms of victimization such as withdrawal, a drop in grades, torn clothes, or demands for extra money.

Tell the school or day care immediately if you think that your children are being bullied.

Work with other parents to ensure that the children in your neighbourhood are supervised on their way to and from school.

Don't bully your children yourself, physically or verbally. Use non-physical, consistently-enforced discipline measures. Don't ridicule, yell at, or ignore your children when they misbehave.

Teach them the social skills they need to make friends. A confident, resourceful child who has friends is less likely to be bullied or to bully others.

Praise kindness toward others. Show children that kindness is valued.

## If your child is being bullied – 20 top tips for parents

Teach children ways to resolve arguments without violent words or actions. Talk about self-protection skills – how to walk confidently, to stay alert to their environment, and to stand up for themselves verbally.

Recognize that bullies may be acting out feelings of insecurity, anger, or loneliness. If your child is a bully, try to get to the root of the problem. Seek out specific strategies you can use at home from a teacher, school counsellor, or child psychologist.

For more information on bullying and how early childhood intervention programs are helping to reduce bullying in communities across Canada, visit the National Crime Prevention Centre Web site at

or call toll-free 1-877-302-NCPC.

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