



BULLYING: IT'S NOT OK

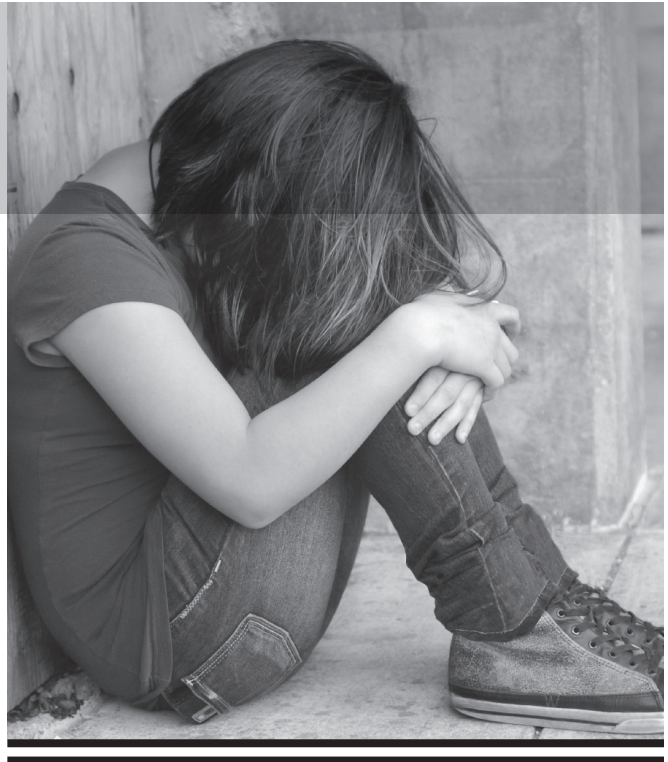
Bullying is when one child picks on another child again and again. Usually children who are being bullied are either weaker or smaller, as well as shy, and generally feel helpless. Some children and youth are at higher risk of being bullied, such as those with disabilities or other special health care needs and those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power. Sometimes children argue with each other or make bad choices in their behavior, which is not bullying.

Cyberbullying occurs electronically, using things like social media sites, texting, chat rooms, or instant messaging. Cyberbullying can happen any time—day or night—and is visible to many more people than traditional bullying. It's very hard to undo or hide what the child who is cyberbullying has done.

FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- Both girls and boys can be bullies.
- A child can be both the bully and the victim.
- Bullies target children who cry, get mad, or easily give in to them.
- There are 3 types of bullying.
 - Physical—hitting, kicking, pushing, choking, punching
 - Verbal—threatening, taunting, teasing, hate speech (This can also include electronic messaging)
 - Social—excluding victims from activities or starting rumors about them



- Bullying happens
 - At school, when teachers are not there to see what is going on
 - When adults are not watching—going to and from school, on the playground, or in the neighborhood
 - Through electronic methods, such as social networks, texting, and instant messaging

Common characteristics of bullies and victims (from www.StopBullying.gov)

Generally, children who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Are seen as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or not having what kids consider “cool”
- Are seen as weak or unable to defend themselves



- Are less popular than others and have few friends
- Do not get along well with others, are seen as annoying or provoking, or provoke others for attention

Those who bully others do not need to be stronger or bigger than those they bully. Often, these students require support to change their behavior and address other challenges that may be influencing their behavior. Children who bully may have more than one of the following characteristics:

- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement
- Have issues at home
- Think badly of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully others

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Children who experience any kind of bullying—including cyberbullying—can experience long-term effects, even into adulthood. Bullying can have consequences for both the bully and the victim, who

- Have a higher risk of substance use
- Are more likely to skip or drop out of school
- Can have health complications
- Have poor school performance
- Experience depression or other mental health challenges

TALK WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT BULLYING

Even if you don't think your child is bullied, a bully, or a bystander, you will be helping protect your child just by asking these questions.

- How are things going at school?
- What do you think of other kids in your class?
- Does anyone get picked on or bullied?
- What is lunchtime like? (or recess)
- Is anyone texting, tweeting, or posting mean things on social networks?

HELP YOUR CHILD RESIST BULLYING

You cannot always help your child avoid all bullying, but you can help him build coping skills to deal with difficult situations. Spend time with your child, show him love and encouragement, and model good behavior toward others. Talk through difficult situations with your child so he knows he can trust you with his problems.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS BULLIED

It can be upsetting to find out your child has been bullied. Let her know you are there for her, willing to listen, and taking action to make sure it doesn't continue. Here are some things you can do.

- *Help your child learn how to respond.* For example, "Let's talk about what you can do and say if this happens again."
- Teach your child how to.
 - Look the bully in the eye.
 - Stand tall and stay calm.
 - Walk away.
 - Not respond to electronic messages and cut off communications with those who are sending unwanted messages.
 - Show bullying texts, posts, or e-mails to a parent or other trusted adult.

- Teach your child how to say in a firm voice.
 - “I don’t like what you are doing.”
 - “Please do not talk to me like that.”
 - “Why would you say that?”

For many children, these skills do not come naturally. It is like learning a new language—lots of practice is needed. Practice so, in the heat of the moment, these skills will come to your child naturally.

- **Teach your child when and how to ask for help.** Your child should not be afraid to ask an adult for help when bullying happens. Since some children are embarrassed about being bullied, parents need to let their children know being bullied is not their fault.
- **Encourage your child to make friends with other children.** There are many adult-supervised groups, in and out of school, that your child can join. Invite your child’s friends over to your home.
- **Support activities that interest your child.** By participating in activities such as team sports, music groups, or social clubs, your child will develop new abilities and social skills. When children feel good about how they relate to others, they are less likely to be picked on.
- **Alert school officials to the problems, and work with them on solutions.** Since bullying often happens outside the classroom, talk with the principal, guidance counselor, or playground monitors, as well as your child’s teachers. Write down and report all bullying, including cyberbullying, to your child’s school. By knowing when and where the bullying occurs, you and your child can better plan what to do if it happens again.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS THE BULLY

No parents want to think their child would bully another child, but it does happen and parents must be ready to respond. If you know your child is bullying someone, take it very seriously.

Now is the time when you can change your child’s behavior.

In the long run, bullies continue to have problems. These often get worse. If the bullying behavior is allowed to continue, these children often become adults who are much less successful in their work and family lives and may even get in trouble with the law.

- Help your child understand what bullying is and why it is a problem. Help your child understand how bullying hurts other children. Give real examples of the good and bad results of your child’s actions.
- Set firm and consistent limits on your child’s aggressive or hurtful behavior. Be sure your child knows that bullying is never OK.
- Be a positive role model. Children need to develop new and constructive ways for getting what they want. All children can learn to treat others with respect.
- Use effective, nonphysical discipline, such as loss of privileges. When your child needs discipline, explain why the behavior was wrong and how your child can change it.
- Find positive ways to stop bullying with the school principal, teachers, counselors, and parents of the children your child has bullied.
- Supervise your child and help develop individual skills and interests. Children with too much “time on their hands” are more likely to find themselves in bad situations.

- Supervise their time online, and monitor what sites they are visiting. Require them to friend you on social media sites and share their passwords with you.
- Ask for help. If you find it difficult to change the behavior, reach out to a professional, like a teacher, counselor, or your child's pediatrician.

It is important for everyone in the community to work together to build a safe environment for all children. Partner with your child's pediatrician, school district, and local community leaders to create anti-bullying messages and policies. Find more information at StopBullying.gov.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS A BYSTANDER (with additions from StopBullying.gov):

Most children are neither bullied nor bullies—they just watch. There are things your child can do to help stop bullying.

- Don't give bullying an audience. Often, those who bully are encouraged by the attention they receive from bystanders. Children can help stop bullying by actively not supporting it.
- Set a good example.
- Help the child who is bullied get away.
- Tell a trusted adult. Talking with an adult is not tattling. Standing up for another child by getting help is an act of courage and safety. To make it easier, suggest taking a friend.
- Be a friend. Children can help someone who's been bullied by simply being nice to him. Being friendly can go a long way toward letting him know that he's not alone.

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Ratings: Making Healthy Media Choices

Why do we need ratings? Research has shown that children are influenced by what they see and hear, especially at very young ages. To help parents make informed choices about what their children see and hear, many entertainment companies use ratings systems. Ratings give parents more information about the content of television (TV) programs, movies, music, or computer and video games. Read on for more information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about ratings and how you can help your children make healthy media choices.

What You Can Do

Your children will be exposed to all forms of entertainment and media at a very young age. One role you have as a parent is to help your children develop the skills to question what they see and hear in the media. Using these skills, they can learn how to pick media that has positive influences and avoid media that has negative influences. The following tips can help your family use ratings to select media:

- Ratings, when available, can be useful tools but should only be used as a guide. It also is important to watch and listen to media with your children. This allows you to talk with them about the content and meaning of the shows they watch, music they hear, or games they play.
- Look for ratings and warning labels. Ratings can help your family choose movies, shows, videos, music, websites, and computer and video games that are appropriate for their ages and interests.
- Beware of products that have no ratings. When products have no ratings, find out more about them before letting your children watch, play with, or listen to them. Keep in mind that companies do not have to use ratings.
- Apps do not have ratings, but you can find reviews of many apps on the Internet. Until a rating system becomes available for apps, reviews from trusted sites, such as www.common sense media.org, can help your family pick apps that are appropriate for their ages and developmental stages.

MPAA Movie Rating System	
Rating	Description
G	General Audiences. All Ages Admitted. Contains very little violence and no nudity, sex, or drug use.
PG	Parental Guidance Suggested. Some Material May Not Be Suitable For Children. May contain some profanity, violence, or brief nudity. Does not contain drug use. Parental guidance suggested for more mature themes.
PG-13	Parents Strongly Cautioned. Some Material May Be Inappropriate For Children Under 13. Contains more intense themes, violence, nudity, sex, or language than a PG movie but not as much as an R movie. May contain drug use.
R	Restricted. Under 17 Requires Accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian. Contains adult material. May include graphic language, violence, sex, nudity, and drug use.
NC-17	Adults Only. No One 17 and Under Admitted Children. Contains violence, sex, drug abuse, and other behavior that most parents would consider off-limits to children.

NOTE: Children younger than 17 years should not be allowed to view R-rated movies. Even though the rating system seems to suggest that younger children may watch an R-rated movie when a parent is present, it is not recommended they watch at all. Also, no child 17 years or younger should be allowed to watch a movie rated NC-17.

TV Parental Guidelines Rating System		
Rating	Guideline	Program Description
TV-Y	All Children	Appropriate for all children. Not expected to frighten younger children.
TV-Y7	Directed to Older Children	For children 7 years and older. Themes and elements may include mild fantasy or comedic violence or may frighten children younger than 7.
TV-Y7-FV	Directed to Older Children—Fantasy Violence	Same as TV-Y7, but programs may be more intense than TV-Y7.
TV-G	General Audience	Most parents may find this program suitable for all ages. Contains little or no violence, no strong language, and little or no sexual dialogue or situations.
TV-PG	Parental Guidance Suggested	Parents may find material unsuitable for younger children. Contains one or more of the following: moderate violence (V), some sexual situations (S), infrequent coarse language (L), or some suggestive dialogue (D).
TV-14	Parents Strongly Cautioned	Parents may find some material unsuitable for children younger than 14. Contains one or more of the following: intense violence (V), intense sexual situations (S), strong coarse language (L), or intensely suggestive dialogue (D).
TV-MA	Mature Audience Only	Designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may be unsuitable for children younger than 17. Contains one or more of the following: graphic violence (V), explicit sexual activity (S), or crude indecent language (L).

NOTE: The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages TV watching and other media use by children younger than 2 years and encourages interactive play. For older children, total entertainment screen time should be limited to fewer than 1 to 2 hours per day.

About Ratings

Most entertainment companies provide ratings for their products. Ratings are usually based on the amount of violence, sex, nudity, strong language, or drug use your children will see or hear. Here is a summary of different rating systems.

Movies

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) rating system is the oldest, most well-known, and most widely used rating system, but ratings should only be used as a guide. You should find out as much as you can about a movie before letting your children watch it. Take time to watch it first to make sure

it is appropriate. You can also read reviews, check the Internet, or ask other parents, but remember that each child is different.

Most big screen movies are rated, even though it is not required.

Television

The TV Parental Guidelines rating system was created to help parents choose programs that are suitable for children. The ratings are usually

included in local TV listings. Remember that ratings are not used for news programs, which may not be suitable for young children.

All TVs 13 inches or larger made in the United States after 2000 are required by federal law to have a V-chip. The V-chip allows parents to block programs based on ratings or times or to block specific shows.

For more information, go to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Parents' Place Web site at reboot.fcc.gov/parents.

ESRB Ratings	
Rating Categories	Description
eC (Early Childhood)	Content is intended for young children.
E (Everyone)	Content is generally suitable for all ages. May contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.
E 10+ (Everyone 10+)	Content is generally suitable for ages 10 and up. May contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.
T (Teen)	Content is generally suitable for ages 13 and up. May contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling and/or infrequent use of strong language.
M (Mature)	Content is generally suitable for ages 17 and up. May contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.
Ao (Adults Only)	Content suitable only for adults ages 18 and up. May include prolonged scenes of intense violence, graphic sexual content and/or gambling with real currency.
RP (Rating Pending)	Not yet assigned a final ESRB rating. Appears only in advertising, marketing and promotional materials related to a game that is expected to carry an ESRB rating, and should be replaced by a game's rating once it has been assigned.

Video Games and Apps

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is the nonprofit, self-regulatory body that gives ratings to video games and apps so parents and other consumers can make informed choices. Almost all video games that are sold at retail in the United States and Canada are rated by the ESRB.

The following ratings information and a complete list of Content Descriptors and Interactive Elements are published on the ESRB Web site at www.esrb.org. The ESRB ratings are trademarks of the Entertainment Software Association.

ESRB ratings have 3 parts: rating categories, content descriptors, and interactive elements.

- *Rating Categories suggest age appropriateness (see chart).*
- *Content Descriptors indicate content that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern.*
- *Interactive Elements inform about interactive aspects of a product, including users' ability to interact, the sharing of users' location with other users, or the fact that personal information may be shared with third parties.*

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Online Safety

Internet companies are still in the process of creating a universal ratings system for online material. Until a system that everyone uses is created, the following tips can help parents create a safer online experience for their children:

- **Search the Web with your children. Keep in mind that anyone can** set up a Web site and post information on any topic. You might be surprised at how easy it is for your children to stumble across or find information that contains graphic sex, violence, or drug use.
- **Put the computer in a room where you can monitor your children.** Computers should never be placed in a room where a door can be closed or a parent left out of the activity.
- **Use tracking software to help you keep track of where your children** have been on the Web. But keep in mind that nothing can replace adult supervision.
- **Install software or services that can filter or block offensive Web** sites and material. Be aware, however, that many children are smart enough to find ways around the filters. Also, you may find that filters may be more restrictive than you want.
- **Find out what the Internet use policies are at the school your children** go to or at your library.

For more information visit the official AAP Web site for parents, HealthyChildren.org, or the Web site of the AAP Council on Communication and Media, www.aap.org/COCM.

Music

The Recording Industry Association of America has a Parental Advisory Label Program that is not required but often used. Each record company uses its own guidelines to decide which recordings will be labeled with a parental advisory.

If a record company decides to use the advisory, a standard black and white logo that says "Parental Advisory: Explicit Content" must be displayed on the front of the music packaging. The logo or a similar notice for parents may also be available on online and mobile products or services that allow users to download music for personal use.

Before allowing your children to listen to or purchase music, you may wish to listen to the lyrics first. Many music stores will allow you to listen to music before buying it. Also, most record companies and recording artists have their own Web sites that may post song lyrics or samples of the songs.

Coin-operated Video Games

All new coin-operated video games are labeled with a Parental Advisory Disclosure Message. This message appears in the artwork of the game or on a sticker on the machine. It comes in the following colors: Green (Suitable for All Ages), Yellow (Mild), and Red (Strong). The yellow and red messages also break down the content into 1 of 4 categories: animated violence, lifelike violence, sexual content, and language.

Talking With Your Young Child About Sex



Children begin learning about sex and sexuality as soon as they are able to view, listen, and sense the world around them. As your children grow and develop, they may giggle with friends about “private parts,” share “dirty” jokes, and look up taboo words in the dictionary. Their curiosity is natural, and children of all ages have questions.

As a parent, you may not feel comfortable talking about sex, or you may not know how to respond to questions about sex. This publication was written by the American Academy of Pediatrics to offer you guidance on how to talk with your children about sex.

You are the best teacher

Your children will learn many things about the world from friends, movies, TV, music, books, magazines, and the Internet. However, when it comes to something as important as sex and sexuality, nothing can replace the influence of a parent.

Talking about sex and sexuality gives you a chance to share your values and beliefs with your children. Sometimes the topic or the questions may seem embarrassing, but your children need to know there is always a reliable, honest source they can turn to for answers—you.

You can teach your children about relationships, love, commitment, and respect. When your children feel loved and respected by you, they are more likely to turn to you for answers and advice. Giving advice and teaching your children to make wise choices is one of your most important jobs as a parent.

Teachable moments

You can find *teachable moments* in everyday events to teach your children about topics related to sex. For example, talk about body parts and what’s “private” during bath time. A pregnancy or birth in the family is a good time to discuss how babies are conceived and born. Watching TV with your children may also be a good time to discuss an on-screen relationship.

Teachable moments can happen anywhere and anytime. Use them when they happen. You don’t need to make a speech. First, find out what your children already know. Let your children guide the talk and ask questions. Some children may not ask for information if they think you might be uneasy with it. Others might test you by asking embarrassing questions.

When your children begin to ask questions, the following might make it easier for both of you:

- Talk openly, and let your children know they can ask you about anything.
- Don’t laugh or giggle, even if the question is cute. Your children might feel ashamed if you laugh.
- Try not to appear overly embarrassed or serious about the matter.
- Be brief. Answer in simple terms. Your 4-year-old doesn’t need to know the details of intercourse.
- Be honest. Use proper names for all body parts.

- See if your children want or need to know more. Follow up your answers with, “Does that answer your question?”
- Listen to your children’s responses and reactions.
- Be prepared to repeat yourself.

If you are uneasy talking about sex or answering certain questions, be honest about that too. You may want to ask a relative, a close family friend, or your children’s doctor to help explain things.

Questions, questions, questions

The questions your children ask and the answers that are appropriate to give will depend on each child’s age and ability to understand. Following are common questions and some of the issues for different age groups.

Preschool children

- “How did I get in your tummy?”
- “Where was I before I got in your tummy?”
- “How did I get out?”
- “Where do babies come from?”
- “How come girls don’t have a penis?”

18 months to 3 years of age—Children in this age group begin to learn about their own body. It is important to teach your children the proper names for body parts. Making up names for body parts may give the idea that there is something bad about the proper name. Also, teach your children which parts are private (parts covered by a bathing suit).

4 to 5 years of age—Children in this age group may begin to show an interest in basic sexuality, both their own and that of the opposite sex. Children may also touch their own genitals and may even show an interest in the genitals of other children. These are signs of normal interest. However, children need to learn what is all right to do and what is not. Setting limits to exploration is really a family matter. You may decide to teach your children the following:

- Interest in genital organs is healthy and natural.
- Nudity and sexual play in public are not all right.
- No other person, including even close friends and relatives, may touch your child’s “private parts.” The exceptions are doctors and nurses during physical exams with the parent’s permission, and parents when they are trying to find the cause of any pain in the genital area.

By the time children are school-aged, they should know the following:

- Proper names of body parts (including the womb or uterus where a baby grows—not mom’s tummy)
- Functions of each
- Physical differences between boys and girls

School-aged children

“How old do girls have to be before they can have a baby?”

“Why do boys get erections?”

“What is a period?”

“How do people have sexual intercourse?”

“Why do some men like other men?”

5 to 7 years of age—Children in this age group learn more about how people get along with each other. They may become interested in what takes place sexually between adults. Their questions will become more complex as they try to understand the connection between sexuality and making babies. They may come up with their own explanations about how the body works or where babies come from. They may also turn to their friends for answers.

It is important to help your children understand sexuality in a healthy way. Lessons and values they learn at this age will stay with them as adults. It will encourage meaningful adult relationships later.

8 to 9 years of age—Children in this age group probably already have developed a sense of right and wrong. They are able to understand that sex is something that happens between 2 people who love each other. They may become interested in how mom and dad met and fell in love. As questions about romance, love, and marriage arise, they may also ask about homosexual relationships. Use this time to discuss your family's thoughts about homosexuality. Explain that liking or loving someone does not depend on the person's gender and is different from liking someone sexually.

At this age, children will be going through many changes that will prepare them for puberty. Teaching your children to be sexually responsible is one of the most important lessons.

As children approach puberty, they should know about

- The body parts related to sex and their functions
- How babies are conceived and born
- Puberty and how the body will change
- Menstruation (Boys and girls can benefit from this information.)
- Sexual intercourse, including information about why people choose to wait to have sex at a later age or until married
- Birth control
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), how they are spread, and how to protect themselves
- Masturbation
- Homosexuality
- Family and personal guidelines

For more information, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics Web site, www.aap.org. You also may find books on talking to your child about sexuality at your local library or bookstore.

About masturbation

Masturbation is a part of childhood sexuality that many parents find difficult to discuss. Up to the age of 5 or 6 years, it is quite common. Around age 6, children become more socially aware and may feel embarrassed about touching themselves in public. Make sure your children understand that masturbation is a private activity, not a public one. Masturbation in private may continue and is normal.

There are times when frequent masturbation can point to a problem. It could be a sign that a child is under a lot of stress or not receiving enough attention at home. In rare cases, it could even be a sign of sexual abuse. Some sexually abused children become overly interested in their sexuality. If masturbation becomes a problem, talk with your child's doctor. For most children, masturbation is nothing to worry about. It is normal.

Sex and the media

Media entertain, educate, and inform. But some messages may not be what we want children to learn.

American media today often portray sexual images and suggestive sexual content. In fact, the average young viewer is exposed to more than 14,000 sexual references each year. Only a small amount of what is seen in the media shows responsible sexual behavior or gives correct information about abstinence (not having sex), birth control, or the risks of pregnancy and STIs.

Media in any format can have a positive or negative effect on your children. This makes it important for you to know what your children are listening to or watching. Many lyrics can be obtained online in case you need help figuring out the exact words. Watch TV or go to the movies with your children—it can be a great starting point for your next talk about sex.

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From your doctor

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