



Parent Guide

Bullying Talking Points



BERNSTEIN BOOKS

For over 45 years, The Sam Bernstein Law Firm has been committed to the community. We are passionate about educating the public about the law, safety issues, and challenges that face Michigan families every day. We believe that knowledge is power and the more we know about the problems, the better chance we have of achieving the solutions.

We are a compassionate law firm that honors a family tradition and spirit of service to our clients and community. We help each other to do noble work that serves justice, strengthens each other, enriches our lives, and helps people.

The attorneys at The Sam Bernstein Law Firm have over 510 years of collective experience. They work hard every day for Michigan families. Bernstein Book publications are just one of our efforts to help inform Michigan residents about the important issues that affect their lives.

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Risk Factors of Bullying

Parents play a key role in preventing and responding to bullying. Below are risk factors of bullying:

Children at Risk of Being Bullied

Children are generally bullied when they have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Perceived as different from their peers such as being overweight, underweight, wearing glasses, different clothing, being new to a school or being unable to afford what kids consider “cool”.
- Perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- Depressed, Anxious or have low self esteem
- Less popular than others or have few friends
- Does not get along with other; seen as annoying, provoking or antagonize others for attention



Children More Likely to Bully Others

Children who have these factors are more likely to bully others:

- Well-Connected to their peers
- Overly Concerned about their popularity
- Like to dominate or be in charge of others
- More isolated from their peers
- Depressed, Anxious or have low self esteem
- Easily pressured by peers
- Can not identify with the emotions or feelings of others
- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement or having issues at home
- Thinks badly of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully others

Keep in mind, those who bully others do not need to be bigger than the children they bully. The power imbalance can come from a number of sources, such as popularity, strength or cognitive ability. Children who bully may have more than one of these characteristics.

Effect/Signs of Bullying

Kids Who are Bullied

Kids who are bullied can experience negative physical, school, and mental health issues. Kids who are bullied are more likely to experience:

- Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood.
- Health complaints
- Decreased academic achievement—GPA and standardized test scores—and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.



Kids Who Bully Others

Kids who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood. Kids who bully are more likely to:

- Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
- Get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school
- Engage in early sexual activity
- Have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults
- Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults.

Bystanders

Kids who witness bullying are more likely to:

- Have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety
- Miss or skip school



Why Kids Bully Other Kids

Children More Likely to Bully Others

There are two types of kids who are more likely to bully others:

- Some are well-connected to their peers, have social power, are overly concerned about their popularity, and like to dominate or be in charge of others.
- Others are more isolated from their peers and may be depressed or anxious, have low self esteem, be less involved in school, be easily pressured by peers, or not identify with the emotions or feelings of others.

Children who have these factors are also more likely to bully others;

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

Remember, those who bully others do not need to be stronger or bigger than those they bully. The power imbalance can come from a number of sources—popularity, strength, cognitive ability—and children who bully may have more than one of these characteristics.



Helping Young Children get Along with Others



Early Childhood often marks the first opportunity for young children to interact with each other. During the ages of 3-5 years, kids are learning how to get along with each other. Parents and guardians can help young children develop skills for getting along with others in age-appropriate ways.



- Model positive ways for young children to make friends. For example, practice friendly ways that children can ask to join others in play and take turns in games. Praise children for appropriate behavior. Help young children understand what behaviors are friendly.



- Help young children learn the consequences of negative behavior in terms they can understand. For example, say “if you don't share, other children may not want to play with you.” Encourage young children to tell an adult if they are treated in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, upset, or unhappy or if they witness other children being harmed.



- Set clear rules for behavior and monitor children's interactions carefully. Step in quickly to stop aggressive behavior or redirect it before it occurs.



- Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior. Young children should be encouraged to say “I'm sorry” whenever they hurt a peer, even accidentally. The apology should also be paired with an action. For example, young children could help rebuild a knocked over block structure or replace a torn paper or crayons with new ones.

Prevent Cyberbullying

Parents and children can prevent Cyberbullying. Together, you can explore safe ways to use technology.

- Talk with your children regularly about Cyberbullying and other online issues.

- Know the sites your kids visit and their online activity. Have a sense of what they do online and in texts. Learn about the sites they like. Try out the devices they use.



- Tell your kids that as a responsible parent you may review their online communications if you think there is a reason for concern. Installing parental controls filtering software or monitoring programs are one option for monitoring your child's online behavior, however do not rely solely on these tools.
- Ask for their passwords but tell them you will only use them in case of emergency.
- Ask to "friend" or "follow" your kids on social media sites or ask another trusted adult to do so.
- Encourage your kids to tell you immediately if they, or someone they know is being cyberbullied. Explain that you will not take away their computers or cell phones if they confide in you about a issue they are having.
- Establish rules about technology. For example, be clear about what sites they can visit, help them be smart about what they post or say, think about who they want to see the information or pictures they post online and tell kids to keep their passwords safe and not share them with friends.

Sam's Talking Points for Parents: Helping Children Cope with Bullies



Help Kids Understand Bullying

- Kids who know what bullying looks or sounds like are better able to identify it.
- Encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied.
- Talk about how to stand up to a bully– Discuss bullying scenes you watch on television or in movies..
- Talk about strategies for staying safe, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.
- Encourage kids to help other children who are bullied by showing kindness or getting help.
- Don't tell your child to ignore the bullying.

Communication is the Key

- Ask your children about their day and listen to them talk about school, social events, their classmates, and any problems they have. Start conversations about daily life and feelings with questions such as:
 - ◆ What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things?
 - ◆ What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with? What do you talk about?
 - ◆ What is it like to ride the school bus?
 - ◆ What are you good at? What would do you like best about yourself?

- Talking about bullying directly is an important step in understanding how this issues might be affecting your child. Start conversations about bullying with question like these:
 - ◆ What does bullying mean to you?
 - ◆ Describe what kids who bully are like. Why do you think people bully?
 - ◆ Who are adults you trust most when it comes to thinks like bullying?
 - ◆ Have you ever felt scared to go to school because you were afraid of bullying? What ways have you tried to change it?
 - ◆ What do you think parents can do to help stop bullying?
 - ◆ Have you or your friends left other kids out on purpose? Do you think that was bullying? Why or why not?
 - ◆ What do you usually do when you see bullying going on?
 - ◆ Do you ever see kids at your school being bullied by other kids? How does it make you feel?
 - ◆ Have you ever tried to help someone who is being bullied? What happened? What would you do if it happens again?

- There are other simple ways that parents and guardians can keep up to date with their children's lives:
 - ◆ Read class newsletters and school flyers. Talk about them at home with your child.
 - ◆ Check the school website.
 - ◆ Go to school events.
 - ◆ Greet and get to know your child's bus driver.
 - ◆ Meet and get to know teachers and counselors at Parent-Teacher Conferences or reach out by email.
 - ◆ Share phone numbers with other children's parents.

Encourage Kids to Do What They Love

- Help kids get involved in activities, interests and hobbies they like. They can volunteer, play sports, sing in a chorus or join a youth group or school club. These activities give kids a chance to have fun and meet others with the same interests.
- Involve your child in activities outside of school This way he or she can make friends in a different social circle.
- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem (enroll in martial arts, give choices and brag on choices, emotional rehearsal, visualization, etc.)

Treat Others with Kindness and Respect

- Encourage kids to treat their peers how they would want to be treated.
- As a parent or caregiver, by example, show the children in your lives that there is no place for bullying. Even if it seems like they are not paying attention, kids are watching how adults manage stress and conflict.
- Support bully prevention programs in your child's school. If your school doesn't have one, consider starting one with the other parents, teachers and concerned adults in school.
- Teach your child nonviolent ways to deal with bullies, like walking away, playing with friends or talking it out.



How to Get Help

According to Stopbullying.gov, when you, your child, or someone close to you is being bullied, there are many steps to take to help resolve the situation. Make sure you understand what bullying is and what it is not, the warning signs of bullying, and steps to take for preventing and responding to bullying, including how to talk to children about bullying, prevention in schools and communities, and how to support children involved. After reviewing that information, if you feel you have done everything you can to resolve the situation and nothing has worked, or someone is in immediate danger, there are ways to get help.

The Problem	What You Can Do
There has been a crime or someone is at immediate risk of harm.	Call 911.
Someone is feeling hopeless, helpless, thinking of suicide.	<p>Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline online or at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).</p> <p>The toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in our national network. These centers provide 24-hour crisis counseling and mental health referrals.</p>
Someone is acting differently than normal, such as always seeming sad or anxious, struggling to complete tasks, or not being able care for themselves.	Find a local counselor or other mental health services
A child is being bullied in school.	<p>Contact the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher 2. School counselor 3. School principal 4. School superintendent 5. State Department of Education
The school is not adequately addressing harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion.	<p>Contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School superintendent • State Department of Education • U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights • U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division



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