

Module 7: Bullying: What It is and How to Help Your Child

1.1 Parent Engagement

WestEd presents the Parent Engagement Migrant Modules; a module series developed on behalf of the California Department of Education, English Learner Support Division.

Growing Self-Confident Children Through Goal Setting and Growth Mindset

Migrant Education Office - English Learner Support Division - California Department of Education

Visit the CDE website for more information (www.cde.ca.gov).

This presentation was posted in October of 2019.

1.2 Navigating the Module

The following information will help you navigate this module:

- Use the menu on the left side panel and the navigation bar on the bottom of the screen to control this module.
- The tab key can also be used to navigate forward through the module components; shift+tab can be used to move backward.
- Use the audio button at the bottom right of the screen to turn the slide's audio narration on and off.
- Use the captions button at the bottom of the screen to turn the captions on and off.
- Use the transcript button at the bottom left of the screen to turn the transcript on and off.
- Transcripts for the complete module can be accessed in the resources menu.

The following keyboard shortcuts have been enabled for ease of use:

- N = Move to the next slide
- P = Move the previous slide
- S = Stop/Pause slide
- R = Resume/Play slide
- C = Turn closed captions on/off
- A = Turn audio narration on/off
- T = Turn narration text transcript on/off

The module will automatically save any progress made if connected to the Internet.

1.3 Welcome!

Welcome to Bullying: What It is and How to Help Your Child.

This is the seventh module in the supporting parent engagement module series.

These modules may be viewed in any order, so it may not be the seventh module for you.

The content of this module focuses on how parents can help their children should they experience or be involved in bullying.

The module will walk through the facts about bullying and offer strategies and support for parents and children.

1.4 Module Objectives

This module will focus on the topic of bullying, specifically in the school environment.

Bullying can be an incredibly challenging situation for families to deal with; this module will help parents understand the various bullying roles (participant, victim, or bystander) and how to approach bullying to best support their child, depending on the role they play.

The module will begin with a clear definition of what bullying is and what it is not.

Throughout the module, parents will learn statistics that surround bullying, the features of bullying, and the risk factors involved in bullying.

Finally, parents will learn strategies on how to best support their child through incidents of bullying and help their child gain control over situations where bullying could arise, such as through social media and Internet gaming.

Overall, this module will give parents the information, resources, and strategies they need to understand bullying and support their child in these situations.

1.5 Cultural Connections

Bullying is something many people have experienced.

Many do not see their own childhood behavior as bullying, especially if they grew up before bullying became a commonly discussed term and such a large problem with children.

Bullying behavior has been happening in the world for centuries.

Many dictators, or other powerful people, are in their positions because of bullying behavior.

It is challenging to explain to children that bullying is wrong when they often see adults model that type of behavior in their work or in social situations.

Culturally, bullying can be seen differently based on family beliefs and experiences.

Maybe what you consider bullying is different from what you see or hear described as bullying by others.

This module will discuss the broad definitions of bullying and what bullying is seen as in U.S. schools and society.

It is likely that you have had experience with bullying at some point.

Consider these questions before we move on to the definition of bullying:

- How do you define bullying?
- Do you accept bullying as a problem in our schools and with our children?
- How do you think a child who may be displaying bullying behavior should be handled?

1.6 What is bullying?

Bullying has become an epidemic in our society.

But how exactly bullying is defined is unknown to many.

1.7 Key Components of Bullying

When we discuss the act of bullying, we are talking about three key components:

- **Repeated:** This means that the act is happening over and over. This is not a one-time incident, but something that someone is doing more than once or twice. Examples of this would be someone repeatedly taking another child's lunch money or someone repeatedly calling another child a name or tripping them in the halls.
- **Intentional:** This means that the act has been done deliberately. Intention is central to the definition of bullying. An easier way to think about the concept of intention is that it is something that is done on purpose. The act is usually unkind, disrespectful, or just mean. Examples of this would be someone intentionally knocking someone over or writing mean notes about someone else. It could also be someone intentionally spreading rumors.
- **Imbalance of power:** This component is harder to define and can be challenging to understand. It means that someone has power, or perceived dominance, over another person. They are doing repeated and intentional acts in order to feel power over someone else. The

acts are usually done to make someone look bad, feel stupid, or influence other people to speak negatively about them. This imbalance of power between two people is what leads to bullying behavior. When someone feels that they have power or status over someone else, then they can exert that power to hurt someone emotionally and/or physically. While the imbalance of power component can be the hardest element of bullying to understand, it is the most negatively impactful on children.

When we notice any of these components at play, we need to step in.

When an adult can intervene and stop even one component from continuing, it can make a dramatic difference toward ending the bullying behavior.

It is important to recognize when things seem to be leading to potential bullying.

When a child feels powerful or has status or size over another, it can quickly lead to bullying.

When a child intentionally seeks out another child to do something unkind or unsafe, it's possible that it will happen again, and that repeated behavior will lead to bullying.

It is important to understand what bullying is so that you can recognize the behaviors and stop them before they lead to repeated, intentional acts characterized by an imbalance of power.

Each component of bullying can be devastating for children and adolescents, both for their self-esteem and their overall relationship with their peers.

Stepping in before bullying occurs is the most important action you can take toward solving the problem.

Remember, even when you are not sure if an act meets the definition of bullying, it should still be reported to the school.

Reporting allows schools to deal with the challenging issues impacting the lives of students.

1.8 What Bullying is Not

Now that we understand what bullying is, let's discuss what it is not.

Bullying has become such a commonly known term in our society that it is overused at times.

The bad thing about it being overused is that it can make people feel that bullying isn't actually happening, when it truly is.

Oftentimes, the term bullying is used to describe one-time situations that might be rude, unkind, or inappropriate, but are not actually bullying:

- **Being rude** is using bad manners or not being polite. This can happen when someone is upset or frustrated and maybe not thinking. When the intent of the rude behavior isn't to exert power over another person-even if they did intend to be hurtful-it isn't considered bullying. An example of this might be when one child ignores another child who is trying to start a conversation with them.
- **Being mean** involves being unfair, unkind, or spiteful. It is something that happens purposefully, but it does not usually involve a power imbalance. Examples of this might be when a child pushes into another child in line because they want to be in the front, or when a child does not let another child join a game or activity. When these situations are not directly targeting one child in a repeated way they are not considered bullying; they are simply mean acts that need to be discussed and remedied.
- **Behaving inappropriately** is when someone does something that is seen as unfit or improper for a situation or age group. An example of this might be a child saying their friend asked them to lie to their parents about a situation that the parents may not approve of.

While we don't want our children to experience or be involved in situations that involve rude, mean, or inappropriate behaviors, most times these situations do not involve bullying.

Again, it is important to recognize that these behaviors do need to be monitored and taken seriously because they can quickly evolve into bullying behavior.

1.9 Four Common Types of Bullying

There are multiple types of bullying that occur.

It is important to understand each of the types and how they differ.

Keep in mind that to be considered bullying, behaviors must be repeated, intentional acts characterized by an imbalance of power.

These components are the factors that mark the difference between unkind behaviors and bullying behaviors.

The four common types of bullying are physical, verbal, social/relational, and cyber.

Select each icon to learn more.

1.10 Physical Bullying

Physical aggression is what many people think of when they hear about bullying; they picture someone being shoved into a locker or stuffed in a garbage can.

Physical bullying can take many forms: hitting, kicking, spitting, hair-pulling, shoving, tripping, etc.

All of these physical acts are part of physical aggression and bullying.

These acts are often the easiest to detect and confirm as children that are physically bullied may have bruises or marks and other children often witness the acts of physical aggression.

A bully will intentionally leave marks and be physically aggressive in front of witnesses since it promotes the imbalance of power to have others see what the bully is capable of doing.

This type of bullying is not only emotionally damaging but can cause physical injury.

1.11 Verbal Bullying

Verbal aggression is another common type of bullying that is often witnessed by others.

Verbal bullying can take many forms: making threats, using hurtful words, teasing/making fun, yelling, etc.

We know that words hurt and verbal bullying can be incredibly devastating to children and adolescents.

While the verbal bullying doesn't leave physical marks, it keeps children from gaining confidence, feeling important, and feeling safe.

This type of bullying is sometimes hard to confirm because trying to do so often leads to "he-said, she-said" conversations where conflicting accounts are given.

1.12 Social and Relational Bullying

Social and relational bullying is something we see more and more of as children grow up.

While it is not unheard of for first and second graders to participate in social bullying, it is most common among young teens and adolescents.

Social and relational bullying can take many forms: social harassment or hazing; social isolation; making fun of friend groups, clothes, hair, money or access to things; starting and spreading rumors, etc.

When people are bullying someone socially, they are often excluding them and exerting power among their peers.

This type of bullying, paired with the changing and growing adolescent brain, can be incredibly damaging and feel life-crushing to young teens.

1.13 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a relatively new type of bullying that effects thousands of children.

With the accessibility of social media, the internet, and any form of online programming, bullying that occurs through the use of technology has become the latest form of bullying.

This form of bullying can quickly escalate as posts and other messaging can be quickly spread and accessed by many at one time.

It is easier for people to bully in this way because cyberbullying can often be done anonymously; no one has to know who they are, and they do not confront their target face-to-face.

The anonymity and distance that cyberbullying creates an environment where inhibitions are lifted and consequences can be ignored; many individuals who would never bully someone in person feel no constraints about cyberbullying.

This act of bullying can be extremely dangerous for all children as once something is posted to the internet it is often impossible to remove.

1.14 Is it bullying or not?

Understanding bullying and its various types can be very difficult for adults; especially when some of the types of bullying were not experienced by adults when they were children.

Children do learn about bullying in school, but sometimes they get confused when trying to determine the difference between bullying and someone who is just being mean or rude.

The acts of being mean, rude, and unkind can lead to bullying, and we want to control and stop those behaviors, but not every act is actual bullying.

To get a better understanding of these differences, let's go through some scenarios and decide which types of behaviors each represents.

1.15 Mariana and Gloria

Read Mariana and Gloria's story; then decide which of the terms categorize the scenario.

Select next to discover if you chose the right terms.

1.16 Mariana and Gloria (2)

The behaviors in this scenario can be characterized as rude and mean.

1.17 Fernando and Jayden

Read Fernando and Jayden's story; then decide which of the terms categorize the scenario.

Select next to discover if you chose the right terms.

1.18 Fernando and Jayden (2)

The behaviors in this scenario can be characterized as verbal bullying, social bullying, rude, and mean.

1.19 Midsi and Sophia

Read Midsi and Sophia's story; then decide which of the terms categorize the scenario.

Select next to discover if you chose the right terms.

1.20 Midsi and Sophia (2)

The behaviors in this scenario can be characterized as social bullying, cyberbullying, mean, and inappropriate.

1.21 Make it personal! (1)

It is never easy to hear stories from your children about when they were treated badly, made sad, or hurt.

It may even be more difficult if you experienced something similar when you were growing up.

Think back to when you were younger:

- Were you ever bullied or did you see bullying occur?
- How can your experiences help your child handle similar situations?

Take a few minutes to think about these questions.

1.22 Activity (1)

You may have heard of situations like those described in the scenarios.

Perhaps your children have experienced something with peers that was hurtful or maybe your children have told stories about what they have seen at school.

Consider the situations your children have experienced with their peers, or other situations you have heard of that might relate to this topic, as we complete an activity.

1.23 Facts About Bullying and Safety

Now that bullying has been defined and the types of bullying explained, let's look at how often bullying is happening in the lives of our children.

There are many statistics that can be found online about how common bullying is.

The statistics we will discuss are from the California Healthy Kids Survey (2015-2017 results).

Every couple of years, students are asked to participate in a statewide survey that measures the mental, emotional, and physical health of students at school.

This is called the California Healthy Kids Survey.

It is used to track the overall health of kids in the state.

The survey is given to all 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th graders enrolled in California schools.

The results are comprehensive and are used for various programs and funding sources as a measure of what is working or not working in our schools and as a guide for what areas need to be focused on.

The information you find on the following slides is specific to school safety and bullying in schools and represents a brief summary of only some of the areas addressed in the survey.

1.24 What are the facts about bullying?

Select each category to access the bullying statistics for elementary and secondary school (secondary covers both middle and high school).

Select the survey button to view the California Healthy Kids Survey report.

1.25 What are the facts about bullying? (2)

Here are the bullying statistics for children in elementary school:

- 12% report being pushed all or most of the time.
- 15% report having rumors or mean things said about them all or most of the time.
- 14% report being called bad names or being made fun of all or most of the time.

1.26 What are the facts about bullying? (3)

Here are the bullying statistics for children in secondary school:

- 23% report being made fun of or called names more than two times.
- 15% report having rumors or lies spread about them more than two times.
- 6% report being afraid of being beaten up at school.
- 31% report being harassed or bullied on school property for any reason.

1.27 What are the facts about feeling safe at school?

Select each category to access the school safety statistics for elementary and secondary school.

1.28 What are the facts about feeling safe at school? (2)

Here are the safety statistics for children in elementary school; the results were reported by 5th graders:

- 81% report feeling safe all or most of the time at school.
- 85% report a teacher or adult will do something about bullying most or all of the time if reported.
- 57% report they will do something to stop bullying if they see it most or all of the time.

1.29 What are the facts about feeling safe at school? (3)

Here are the safety statistics for children in secondary school; the results were reported by 7th, 9th, and 11th graders:

- 70% of 7th graders felt safe or very safe at school versus 60% of 11th graders.
- 31% of 7th graders, 27% of 9th graders, and 24% of 11th graders who are Latino or Hispanic report being harassed or bullied due to race.

1.30 More Bullying through Technology

"Between 2005 and 2017, the percentage of students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied at school during the school year decreased from 29 to 20 percent. In 2017, about 15 percent of students in grades 9-12 reported being electronically bullied during the previous 12 months."

This means that while it may seem that bullying is decreasing, what is actually happening is that the way children are being bullied is just shifting.

This is one of the reasons it is important to stay involved in what your children are doing online and on their phones.

1.31 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System indicated that, nationwide, 19% of students in grades 9-12 reported being bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.

On a previous slide, there was a big difference between how safe 7th graders felt at school versus 11th graders.

If bullying is happening at school, children will feel less safe.

While teachers and staff work to prevent bullying, many may not be aware it is happening.

It is important to share incidents that concern you with the school.

1.32 The Facts About Bullying

This visual gives overall facts about bullying provided by a non-profit organization called Stop Bullying Now.

They are a program that helps support parents of students who are being bullied.

While these facts can be overwhelming, it is important to remember that schools and organizations all over the country are continuing to work with children and families to teach about bully prevention and awareness.

Select each image to enlarge the information.

1.33 Video on Bullying

Select and play this short news clip developed by Child Trends.

1.34 Bullying Roles (1)

The roles kids play in bullying are not limited to those who bully others and those who are bullied.

The direct roles of bullying include:

- Kids who bully
- Kids who are bullied
- Kids who are bystanders

Select each tab to learn more about each role.

1.35 Bullying Roles (2)

Kids who bully are those children who engage in bullying behavior towards their peers.

There are many factors that may contribute to the child's involvement in this type of behavior.

Oftentimes, these students require some kind of support to change their behavior and address any other challenges that may be influencing their behavior.

While we may be angry at their behavior, it is important that we do not label kids who participate in bullying behavior as “bullies.”

This label leads to a mindset that the child cannot change their behavior or that they have no other qualities other than being a bully.

Most children who bully have many reasons for their actions and it is important for educators, families, and mental health professions to help children understand that they can find their voice, their worth, and their friends in more positive ways.

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.

1.36 Bullying Roles (3)

Kids who are bullied are the targets of bullying behavior.

Some children are more at risk of being bullied because of their personalities or other characteristics; examples could be size, shyness, or meekness.

This does not mean that all children with these characteristics will be bullied, and no characteristic justifies being them being bullied, it simply means that they are often the most vulnerable to bullying.

We need to support children in understanding how to handle bullying behavior and how to best respond to various bullying situations.

Many children are bullied throughout their lives in some way or another and it is essential to teach them how to cope and manage these situations.

Just as we don't want to label someone who bullies another child a "bully," we do not want to label someone who is being bullied as a "victim."

A victim label does not empower a child to cope but could instead make them feel helpless.

There are many ways to deal with being bullied, but responding with violence or self-harm can be more damaging than the original act of bullying.

1.37 Bullying Roles (4)

Even when a child is a bystander in a bullying incident, they do not escape involvement.

Witnessing bullying behavior has a strong effect on children, so it is important for them to learn how to respond to bullying when they see it happening.

There are three main roles kids play as bystanders: participants, silent witnesses, or defenders:

- **Participants:** These children may not start the bullying or lead in the bullying behavior, but they encourage or assist the children who are bullying. They might urge the bully to attack, join in on the bullying, or laugh and cheer the bully on.
- **Silent witnesses:** These children do not act as participants in the bullying behavior, but they may give audience to the bullying, which encourages the bullying to continue. They might try to remain separate from the bullying situation, but they do not defend the child being bullied.
- **Defenders:** These children make an effort to intervene and stop the bullying. They may verbally defend the child being bullied or report the incident to an adult.

These roles are important to understand in order to help a child that may be identifying with one or more of them.

All children should be taught how to become defenders and encouraged to act.

When a bystander stands up for someone being bullied, the bullying usually stops quickly.

1.38 Make it personal! (2)

Hearing about what bullying is, and the roles kids play in bullying situations, may bring up some concerns for you.

What fears or worries do you have for your child when it comes to bullying?

1.39 Signs and Risk Factors of Bullying (1)

There are many signs of bullying that parents should be watching for.

Having an open relationship with your child helps them feel as though they have someone to talk to should they feel unsafe or unsure about things happening at school or outside of the family home.

It is important to remember that bullying can happen at schools, parks, a neighbor's home, and even among cousins or friends.

While it may be hard to hear about these stories from your child, you may be able to identify some risk factors in the situations and provide them with support.

Select each tab to learn more about the signs and risk factors of bullying.

1.40 Signs and Risk Factors of Bullying (2)

There are many risk factors for a child who is being bullied.

Some of these risk factors are based on the way other children view the child being bullied, even if that isn't the way the child actually is, and some of these risk factors are based on characteristics or behaviors that the child may actually have:

- The child may be perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or being unable to afford what kids consider "cool."
- The child may be perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves.
- The child may be depressed, anxious, or have low self-esteem.
- The child may be less popular than others and have few friends.
- The child may not get along well with others, be seen as annoying or provoking, or antagonize others for attention.

It is important to remember that while a child may have these risk factors, they may never get bullied.

1.41 Signs and Risk Factors of Bullying (3)

There are many risk factors that may contribute to a child's involvement in bullying behavior.

These risk factors are based on characteristics or behaviors that the child exhibits:

- The child may be well connected to peers, feel social powers over others, and be concerned with popularity and dominance over peers.
- The child may be isolated from their peers, disconnected from school, and have low self-esteem.
- The child may be aggressive or easily frustrated.
- The child may have less parental involvement or be having issues at home.
- The child may think badly of others.
- The child may have difficulty following rules.
- The child may view violence in a positive way.
- The child may have friends who bully others.

Remember, those who bully others do not need to be stronger or bigger than the children 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.

Again, it is important to remember that having these characteristics does not automatically mean that a child is bullying other children.

1.42 Signs and Risk Factors of Bullying (4)

A child might not speak up when they are being bullied.

It is important for parents to watch for the signs that could indicate their child is being bullied:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches; feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits such as suddenly skipping meals or binge eating (Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.)
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations

- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

1.43 Signs and Risk Factors of Bullying (5)

It is also important for parents to watch for the signs that could indicate their child is bullying others:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

1.44 Effects of Bullying (1)

Bullying effects all involved.

Select each tab to learn how bullying effects those who are bullied, those who bully, and bystanders.

1.45 Effects of Bullying (2)

Kids who are bullied can experience a variety of negative physical, school, and mental health issues:

- 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.)

A small percentage of children who are bullied choose to lash out in an extremely violent and aggressive way, whether towards themselves with self-harm or suicide, or toward others through violent and harmful retaliatory acts.

1.46 Effects of Bullying (3)

Kids who bully are more likely to engage in negative behaviors:

- Abusing alcohol and other drugs
- Getting into fights, vandalizing property, and dropping out of school
- Engaging in early sexual activity
- Having criminal convictions and traffic citations
- Being abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults

Kids who bully others are often involved in violence and other risky behaviors into adulthood.

1.47 Effects of Bullying (4)

Kids who are bystanders to bullying can also suffer negative effects throughout their lives:

- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety
- Increased feelings of fear, stress, and guilt
- Reduced empathy
- Decreased school participation

Many of these damaging effects can be negated when bystanders act as defenders and make an effort to intervene-either directly or indirectly-when someone is being bullied.

1.48 Activity (2)

Bullying is a complicated issue.

Not only is it sometimes difficult to identify, but it can affect a large number of children-many of whom are bystanders.

Parents who regularly talk to their children about school, friends, and the activities they are involved are more likely to hear if there is bullying happening around them.

After hearing how often bullying happens, how it can happen, and who is affected, you may have some questions or concerns for your child.

Let's take some time to do an activity about what questions you can ask your child and how you can share your concerns.

1.49 Cyberbullying (2)

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over a digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets.

Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else.

It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else, causing embarrassment or humiliation.

Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

1.50 How does cyberbullying happen?

If someone has a phone, computer, or tablet, then they have the ability to be a part of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying can occur through texting, instant messaging, apps, social media outlets, messaging boards and forums, multi-player video games, or anywhere people can view, participate in, or share content.

New apps and programs are constantly being created, so there are always new ways to be in danger of cyberbullying.

1.51 Cyberbullying is challenging!

Cyberbullying can be particularly challenging because it happens online and is persistent, permanent, and hard to notice:

- **Persistent:** Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief.
- **Permanent:** Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if it isn't reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.
- **Hard to notice:** Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.

1.52 How to Handle Cyberbullying

When cyberbullying happens, it is important to document and report the behavior so it can be addressed.

These steps should be taken immediately whenever cyberbullying occurs:

- Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.
- Keep evidence of the cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.
- Block the person who is cyberbullying.

1.53 Cyberbullying Video

Let's watch a video with an example of cyberbullying.

Select the video to begin playing it.

1.54 Racial Bullying

When bullying based on race or ethnicity is severe, pervasive, or persistent, it may be considered harassment-which is covered under federal civil rights laws.

Schools are required to step in and address issues of race or hate within a school setting.

A school that fails to respond appropriately to the harassment of students based on a protected class may be violating one or more civil rights laws enforced by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice.

1.55 Bullying and the Role of Schools

School is the most common ground for bullying for many reasons:

- It is where students interact with one another the most.
- It is impossible for adults to have eyes on every child every second of a school day.
- It is the easiest environment to create to repeated, intentional imbalances of power among peers.

If a child is being bullied by a peer from school, it must be reported to the classroom teacher and/or the principal right away.

There is no way for a school to stop bullying if they do not know it is happening.

This step can sometimes be intimidating, but it is essential if the bullying behavior is to stop.

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If you are unsure if the behavior is a bullying behavior, remind yourself of the three essential requirements that are the hallmarks of bullying: Is it repeated? Is it intentional? Is there an aspect of power involved?

Even if the behavior only seems to meet one or two of these requirements, it is important to report the behavior to the school so that it can be stopped before it progresses into bullying behavior.

School procedures are fairly standard when it comes to bullying behavior.

There is no tolerance for it and it should be addressed by the school immediately.

It is important to remember that the school must hear all sides and investigate the stories of each party in these cases.

Oftentimes, schools will interview both all involved students, including bystanders.

When reporting to the school, it is important to remember that the child reporting will have to tell their story, even if it is hard for them to relive the incident.

Once the adults in the school know the severity of the situation, they can move forward with appropriate actions.

Sometimes there is an attempt to remediate the situation between the two children, but both children need to be willing to do this.

There are also many different forms of restorative justice that schools are being trained in.

This is where children who bully are asked to consider how the child who was bullied might have felt and to try and understand how they may be reacting to the situation.

The school's goal is to change and reform behavior first.

If those attempts do not work, then more strict disciplinary action can be taken.

As parents, it is important to remember that the school has procedures and protocols that must be followed.

They also must educate all children, so assuming a child will be removed from a school or a classroom for bullying behavior is not always reasonable.

What is reasonable is to expect that the behavior will stop and that the school will respond to concerns quickly and effectively.

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Module 7: Bullying: What It is and How to Help Your Child

Many school districts now have bully hotlines and anonymous tip emails in which students and parents can report bullying or dangerous behavior.

Schools understand the significance of the bullying epidemic and have strong rules in place to handle these situations.

Additionally, schools are now required to teach bullying prevention behaviors in the classroom.

These programs go hand-in-hand with many social/emotional learning curriculums that many schools already have in place.

Bullying prevention programs are being taught to decrease the incidents of bullying, but also to decrease the other major risk factors.

Students will learn about what bullying is, how they can help stop it, and how to report it immediately, should they need to.

This important piece of school reform has led to decreases in school safety concerns over the years.

Programming, awareness, and nationwide efforts to combat bullying can all be attributed to improved numbers in reporting and responding to bullying in schools.

1.56 Make it personal! (3)

Bullying isn't something that is new.

Every generation has experienced bullying of some type or another.

In some countries or communities, the bully may be someone in power-like a dictator or law enforcer.

In some cultures, certain roles in a family may have more power than others, and when the individuals in those roles use that power, they may be seen as a bully.

Think about your family and how and where you grew up; can you think of anyone who you considered to be a bully?

1.57 Cultural Connections (2)

Now that we have thought about the bullying we have seen happening or been made aware of, let's think about what we can do with our own families to talk about or prevent bullying.

In some families, talking with parents or adult authority figures can be intimidating.

Children may have been taught to show respect by being quiet; this may lead them to think they cannot talk to their parents or other family members about the situations or things that frighten them.

In other families, children may see family dynamics that they compare to peer interactions.

For example, if a child has a grandfather or uncle that makes all of the decisions for the family and doesn't consider how those decisions affect others, a child may see them as being mean.

This behavior may not be seen as mean to other family members who might be comfortable with the established dynamics in their family.

Think about ways you can talk to your children about family dynamics and friendships so they feel they have a safe space where they can share their problems.

Talking about what it means to be respectful and how everyone deserves to be respected will help them with relationships now and as they get older.

It is important to be respectful of adults, but everyone also deserves to be respected-including children.

Adults do not need to agree with their child or to allow for all the things that their child wants, but listening to a child's thoughts lets them feel respected.

1.58 Activity (3)

It can be difficult knowing how to start conversations with your children about bullying or to even respond to them when they share what may be happening at school or with their friends.

This activity will share some common experiences and what parents can say about these situations with their children.

1.59 How to Address Bullying at Home

There are many ways to address bullying at home.

Children are greatly impacted by the way they are disciplined and by the relationship they have with their parents.

These are some ways that bullying can be addressed at home:

- Teach kindness in the home.
- Be someone your child can talk to.
- Go the school for help as a partner.

- Set clear rules and expectations.
- Develop appropriate consequences for aggressive and inappropriate behavior.

You may notice that most of these strategies do not seem to directly address bullying, but by employing them with your children, you can build the characteristics and skills that can prevent bullying.

Select each textbox to look at each strategy in more detail.

1.60 How to Address Bullying at Home (1)

Telling children to be kind to one another is good way to begin to teach kindness but when we share with children why we want them to be kind and model how to be kind, then children truly learn what kindness is all about.

Here are some ways that parents can teach kindness in the home:

- Share personal stories of when someone was kind to you and how it made you feel.
- Tell your child when you witness kindness. (“That was a nice thing that person did, do you see how happy they are.”)
- Do kind things for one another. This can be listening to your child talk about their day, helping them with a chore when they feel overwhelmed, or taking a few minutes to sit down with them and ask them how they are feeling.
- Acknowledge when your child does something kind to you and say how it made you feel.

1.61 How to Address Bullying at Home (2)

It isn't always easy for a child to come to their parent with a problem.

When children are younger, their problems are simpler, but as they get older, problems can be with friendships and feelings and those are harder to share.

Parents may wonder how they can make their children feel more comfortable talking to them about the issues they are having.

Here are a few ways you can encourage your child to talk to them about anything:

- **Ask your child about their day or their friends when you are in the car together.** This gives your child a chance to talk without being face-to-face and sometimes that is easier. Also, most families are together in a car quite often, and it is a time where parents aren't working, cooking, or taking care of something else.

- **Be open to whatever your child wants to talk about.** Some topics are hard. Parents may feel protective and want to set a rule or a limit when their child talks about boyfriends or girlfriends. If this is the reaction a child gets, they may stop sharing. Try to listen first and then share your feelings: “I worry about you spending time with boys because I want to keep you safe, but that does not mean I don’t want you to share with me.”
- **Take time anytime.** Children have problems that come up all of the time, but it can take some time for them to feel ready to talk about those problems. We can’t predict when a child will feel like talking, and when the moment comes it may be a time when parents are busy or distracted. Taking even two minutes to stop and listen tells your child what they have to say is important.
- **Promise to love your child no matter what.** Giving your child the message that no matter what kind of trouble or problems they may have that they will still be loved may be the most impactful thing they can hear. This knowledge provides safety for them to share even difficult things. Remember that what may be hard for you to hear is likely scary for your child to share.

1.62 How to Address Bullying at Home (3)

Schools want children to feel safe and to enjoy their time at school.

When a child feels unsafe or unhappy, they may not be comfortable telling someone at school.

Parents can ask for help from the school to help their child:

- **Meet with a teacher or administrator** if your child feels like they are being bullied and feels like they can’t speak up for themselves.
- **Ask for help.** It is always okay to ask for help because parents do not always know the answers. When parents ask for help from the school, it shows the child that school is a safe place to ask for help.
- **Recognize that you may need to tell the school,** even if your child does not want you to. Share the concern your child has about going to the school for help and ask that the problem be kept confidential. School administrators know how to handle difficult and confidential situations between children.

1.63 How to Address Bullying at Home (4)

Now that you have learned about what bullying may look like, you can better support your child.

Be clear with your child regarding how they are to behave with adults and with peers:

- Tell children what you expect of them:
 - “I expect you to treat people with respect. When someone is mean or rude to you, it does not mean you act the same way.”
- Share your values with your child to remind them how to live their lives:
 - “It is important to me that you represent our family well when you are with others. This means being kind, helpful, and polite, even when it is not easy to be that way.”
 - “I want you to help people who need help even when it is hard. Step in when you see someone being treated badly and if that is too hard, talk to me or your teacher.”

Standing up to someone who is mean or standing up for someone who is being treated mean is not easy for a child. Not standing up for them is also not easy.

Teach your child that they can go to safe adults to talk about what they are seeing and ask how they can help.

Make sure they understand that telling an adult is helping.

1.64 How to Address Bullying at Home (5)

While we don't want our children to be the ones who are bullying or supporting a person who is bullying, it may be something that is happening.

It is important to develop appropriate consequences for aggressive and/or inappropriate behavior:

- Confront your child if you see or hear them taking an active role in bullying. Tell your child why their behavior is hurtful and that it must stop.
- Remind your child of your values and give them an appropriate consequence. An example for younger might be time alone to think about their behavior. An example for older children might be writing an apology note or doing something nice for the person they wronged. Or it could mean a loss of privileges.
- Share the behaviors you are seeing with the school (when appropriate), even if this is difficult. The school may already be seeing some of the behaviors and providing consequences. Working together, the school and parents may find consequences that support each other and send a clear message to the child.

1.65 How to Prevent Bullying

While it is important to learn about what bullying is and what schools are doing about it, it is just as important to learn what parents can do at home with their children:

- Help kids understand bullying.
 - Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely.
 - Tell kids that bullying is unacceptable.
- Make sure kids know how to get help.
 - Kids who know what bullying is can better identify it; they can talk about bullying if it happens to them or others.
 - Keep the lines of communication open.
 - Check in with kids often.
 - Listen to them.
 - Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
 - Research tells us that children really do look to parents and caregivers for advice and help on tough decisions.
 - Sometimes spending 15 minutes a day talking can reassure kids that they can talk to their parents if they have a problem.
- Encourage kids to do what they love.
 - Help kids identify their special interests.
 - Allow kids to take part in the activities, interests, and hobbies that they like.
 - Encourage kids to 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; they can build confidence and friendships that can help protect them from bullying.
- Model how to treat others.
 - Treat others with kindness and respect.
 - Show the kids in your life that there is no place for bullying.
 - Kids learn from adults' actions.
 - Even if it seems like they are not paying attention, kids are watching how adults manage stress and conflict, as well as how they treat their friends, colleagues, and families.

1.66 What Parents Can Do About Bullying

There are things that parents can do at home on their own, as well as things that can be done with the school, to address this issue.

You may notice that most of these items were already discussed in this module, including recognizing the warning signs, learning what bullying is and isn't, and the importance of talking to your child about bullying.

Do not be afraid to talk to the school about any concerns you have about bullying.

Schools want children to feel safe and happy at school and preventing and addressing bullying is a big part of that.

1.67 Bullying Video

Select and play this video from the stop bullying campaign put on by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

1.68 Take-Home Activity

Here is a take-home activity that you can complete:

- Create a card that shows kindness to someone in your family.
- Discuss what was learned from this module with your family and share the card you made.
- Remind your family members that kindness is the best and only option in your home and discuss how you can support them.

1.69 Make a plan. (1)

Many new ideas were shared in this module.

You may be excited and ready to try some of the strategies you have learned.

As parents, you are very busy and sometimes working and taking care of the family feels like it takes up most of your day.

To support you in trying these new strategies, there is a resource called Action Planning.

Download this resource and answer the questions about what you are going to try with your children before the next meeting.

Keep this resource with you so you can make notes as you try new things at home.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT MODULES SERIES
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We hope that you share your experiences with the group next time.

You may find that others have had the same types of experiences.

1.70 Congratulations and thank you!

This concludes Module 7—Bullying: What It is and How to Help Your Child.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this module!