

TALK TIPS

Help My Child is a Bully!

It can be unsettling to hear that your child is a bully. If you ever find yourself in this predicament, follow these guidelines to get at the root of the problem and help your child grow.

1. Investigate all accusations that your child is bullying others. It is important to take the accusations seriously and ask questions to uncover the facts. Don't automatically defend your child without understanding all parties perspectives.
2. Explore the meaning and intention of your child's negative or hurtful behavior. Ask open-ended questions to get them to discuss their behavior.
3. Uncover what they were trying to communicate to the victim and help them find more appropriate ways to get their needs met.
4. View an incident as a teaching moment to help your child develop positive character traits. Take it seriously and remind them you are available to support them when they are having a difficult time with others.
5. Talk about your family's values, morals and your expectations for appropriate behavior when they are away from home.
6. Teach them empathy skills and the importance of compassion. It is also essential to discuss being tolerant of people's differences.
7. Ask that they make amends to the victim. This can be done in person, or with a written letter or phone call. The point is to get them to face up to their wrongdoing and take responsibility for their actions.
8. Enforce effective consequences. Be sure to follow through with some appropriate consequences for their negative behavior. Some kids learn simply by having an enlightening conversation with their parents, others from making amends. However, some kids need to feel the pain of their wrongdoing, depending on the severity of the bullying incident.
9. Use the Kid Pointz behavior contract to write up the bullying incident and choose an effective consequence. Be sure to have them sign the contract to show they agree with what is expected of them in the future.

