

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

Your Child's Real Nightmare: The Bully?

(NAPSA)—Bullying is defined as constantly saying or doing nasty or unpleasant things or teasing in a way someone doesn't like. Here are some tips on dealing with bullying from the 120-year-old children's crisis charity, KidsPeace.



Be on the lookout for:

- Sudden fear or reluctance to go to school
- Ripped or torn clothing at the end of the school day
- Frequent cuts or bruises and excuses

Learn how to deal with bullying

to explain them

- Lost lunch money or possessions and excuses you have trouble believing
- Spending more time alone
- Grades that begin to fall
- Spending less time doing activities once enjoyed
- Changes in sleeping or eating
- Physical complaints
- Looking and acting sad

What to do

Pay attention to the problem, says KidsPeace President & CEO C.T. O'Donnell II. Parents need to help their child deal with bullying, and, in some cases, to protect the child from emotional and physical harm.

- Talk—let your child know you know something's wrong
- Listen—encourage your child to talk
- Support—let your child know it's not his fault

- Protect—if your child is in physical danger, talk to the school authorities

- Encourage—suggest your child talk to the bully (only if he is not in physical danger)

- Reach out—tell a teacher or guidance counselor if necessary

My child might be a bully

"Bullying can be serious—for the bullier and the child who is bullied," says Alvin Poussaint, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and National Director of the KidsPeace Lee Salk Center for Research. "It's important to address the underlying reasons before they lead to even more harm."

Kids bully because:

- They need to be in control
- They're jealous, but have trouble sharing
- They learned threats or violence get them what they want
- They've seen those close to them bully someone else
- They've been bullied and may be trying to get back at somebody without realizing it
- They have trouble controlling anger
- They don't know how to talk about how they feel
- They're used to getting what they want
- They have low self-esteem
- They see a lot of violent shows or games

I want to help

Try some of these suggestions:

- Awareness—Let your child know you're aware of bullying behavior

- Stick to it—Even though he denies it

- Show real concern—Let her know you want to help and are concerned about her behavior

- Talk—Talk about what you've seen or heard, but don't judge him

- Teach her—She may not know how to talk about feelings. Be open about the importance of talking, especially about upsetting things

- Be careful—Bullying, frequent yelling or violence at home, can affect younger children

KidsPeace offers parents and guardians useful information about children and common crises of growing up at www.kidspeace.org. Older children and teens can visit the safe, anonymous and free self-help Web site, www.TeenCentral.Net. There they can work out problems, share stories with other teens, and find friendly, personalized, clinically screened advice. "Sometimes," says Lewis P. Lipsitt, Ph.D., child development expert and National Director of the KidsPeace Lee Salk Center for Research, "the most comforting thing to know is that you and your children are not alone and that help is available."

KidsPeace is dedicated to giving help, hope and healing to children facing crises such as traumas, depression, and the stresses of modern life.

KidsPeace helps thousands of children at 50 centers nationally, and millions more through public education efforts supported by its national spokesperson, TV personality, Leeza Gibbons.