

HANDOUT: STEPS TO TAKE IF YOUR CHILD IS A VICTIM OF BULLYING AT SCHOOL

Because you might not always immediately recognize if your child is a victim of bullying, it's important to talk with your child about his or her school day every day. Find out about friends in the classroom. At meetings with the teacher, don't hesitate to ask about how your child is fitting in socially.

Children who are bullied typically are anxious, insecure, cautious, and suffer from low self-esteem. Rarely do these children defend themselves or retaliate when confronted by students who bully them. When parents discover—or suspect—that their child is being bullied at school, they should confront the problem immediately by following these steps:

1. Keep a written record of when the acts of bullying occur. Your record should include the names of the children involved, date and time of the bullying, and what happened.
2. Arrange to meet with your child's teacher as soon as possible to discuss your concerns.
3. Ask for the teacher's observations of bullying behavior toward your child.
4. Find out how the teacher plans to address the issue.
5. If you have concerns about how your child is coping with the stress of being bullied, ask to talk with the school counselor or make an appointment with a mental health professional.
6. Follow up with the school approximately one week after your meeting to find out if circumstances have changed for the better.
7. If there isn't any improvement, talk with the school principal.
8. Keep notes of all your meetings with teachers and administrators.

Research has found that bullying occurs most often in schools where there is little to no supervision during breaks, where teachers and students are indifferent to or accept bullying behavior, and where rules against bullying are not consistently enforced.