



ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH, INC

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STRATEGIES PARENTS CAN USE TO ELIMINATE BULLYING

Developed by Nate Terrell, LCSW and Anita Foeman, Ph.D.

- 1) Make sure that your children understand what constitutes bullying/sexual harassment, that they have a right to be treated with respect at all times and the steps they should take if they are bullied/harassed (such as telling you).
- 2) Teach your children that bullying, sexual harassment, etc. is identified by what is experienced rather than what was intended. If they do not like how they are treated, it doesn't matter whether the perpetrator was "joking" or not.
- 3) If your children report that they have been bullied, calmly gather as much information as you can about the situation and then brainstorm solutions to their bullying situation. Be careful not to overreact since you may undermine their confidence in their ability to resolve their own problems. Trust your gut to determine whether they have the savvy to respond themselves or if you need to intervene more directly.
- 4) Use role-play to enable your child to learn effective ways to respond to bullies such as disarming them through Socratic questions, offering to be helpful, humor, unpredictable behavior, etc.
- 5) In order to mobilize peer pressure to protect your child from bullying, invite a group of her/his friends to your house for an "anti-bullying party" during which group intervention strategies can be developed and practiced.
- 6) If your child is chronically bullied, meet with school staff to develop a "game plan" which insures her/his protection through maximizing time with adults, identifying places he/she can go that are safe from bullying, etc. It is also important to get them into counseling to help them learn effective responses to bullying, increase their confidence (if necessary) and strengthen their social skills since having friends significantly reduces the chances of being bullied.
- 7) If you are informed that your children have bullied others, try not to become defensive. Instead, gather all the facts and help them develop their sense of empathy, learn positive ways to get attention and change the underlying beliefs that caused their behavior.
- 8) Encourage your children be friends with a wide variety of other students and to extend friendship and/or support to bullying victims and/or isolated peers.
- 9) Whenever possible, observe your children in school and/or with their peers to get a sense of their social interactions and to make sure that they are not victims or perpetrators of bullying.

