

Student Services

Leading adolescent and child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg has put together six webisodes to give parents practical tips to deal with bullying. Below is a transcript of his practical advice about 'How do you support your child?' The webisode is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDfjMHIS_9A

How do you support your child?

If bullying isn't challenged by people in a position of authority then guess what, the bully keeps bullying. Teachers, Parents need to take a stand! If your child is being bullied or harassed, you may feel angry, anxious or sad, however it is important that you stay calm and listen carefully to your child, praise them for talking to you about what has happened, find out what happened, who was involved, where it happened and if anyone else saw it. Write down what your child says so that you can talk to the school.

Your child may not want to tell the school about the bullying, however it is very important that you let the school know. Talking about the problem with your child's teacher is an important step in solving it. Make a time to talk to your child's teacher, school counsellor, deputy principal or the principal. Be as clear as possible about what happened. Ask what the school intends to do, and ask for a follow up meeting. Keep in touch with the school and let the staff know if the problem continues.

Things to say to your child who is being bullied

1. Talk - Start a conversation about being bullied. But don't make it intense or you might deter them from talking to you.
2. Listen - Hear the whole story without interrupting. Ask what they want to happen before you make any suggestions.
3. Explain - It's normal to feel hurt. It's never OK to be bullied, and it's NOT their fault.
4. Find out what is happening - Ask what, when and where the behaviours occurred, who was involved, how often and if anybody else saw it. Find out if any teachers know and if the school's done something to address the situation.
5. Give sensible advice - Don't advise your child to fight back. Don't explain that the child doing the bullying did not mean it—they did. Don't tell them it will go away—it probably won't. Don't let your child stay away from school—it won't solve the problem.
6. Help your child work out some things to do, like walk away when the bully approaches you. Try and imagine it's a friend you're walking away from - this can be a way of making sure your body language (which you're usually unaware of) doesn't give away a sense of fear.
 - It might help to concentrate on thinking about something else (Eg - Like what you'll do next weekend, counting to 100)

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- Have a saying or a statement that you can repeat in your head when the bully approaches you to block out a sense of fear.
1. Begin by having a conversation about being bullied. But don't make it intense or you might deter them from talking to you.
 2. Try and get the whole story from them, without interrupting. Then, ask what they want to happen **before** you make any suggestions.
 3. Explain to them that it's normal to feel hurt. It's **never** OK to be bullied, and it's **NOT** their fault.
 4. Find out what is happening. Ask what, when and where the behaviours occurred, who was involved, how often and if anybody else saw it. Find out if any teachers know and if the school's done something to address the situation.
 5. Contact the school. Check the school's bullying policy. Make an appointment to speak to your child's teacher or coordinator. Be calm! Make a follow-up appointment in a week or two to make sure the situation is being addressed. Take your child with you.
 6. **Don't** advise your child to fight back. **Don't** explain that the child doing the bullying did not mean it—they did. **Don't** tell them it will go away—it probably won't. **Don't** let your child stay away from school—it won't solve the problem.
 7. Help your child work out some things to do.

Young people will take their cue from you, so above all stay calm. Good Luck.