



Parenting Tips: Supporting Bystanders

What we know:

Eighty-five percent (85%) of school aged children witness bullying in their schools, neighborhoods and homes. Their action or inaction plays a crucial role in whether an incident of bullying stops or is reinforced. As adults, we have the responsibility to teach and support our children when they encounter bullying.

What parents can do:

- **Become Informed**
Educate yourself about the facts of bullying, the warning signs that a child may be the target of bullying or bullying others, and steps you can take to prevent bullying.
- **Examine Your Personal Feelings, Values, Experiences**
 - What kind of group, if any, did you belong to in junior high or high school?
 - When you were a teen, what got a boy high status and what got him teased? What got a girl high social status and what got her teased?
 - Did you ever watch a friend be cruel to another child but do nothing to stop it? If you did try to stop it, what happened?
 - Were you ever cruel to other children? What motivated you?
 - How do these experiences guide your interactions with your children now?
- **Walk the Walk**
Model the behavior you want from your child. This not only includes treating others with respect and kindness, but also refraining from gossiping and spreading rumors.
- **Take a Stand**
If we want our children to stand up to bullying behavior, we have to be willing to take a stand too. Adults are also bystanders to bullying. Use teachable moments to support targets of bullying or to intervene during a bullying incident.
- **Communication**
 - Start an ongoing dialogue with your child
 - Messages about bullying behavior must be consistent between parents, school staff and other caregivers