

More About Bullying

Many children know a lot about bullying because it happens often in their neighborhoods and schools. Bullying is aggressive or abusive behavior directed toward another person, usually someone weaker. Research shows that nearly 30 percent of U.S. students in grades 6 to 10 have either been bullied or have bullied other students.

FORMS OF BULLYING

Bullying takes different forms in different situations. Some forms of bullying are physical, such as hitting or shoving. Other forms of bullying are verbal or emotional, including teasing, spreading negative rumors about someone, or isolating a person from a group. Boys are more likely to be bullies than girls, and they are also more likely to be the victims of bullies. Bullying between girls generally takes verbal or emotional forms, while bullying between boys is more likely to be both physical and emotional. No matter what form it takes, however, bullying has many negative effects on both the bully and the victim.

EFFECTS ON THE VICTIM

People who are bullied suffer emotionally as well as physically. Bullying can cause the victim to feel anxious, lonely, tense, or afraid. Bullying affects the victim's self-esteem. Many students who are bullied stay home from school because of fear and humiliation. Even when they have the courage to go to school, they often have trouble concentrating on their school work. Victims often feel helpless to stop the bullying and may become depressed and think about harming themselves.

The effects of bullying often last into adulthood. Studies have shown that adults who were bullied when they were young are more likely to have problems with depression and low self-esteem.

EFFECTS ON THE BULLY

While many people understand the negative consequences of being bullied, they may not realize that the bully is also affected. Bullies are more likely to skip or drop out of school, get into fights, drink alcohol, and smoke. Research shows that 60 percent of boys who were bullies in middle school were convicted of a crime by the time they were 24 years old.

CAUSES OF BULLYING

Children bully others for many reasons. Some bullies need to feel stronger and more powerful. Hurting someone else makes them feel that way. Others feel that they must bully to keep from being bullied themselves. Sometimes children bully because they are imitating someone else.

Research has shown that bullies tend to have trouble following rules and controlling their temper. They tend to be stronger than other children and view violence positively. They often come from homes where the parents provide little supervision. Any discipline they receive may be harsh and physical, and there may be bullying within the home itself.

PREVENTING BULLYING

Stopping bullying requires action. It does not usually go away on its own. Although there is no simple solution, certain steps can help:

- If a child is being bullied, he or she should tell an adult, such as a parent, teacher, or other caregiver. Children who are being bullied need to understand that it is not their fault, and that they do not deserve to be treated badly. The situation is not their fault.

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- Children who are being bullied should try to stay with a group of people. Bullies often harass victims when they are alone.
- If possible, the person being bullied should try to stand up to the bully by telling the bully to stop and then by walking away.
- Acting confidently by making eye contact and having good posture can reduce a person's likelihood of being bullied.
- Anyone seeing a child being bullied should step in and stop the bullying.

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE

Bullying is a problem for schools because it affects students' ability to learn. School personnel must acknowledge that bullying is a problem and decide how to both minimize its occurrence and deal with it. There are a number of ways schools can reduce bullying through setting and communicating high expectations. For example, rules against bullying should be clearly posted. Schools should closely supervise transitions from one activity to another, and unstructured times, such as lunch. Rules need to be explained and consistently enforced. Providing support and protection against bullying decreases the amount of bullying in a school.

Taking Action

With a group of three or four other students, discuss bullying at your school. Use the following questions to guide your discussion. Then write a brief report summarizing your discussion.

- When and where does bullying occur most at your school?
- Does your school have rules against bullying? If so, how are they communicated?
- What consequences do students face if they bully others while at school?
- What more could your school do to help prevent, or reduce the amount of, bullying?
- What can *you* do to help prevent bullying?

Giving Allowances

Parents often wonder how to teach their children about handling money. Many experts say that the best approach is to start by giving them an allowance. Linda Barbanel, a behavior specialist, says “Children who get an allowance learn how to set priorities, save, negotiate, and live within their means. Those who get money or clothes or toys whenever they want them, simply learn how to ask for more.”

One issue on which the experts disagree is whether or not to tie an allowance to the child’s completing chores around the home. Most experts agree that all children should be expected to help around the home simply because they are family members. Some say that tying an allowance to chores teaches that to receive benefits, the child must also meet responsibilities. Others say that paying for work sets a bad precedent. Anytime a parent asks that the child do something, the child may expect to be paid for it.

Another important question is how much to give. Of course, a family’s circumstances are the main factor in answering this question. Some experts suggest that the key principle is that the allowance should be enough so that the child can buy something he or she wants without waiting too long. On the other hand, it is important not to give too much. If children can afford to buy everything they want, they are getting too much. They should have to save and choose among the things they want to buy. Some parents give \$1.00 every week or two weeks for every year of the child’s age—for example, \$5.00 for a five-year-old, \$10.00 for a ten-year-old, and so forth. The amount of the allowance is then increased as the child gets older.

How is the allowance to be used? Some experts suggest that the child divide the allowance into two parts, using some for everyday expenses and putting some away for savings. Other experts suggest

dividing the allowance in three parts, with the third part going to a charity of the child’s choice. The benefit of having an allowance system, experts say, is to teach a child to manage money. Only if some money is saved for more expensive purchases is that lesson learned. Parents also need to make sure that the child understands what must be paid for with the allowance, perhaps extra clothes, and entertainment expenses. If parents do not want the child to buy certain things, such as junk food, that rule should be set. Parents may also want to set a guideline for large purchases. For example, they might set a spending limit of \$30.00. Any purchases over \$30.00 would need to be approved by them.

It is also important to set a specific allowance day, perhaps weekly or bi-weekly. Setting and keeping a payday will help a child learn how to save and budget for the things he or she wants to buy. Money should not be taken away from a child for misbehavior. However, if the child breaks something, such as a dish, it may be appropriate to have the child pay for a replacement from his or her allowance.

Experts give three important points of advice to parents who give allowances:

- Stick to the system. Let the child use the money saved to buy the CD he or she wants. Do not buy it for the child.
- Remember that the money is the child’s to manage.
- Be prepared for the child to make mistakes. Some children—especially younger ones—spend everything as soon as they receive the week’s allowance. Give them a chance to learn that they need to be more careful with their money to avoid disappointments later.

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Taking Action

Pretending that you are a parent, create an allowance system that you think would be appropriate for a seven-year-old. How much would you give the child? Would you expect help around the home in return? Would you put any limits on what the child could use the money for? Describe your allowance system in the spaces below. Once you have created that system, explain how it would—or would not—change for a twelve-year-old.

Allowance System		
Age 7		Age 12
	Amount	
	When paid?	
	Chores required, if any	
	Rules for saving and sharing	
	Rules for spending	

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