

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone is being intentionally hurt either by words or actions. It usually happens more than once. The child feels upset and has a hard time stopping what is happening to him or her.

Children with special needs are more likely to be bullied.

Reports find that children with a disability are 60% more likely to be bullied compared to 25% of non-disabled children.

Types of Physical Bullying

- hitting
- pushing and shoving
- fighting
- tripping
- yelling at someone
- making rude gestures
- taking or breaking another person's things

Types of Emotional Bullying

- name calling
- making fun of someone
- laughing at someone
- leaving someone out on purpose
- starting rumors or telling lies about someone
- sending mean messages on a computer or cell phone
- trying to make someone feel bad about who they are

What is cyber bullying?

Bullying has also become harder to detect as more and more of children's social life takes place online. Cyber bullying is now estimated to represent around 15 percent of all bullying cases, and that number is sure to rise. Disturbingly, it is an aspect of harassment that parents are often unable to detect.

On social media, the sort of belittling and shaming that occurs in cases of cyber bullying is more obscured to authority figures that might otherwise be able to step in and do something about it.

Cyber bullying is often even more humiliating and demoralizing since it can be more visible to the victim's classmates than any incident that might happen in the hallway at school.

What makes children with autism susceptible to bullying?

- Others may pick up on their unique mannerisms
 - Pacing
 - Verbalizing – talking to themselves
 - Repetitive movements
 - Reactions to others
- They may prefer solitary play making them more vulnerable because there are no peers around to protect them

How can I tell if my child is being bullied?

- Some children may be able to tell you if something happened to them at school or online.
- You may notice injuries – scrapes, bruises
- Ripped clothes
- Missing items – electronics, book bags
- A child who is being bullied may have difficulty eating or sleeping. They may refuse to go to school.
- If direct questions don't work you can try something called the *emotion timeline*

Bullying affects student's ability to learn.

- Higher absenteeism and school avoidance
- Decrease in grades
- Loss of interest in academic achievement
- Increase drop-out rates

What parents can do

- Know the schools bullying policy
- Meet with the school to discuss incidents & see if they were handled according to policy

What teachers and parents should be doing

- Lead by example – address every incident you witness & hear about
- When adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior they send the message that it is not acceptable
- Explain what went wrong and why
- Incorporate specific bully training into the classroom and at home
- Develop a buddy system or “Circle-of-Friends” so the student with autism isn't alone
- Provide consequences for by-standers