



Bullying

Bullying is a serious problem with long-lasting effects that can be the root cause of academic failure, lack of self-esteem, and behavior problems.

Most bullying takes place where adults can't see it or hear it. Bullies need an audience of their peers to establish their power over the victim, but the last thing they want is an audience of adults who have power over them and can make them stop.

Pay attention to interactions between your child and other children. Does your child seem fearful, withdrawn, lonely, and shy? Are the children your child is playing with especially aggressive, need to "win" all the time, seek excessive attention, and are always pushing the boundaries of rules? How do the children get along with each other? What happens when they're seated beside each other, or are assigned to the same groups and expected to work together? Be watchful and alert.

Other signs that your child may be being bullied are:

- Frequent illness
- Frequent complaints of headache, stomachache, pains, etc.
- Sudden changes in behavior (bed-wetting, nail-biting, tics, problems sleeping, loss of appetite, depression, crying, nightmares, stammering, stuttering, etc.)
- Seems anxious, fearful, moody, sad; refuses to say what's wrong
- Changes walking route to school, wants to change buses, begs to be driven to school (refuses to walk or ride the bus)
- Comes home from school with scratches, bruises, damage to clothes or belongings, etc. that don't have obvious explanations; makes improbable excuses
- Comes from school hungry (lunch money was "lost" or "stolen")
- Possessions are often lost, damaged, or destroyed
- Frequently asks for extra money (for lunch, school supplies, etc.)