

Tips for Parents

It is hoped that the following tips will help parents promote the acceptance of their children, build their self-esteem and confidence, and prevent their children from being victimized:

- Keep a log of the bullying events: When, Where, Who (including witnesses), What happened. Present this log to the teacher and other school personnel – but not during school hours when other students can see you there. Presenting such a log sometimes will motivate the school system to take action because it increases their awareness of the problem and they become fearful of legal action.
- Talk to your lawyer and see what rights your child has and how he/she can be protected from the bully. Then decide if you want your child in school under those conditions.
- Do not call the bully's parents unless you are certain they will believe you and try to address the problem in a way that it will not make the situation worse for your child.
- Look for ways to build your child's body strength. Help your child establish a schedule that includes regular exercise (lifting weights, aerobics, etc.). There are many benefits from taking self-defense courses: self-respect, pride, body strength, and confidence.
- Help your child make friends outside of school. For example, your child might become a scout or join a club or youth group in a local church. Your child could also have an e-mail friend – with your supervision.
- Identify caring school personnel who are willing to help your child – perhaps even befriend him/her. Tell them when and where he/she is being bullied and ask them to supervise these areas.
- Label everything your child has with a permanent marker. The bully is less likely to want to steal it from him/her.
- Help your child identify the interests and hobbies he/she has in common with others. For example, your child might notice that other students in his/her class/school ride horses.
- Help your child learn a new hobby or develop a new skill, such as painting, drawing, or playing an instrument. This might help your child feel good about himself or herself, carry themselves with more confidence, and may even help your child develop additional friends.
- Ask the principal to prevent bullying by training teachers, bus drivers, counselors, and other adults in your school. They need to learn how to prevent bullying and how to stop it. They also need to learn how to help victims. They also need to learn how it is connected to other problems: drugs, gangs, cults, teen pregnancy, runaways, stress and illness in children, absenteeism, discipline problems, etc. You might also ask them to buy an anti-bullying book, such as *The Bully Free Classroom*, that can help them. Ask local parent organizations, civic organizations or corporations to sponsor a workshop by Dr. Beane and/or to purchase his book for teachers, counselors, school psychologists and school administrators in your areas. Help your school system implement an anti-bullying campaign.

- Ask yourselves: "Is my child doing something or wearing something that might be encouraging mistreatment?" Once again, no one deserves to be bullied, but sometimes there are changes that the victim needs to make.
- Increase the awareness of the problem of bullying through articles in your local newspapers, presentations at local civic meetings, presentations at local parent/teacher meetings, etc.
- Ask an older student to mentor your child. Mentoring can be effective. Even adults are being encouraged to mentor one another. The mentor can go places with your child and do a lot of fun things with him/her.
- Share with your child the information in "Tips for the Victim of Bullying" written by Dr. Beane and found in the Free Resources section of BullyFree.com.
- Make sure your discipline style is not too permissive or too aggressive. It should be firm, controlled and filled with love. Good discipline makes your child mentally strong, confident and self-controlled.
- Pray for your child and the bully. Pray that your child will find acceptance and peace and that the bully's heart will be changed.