

Bullying = Power Over Others

Bullying is when a child tries to control another child through fear.¹ This can be done directly or indirectly through physical harm, hateful words, sabotaging of relationships, or damage to the victim's property.² The end result is that a bully wants to control the actions of another.

Bullies have an ability to find those they can control. Children are much more likely to be bullied if they are:

- perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- depressed, anxious, or have low self esteem
- less popular than others and have few friends
- seen as annoying or provoking or antagonizing others for attention³

Confidence = Power Over Self

Confidence is the antidote of being *bullied*. Confidence gives you power over your own actions and choices. A confident child can look a bully in the eye, stand tall, and then choose to either calmly engage them or walk away.

How to Create Confidence

Confidence and self-worth start at home. Your words and actions will have a huge impact on your child. You need to help your child know they are loved and respected at home so that they can go out into the world with confidence.

Give them a supportive home. Praise your child for something they do well. Praise your child for *who* they are. Every day make sure you show them love in a way that isn't tied to an action or personality trait. They need to feel loved even if they leave messes or if they are having trouble being kind. For example, just saying, "I love you exactly how you are" will help your child feel secure.

Help your child make friends.¹ Friends that have similar interests will give a foundation to your child on which to grow their social interactions. This will build confidence that will, in turn, help reduce bullying. Friends are also much more likely to *stick up* for each-other when bullying does happen.

Talk. A child who has their parent at their back, listening and *supporting* them, will be more confident.

Rules for Open Communication⁷

- Show *interest*.
- Use simple language.
- Be a *listener*.
- Know when to stop.
- Use humor.

A lot of communication is just trying and finding what works. Your child needs to feel safe, and that happens best when you are a good listener. Take the time, enjoy your child's experiences, and as they communicate and get advice, they will become more and more confident.

Your child needs a supportive home, great communication, and sometimes help finding friends. If your child is having trouble with bullying, or you are just worried about bullying, then these three steps will go a long way with helping them become confident and successful. Choose to start using them today and help give your child the gift of confidence.

Resources include:

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. Bullying: It's Not OK. Found at <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Bullying-Its-Not-Ok.aspx>, accessed 7/15/2019.
2. Gladden, RM. Bullying Surveillance among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements. Version 1.0. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2014.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. stopbullying.gov. Who Is at Risk. Found at <https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/index.html#atrisk>, accessed 7/15/2019.
4. Foley, M. Child Development Institute. How to Build Your Child's Confidence and Self-Esteem. Found at https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/how-to-build-your-childs-confidence-and-self-esteem/?utm_source=Subscribers&utm_campaign=a584c14530-, accessed 7/15/2019.
5. Foley, M. Child Development Institute. Everyday Practices to Make Your Child Feel Loved. Found at <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/family-building/everyday-practices-to-make-your-child-feel-loved/#.XG69v9FDzg>, accessed 7/15/2019.
6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. stopbullying.gov. How to Prevent Bullying. Found at <https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/index.html>, accessed 7/15/2019.
7. Center for Effective Parenting, Arkansas State PIRC. How to Effectively Communicate with Your Child. Found at <https://parenting-ed.org/wp-content/themes/parenting-ed/files/handouts/Communication-Handout.pdf>, accessed 7/15/2019.