



Information by:

www.KeepYourChildSafe.org

P.O. Box 559, Sedalia, CO. 80135

Provided by:

Keys to Helping a Bullied Child

Bullying is often looked upon as a rite of passage, and to some degree it is. Few children will completely escape the wrath of peer torment during their childhood. For most, the cruelty will be short-lived and will never become too severe. But the fact that almost all kids experience *some type of bullying* does not mean that such episodes are harmless. Some kids get far worse than others, and bullying can be just as damaging as any other type of child abuse.

Social scorn is the most severe of all stressors, and the constant verbal, emotional and physical abuse that bullied children experience can shred their sense of self and leave them with a personal identity that's been shattered into a million pieces. So if you know or suspect that a child is being bullied, it's important you find ways to help them through it. Here are some general guidelines for parents or teachers.

1) Really, it's not about you, it's about them

People aren't cruel because of offensive attributes in other. They're cruel because of what exists within themselves. No matter what others might say about, the blunt reality is that happy, secure people who are content with their place in the world don't waste their time and energy focusing on what others do or trying to bring them down. Happy, secure people live their own lives. One big reason bullying spikes around junior high is that kids that age are suddenly more insecure. Children who are bullied need to understand that it's really, truly, not about them.

2) Scorn and ridicule has no basis in fact

In times past, people tied up 4-year-old girls and burned them alive because they believed they were witches. They hung anyone who dared to say the earth was round and revolved around the sun. Millions of people were convinced that having dark skin made on an animal who had no soul. At the time, these things weren't horrible; they were considered common logic. Today our prejudices may be different, but any sociologist worth his or her degree could tell you the reasons and excuses we come up with for judging others are just as baseless. Bullied kids need to understand this. (Our anti-bullying book *Making Fun of Einstein* teaches this concept, available at <http://www.KeepYourChildSafe.org/bullying-book-for-kids.html>)

3) It gets better

Bullied kids need to understand that the torment won't go on forever, and that eventually, things will improve. Unfortunately, this isn't as easy as it sounds. Today's youth can turn on the TV and see mobs led by preachers holding signs that say "God hates Fags." They can see the way politicians slander groups and opponents they don't agree with. They overhear adults gossiping over this and that or passing harsh judgment against people they don't even know, based on what others say about them. Kids aren't stupid, and they can see throughout society the same bullying culture that they're experiencing in school.

Simply giving kids empty reassurances that "it gets better" is not enough. Kids need to understand **how** it gets better, and **why** they can hope for a better future. You can find a list of talking points addressing how things get better at www.KeepYourChildSafe.org/bullying/it-gets-better.html.