

# How Parents Can Prevent Bullying

By Fiona Baker ([www.kidspot.com.au](http://www.kidspot.com.au))

There are many ways parents can help reduce the likelihood of bullying, or at least make their children aware of acceptable behaviour. How often do we hear that behaviour starts at home. In the case of bullying and society's attitudes to it, these often stem from the home environment. So the parental role in preventing and reducing bullying is vital.

Some of the actions parents can take, whether bullying has impacted on you or your child's life or not, are:

## **Explain bullying**

Tell your children regularly much you disapprove of bullying and why. Tell them you don't want them to take part in mistreating another student at any level, however small. Students who come from families that oppose bullying accept that bullying is wrong and are less likely to bully others because they know their parents would disapprove.

## **Forbid bullying**

Do not allow any type of bullying at home and deal firmly with any attempts by siblings to bully one another.

## **Encourage positivity**

Encourage your child to see the positive side of other students rather than expressing contempt and superiority.

## **Model and encourage respect**

Model and encourage respect for others as well as behaviours and values, such as compassion, cooperation, friendliness, acceptance of difference and respect.

## **Explain rights of others**

Emphasise seeing things from another's point of view and the rights of others not to be mistreated.

## **Report incidents**

Report all incidents of bullying that you are aware of, not just incidents that happen to your child. Don't continue any child's silent nightmare by saying nothing.

## **Encourage resilience**

Develop protective behaviours and resilient social skills in your child, such as speaking assertively, negotiating, expressing their own opinion, using a confident voice and using firm eye contact. Practice regularly using dinner conversations and social encounters with acquaintances and new people.

## **Respect and confidence are key**

Talk about respect and help children distinguish between people who care about their wellbeing and those who don't. Children require the confidence and skills to avoid people who don't treat them with respect.

## **Help build friendships**

Help your child build and maintain caring and genuine friendships. This may mean taking an active role in encouraging social activities such as after school plays and sleepovers.

## **Deal with fear and anger**

Assist them to develop effective ways of dealing with fear and anger instead of internalising their feelings, taking them out on others or losing face in front of the peer group by allowing them to spill over.