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# How to stop your kid from being the bully

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## Sometimes moms have to face that their kid is the bully

Finding out that your child is being bullied at school can be alarming, and learning strategies for protecting them can be a challenge. As unprepared as a parent might be, there is at least information out there on how to do the job. Now it's time to talk about the other side of the coin: What do you do when your child is the bully?

Chances are, most parents can't even imagine that being true. We all rush to defend our kids' actions, sometimes when we know that it may not be justified, because we know them in a way that others couldn't possibly. That's completely understandable. But the fact is, the more we become aware of bullying and are less willing to excuse bullying behavior as "kids being kids," the more we have to face the reality that it could be one of our own kids doing the bullying.

*More: [Teen punches bully to protect blind classmate \(VIDEO\)](#)*

What do you do, though? Could you recognize the signs, and would you know what you could do to help? With all of the information out there for parents of bullying victims, it's also important to ensure that parents of bullies have the tools they need to help their kids, too.

## 1. Learn the warning signs

Bullying doesn't come out of nowhere. By knowing what to look for, you can recognize bullying behavior in your child early, when it can be nipped in the bud. Jarrett Arthur, self-defense and safety expert and [owner of Train With Jarrett](#) customized self-defense education and training for parents, women, and kids, says that there are some signs that can signal that something might be wrong. For instance, she says to watch out for "a preoccupation with a certain child, without any interest in spending time with that child socially," or "If your child comes home with money or belongings that are not theirs, [or] seeing aggressive, insulting, or offensive comments while monitoring their social media accounts." None of these should be seen as definite signs of bullying, but when you see one or more together, that can be a definite sign of trouble.

Unfortunately, the most tell-tale sign of bullying is often the one that's most ignored. Arthur cautions parents to look out for "reports from teachers and other parents; often times [sic] parents of bullies will deny that their child is bullying, despite being told so by teachers and other parents."

*More: [Think your child is being bullied? Here's what you should do.](#)*

With emotions running so high, it can be difficult to take such reports to heart, but it's important to remember that they likely mean that your child needs your help to extricate themselves from a bad situation.

## 2. Intervene immediately

If you think that your child might be targeting a peer, you're likely going to want to get to the bottom of it as quickly

as possible, and that's definitely important. However, it's vital to end the bullying first. [Relationship expert April Masini](#) explains:

"Your job as a parent is to guide your child towards productive behaviors and away from destructive behaviors. Roll up your sleeves and get involved. Call other parents, teachers and coaches — make them aware that you're intervening and would like their 'second set of eyes.' Open communication channels and create the community you need for your child to be safe."

If you can intervene with a cool head, you'll be helping two kids: yours, and the one suffering the bullying.

### 3. Take a look in the mirror

This one can be tough. It's hard to know how our kids interpret our own behavior, and it can be just as hard to examine ourselves objectively without shouldering all of the blame (your child is their own person, remember) or dismissing any concerns out-of-hand by shirking responsibility. The productivity of checking our own behavior lies somewhere in between.

Masini gives some valuable insight on this particular exercise: "Kids do what they learn, and if they're seeing bullying behavior at home, they will most likely replicate it outside the home. It may be you, it may be a spouse, a friend, a housekeeper or a sibling who is modeling this bully behavior. Find it and put a stop to it in your own home."

"Bullies are most often grown at home, mimicking the behavior of the parents," Arthur adds. "Parents should be aware of their own bullying behaviors, such as road rage, gossiping about peers or family members and even methods of disciplining their child (spanking, grabbing, physically intimidating, screaming, etc.), that can negatively influence how their child interacts with others."

It's easy to see how some of the behavior that we all participate in (hello, road rage!) can be interpreted differently by children, who are little sponges of information.

### 4. Take time to make time

It's no secret that the best thing we can all give our kids is our undivided attention and time. It's also no secret that many kids who bully are in fact emotionally hurting themselves.

"Bullies are almost always hurting for love, attention, support and encouragement," Arthur explains. "If your child is a bully, you can bet that they are calling out for more directed attention and feedback from their parents that will raise their confidence and personal sense of power."

## 5. Empathy, empathy, empathy

Finally, there's empathy, a two-sided coin if ever there was one. On the one side, there's a need to teach empathy. It's a concept that we all, as parents, need to revisit over and over again, not just hope that our children will come by empathy naturally.

*More: [4 Reasons all kids deserve diverse books](#)*

Says Arthur, "Yelling at a child to stop bullying is not nearly as effective as involving the child in how their target feels. It's the difference between, 'Don't you be mean to that child!' and "When you tease, push or belittle that child, how do you think he or she feels? What does he or she think of themselves when you do this?"

On the other side of the coin, it's important to remember that if your child is exhibiting bullying behavior, they are also in need of the empathy that *you* can provide.

Masini explains that it's important to "remember that bullies are usually in more pain than those who are bullied. This seems antithetical, but it's not. When someone needs to bully, it's because they feel out of control and hurt. This doesn't excuse their behavior, but when there is empathy for the bully, there's more likely to be an effective solution."

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