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**Dealing with bullying: Tips for parents**

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Bullying has been the subject of media reports lately, but in reality, it is a problem that has been around for a long time. In fact, the rate of bullying has stayed fairly steady for the last decade.

About 25 percent of kids between the ages of 12-18 say they have been bullied in the past year. Not surprisingly, victims of bullying are anxious and often depressed, but studies show that the bullies or the witnesses of bullying can also be negatively affected.

Parents may feel helpless when their child is being bullied—and confused when their child is guilty of bullying others.

Anne Clarkson, digital parenting education specialist with UW-Extension Family Living Programs works on parenting education and child development. She suggests three tips for parents to prevent and help stop bullying.

* **Talk to your child!** Even 15 minutes of talking per day can prevent bullying. When parents and children talk, children learn strategies for responding to bullying, feel supported, and gain confidence. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) actually has a new app called *KnowBullying* that can be downloaded for free and offers some ideas to start a conversation. (<http://store.samhsa.gov/apps/bullying/?WT.mc_id=FB_20140807_knowbullying_TK02>)
* Bullies and kids who are bullied are unlikely to ask for help so **watch and listen for signs that your child is involved in bullying**. For instance, possible signs of bullying include a child faking illness to stay home from school or suddenly losing interest in friends or homework. Although it may be painful to observe, your child is also hurting if he or she is the bully. Bullies may have friends who are bullies; suddenly have new things or more money; or always blame someone else for their problems. The website <http://www.stopbullying.gov/> is a good resource to learn more about bullying.
* **Don’t ignore bullying. Instead, be an anti-bullying advocate.** Stop bullying as soon as you see it by separating the children involved, and getting the facts from all parties (including adults). Support children by talking about the situation and planning what to do if the bullying happens again. Also, make sure to respectfully talk to other adults about your concerns about bullying. For example, talk to your child’s teacher privately or talk to other parents and ask them to keep an eye out for bullying.

One of the best ways parents can prevent bullying is by modeling positive relationship skills. When parents show children from the time they are little how to get along with others and how to deal with disagreements in a respectful, assertive way, they are giving children important skills to deal with future conflict.

To learn more about issues affecting teens and preteens, consider exploring the *Parenthetical* online community. *Parenthetica*l features weekly postings about parenting topics based on research and the collected lessons and wisdom of parents.

For more information on *Parenthetical,* visit <https://parenthetical.wisc.edu/>. Or contact your local county UW-Extension office to learn more.

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**SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS**

Parents may feel helpless when their child is being bullied—and confused when their child is guilty of bullying others. These tips from @UWEXCoopExt help parents address the problem. #TapintoUWCX #bullying #parenting

Be an anti-bullying advocate. Learn more here. @UWEXCoopExt #TapintoUWCX #bullying

About 25% of kids are bullied. Here’s what parents can do. @UWEXCoopExt #TapintoUWCX #bullying #parenting