



## How to Prevent our Children from Getting Bullied - Top 5 Tips

### We can Empower our Environment at Home and Prevent our Children from Getting Bullied - Top 5 Tips

Did you know that bullies look out for other kids who seem to have a low sense of self esteem?

As a parent, our Number 1 job is to give our children a high sense of self esteem.

Many times, we as parents or caretakers, don't even realize we're behaving or doing something that can reduce our child's self esteem. We're operating out of our own conditioned responses as to what we believe are 'good parenting' skills. These are most likely learned from our own parents/caretakers and their parenting styles. They become a default parenting style unless we consciously choose to adopt a different parenting style.

Giving our children a high sense of self esteem includes being present for our children, making them feel safe, loved, connected and significant.

It doesn't matter what we've done before, we can start being that parent/caretaker now.

#### **Tip # 1: Give our Children our focused attention for about 1/2 hour a day**

Children don't need much time from us. They only need about half an hour a day of our focused attention, without distractions. This time is for them, to make them feel significant, important. Use this time to let the child know and feel that you want to understand them. Ask them about their day.

We can't expect them to suddenly open up, because they don't know if you really are going to spend time with them without distractions. When we start doing this repeatedly, they may be convinced it's real and they may start sharing.

In our focused time with them, it becomes important to give them the safe space to share their feelings and emotions, without judging them.

Why feelings?

Because when there's a battle between emotion and logic, emotion always wins.

If it's a matter of remembering the answers for the test, and feeling anxiety:

- Anxiety will prevent us from remembering the answers for the test.
- Anxiety will prevent us from scoring the goal on the soccer field.
- Anxiety will prevent us from playing the musical piece well.

We may have the knowledge, the logic, of doing well in all of these type of situations, but if our emotions aren't aligned with our sense of self esteem or confidence in that moment, then our knowledge or logic will have a hard time prevailing and leading us to success. Our emotions must be aligned in achieving success. Anxiety is an emotion stemming from fear usually preventing success.

Most of our low self esteem comes from our inability to accept and express our emotions. We either repress our emotions or ignore them, not giving them their due importance. As parents, we can help our children accept and express our emotions.



## Tip # 2: Give our Children an Understanding of the 4 Basic Emotions, and Help Them Find Channels to Express Them

There are 4 Basic emotions:

- Happiness
- Sadness
- Anger
- Fear (being scared)

### Happiness

Happiness is usually easy. We can smile, laugh, giggle as simple expressions of happiness. But we can also express it in all sorts of movement; dancing, exercising. This increases our build up of serotonin, the happy hormone even further.

**Sadness and Anger** - while these are distinct emotions, many times we oscillate between both. At times we are sad, but then become angry, and again become sad.

If at lunchtime, our child was pushed by some other children (who actually had no intention of pushing him/her) and our child accidentally dropped his/her lunch tray on the floor. The cafeteria aid reprimanded the child for not being careful and insisted that he/she clean up the mess. The child may feel anger that it was not his/her fault. He/she was pushed by others and they should also be help cleaning up. But the cafeteria aid did not see that. And all the kids at lunchtime were watching the child clean up, maybe even making fun of him/her.

The child may be angry, as it wasn't only his/her fault. May also be sad, that everyone thinks he/she made a mess when he/she didn't. May also feel helpless that he/she isn't able to do anything about it.

And the child comes home grumpy.

If the parent gives the child, the time and space to listen to the child's sadness and anger, encourage the child to express it. Ask questions to dig deeper into that feeling.

- 'Why are you sad?' Because I was blamed for something I didn't do wrong.
- 'How do you feel when you're sad?' I feel angry because I wish I could do something about it, but I couldn't , I just had to follow what the cafeteria monitor wanted me to do.
- 'And how did that make you feel?' I was so embarrassed because everyone thought I made the mess but I didn't.
- 'What do you feel like doing when you're sad?' I feel like crying.
- 'Go ahead, it's absolutely fine to cry when you're sad'

Most of the time, just being heard, saying their feelings out loud, feeling the emotion fully, that they may have denied at the earlier moment (the child may not want to cry or get angry in front of others), is usually enough for the child to resolve the issue in their mind. This 'hearing them out' is usually all they need. It makes them feel significant, that they matter, and raises their self esteem, self confidence. Reviewing a situation also enables them to think of solutions in their own mind. Just having someone that listens to them, most times, is all that they need.

Sometimes, when the need is for expression is greater, it helps to discuss with the child and help them find ways to channel their emotion.

Crying is an expression, an outlet of being sad. It's an acceptance of their feelings and a way to express them. Playing music or creating art or journaling (writing down their feelings and why they feel this way) can also be used as a channel to express sadness.

'What do you feel like doing when you're angry?'

Most children usually are not allowed to express anger. Anger has usually taken the forms of

- Yelling or screaming at another
- Hitting someone, or something - (though hitting pillows is safer)
- This expression of anger is seen as violence and makes another person around this angry person feel unsafe.

We can teach our kids to express anger safely.

- Exercise - shooting hoops (if we are able to provide that



at home),

- Hitting/kicking a ball
  - Throwing a ball against a wall
  - Dancing
- 
- Sometimes, anger can be a great fuel for proving someone wrong. 'I'll show you I can make a great science experiment, or do a great piece of art'
  - Writing things out - Journaling
  - Even Cooking (chopping veggies)

The idea is first accept our emotion. If we accept our emotion, we accept our right to feel the emotion. This becomes an important part of accepting ourselves. And acceptance of ourselves raises our self esteem.

In addition to help our child understand their emotion, find a way to channel it, it may also be helpful to ask them, if the same situation happened again, what solutions could they think of.

In this example, 'I'll hold onto my lunch tray with greater strength and be alert with others around me.' If we can help the child to think of a solution also, then we've given them both, the emotional freedom to accept their feelings and the intellectual freedom to solve the issue for the future.

### **Fear, or being scared**

Those kids who are more likely to be bullied, are the ones, who give the energy of fear.

These kids may sit alone in class, or at lunch time. They may be trying to make friends with those who don't seem to want to be their friends . In their fear of not wanting to be rejected, they are actually attracting their rejection.

We attract 2 things: What we desire and what we fear.

We can create a safe environment for the child at home where is there again, acceptance of the child and his/her emotions. Acceptance of him/herself helps minimize fear of rejection, and raises self esteem and confidence.

With that confidence, even if they are sitting alone at lunchtime, they don't send out signals of fear. They may be comfortable being **alone**, but are not **lonely**. They may want time to think about something that is bothering them and choosing to be alone. If someone comes to them, they have the confidence and may brush others aside with an air of confidence, 'I needed to work on something on my own. Now, please excuse me as I have to get to class.' There is no fear in the voice, no fear of rejection. The inner confidence and high sense of self esteem speaks for itself.

### **Tip # 3: Feel a Sense of Fulfillment of an Achievement Before Moving On**

We can use our emotions creatively to focus fully on something. And when we focus fully on something, we actually get the satisfaction of having achieved something. That gives us a sense of fulfillment at that time.



If our child received an 'A' on a test, that is usually indicative that the child has understood the concepts of the subject and has been able to showcase his/her understanding in a limited period of time. Many children who get a B on a test, usually get the idea, but it may take them longer to come up with the answer that the teacher/instructor deems as correct. Time runs out.

Whatever that grade is, if it is coming from the child's understanding that they worked, spent quality time and did the best they could, then that grade is worth celebrating, it's worth having a sense of fulfillment.

The child must be encouraged to feel that fulfillment. To feel satisfaction that I improved. I'm worth it. I did great because I did better than what I was before. The only person I need to compare to is myself.

That sense of fulfillment can be an experience for a minute, an hour, a day or a week, whatever is comfortable for the child. But that sense of fulfillment is important. It builds self esteem. Being fulfilled at a time, is truly enjoying the moment. It's being in the moment. It lays a true foundation on moving onto the next goal, the next improvement.

If we don't build on a solid foundation of being content with ourself for our first goal achieved, then the next achievement may also come, without our own recognition, and we just move along goal to goal without satisfaction, and that becomes craving.

#### **Tip # 4: Avoid Craving**

What is craving? Craving is a sense of not getting enough. Even if we have it, we feel as if we don't have enough and want more.

If the child was given a piece of cake, and was excited that he/she was going to have all of it. Then suddenly, say if the older sibling came around and grabbed half of the cake, the child is no longer satisfied with his piece of cake. Moving further along, say if every time, the same child was served a serving of dessert, he/she had a fear that the older sibling would come and eat his/her dessert, and quickly finished the dessert. The child may still not be satisfied with the dessert and want more. It's the fear of not having enough that makes the child want more (when actually they have had the full dessert). This is craving.

A more appropriate handling of the situation would be give the child the security that they can finish their portion peacefully. This would give the child the time and feeling of ease to finish their dessert and feel satisfied. Then they would not want more.

Craving can be in anything. In getting good grades, or scoring goals, or clothes, etc.

First comes being fulfilled with our goal, then we can truly focus on the next goal for our true growth.

## Tip # 5: Having a Time and Place at Home Where a Child Feels Safe and Comfortable Being Him/ Herself

For example, a child might want to play with a video game, MarioKart - racing cars. On the surface level, we may think of it as just a video game. However, if we watch our child closely, observe and even ask with true curiosity what they enjoy about the game, then they can feel comfortable telling us. They may find it thrilling to be able start slow and understand how gently or aggressively to use the controls to turn their vehicle.

Understand how the terrain changes and how they have to change their strategies. How to have to make decisions in split seconds on how to weave thru, get the gold coins and still get back on the track. If you actually play with them, you can assess the difficulty of successfully winning at the game. Multiple skills are learnt in the process. Once they actually learn the skills and are winning most of the racing games, chances are they will move onto something else. They're not really challenging themselves nor learning anything new, and will most likely drop the game and move onto something else.



Sometimes if they've had a difficult day at school, they may need to come back to a safe place, where they feel confident they can navigate and have control over. Playing their favorite game for about 20 minutes, can put them in the right mode of self confidence and being able to control the situation. Then they may be able to review and resolve their issue in school because, now, they feel confident about themselves. And didn't feel confident when they were in school and 'their lunch tray fell and turned into a big mess. And they felt they had no control over a situation'.

So while we're not encouraging the play of video games for hours and hours and ignore homework, but we should give them the allotment of time to do what they feel comfortable with to regain their confidence. And if they're playing, ask them, how much more time they need? Chances are, they will say about 5-10 minutes or maybe 1/2 hour. And we should give them that time. That way they know, that they have that time to fulfill themselves, feel good and then it's time to move on.

We hold them accountable to their time commitment. And make them responsible to the other goals that need their attention and time commitment.

This shows respect for their needs and sense of fulfillment while addressing other goals. tasks. It helps them reinforce their voice is being heard, feeling respected, feeling significant, and having self esteem.

## Empowerment Begins at Home

Our interaction with our children is very important to give them the tools to empower themselves against the external world. We may want to repeatedly review our interactions and see if it fits into this basic checklist.

- Am I boosting my children's self esteem and



confidence?

- Am I allowing my children to voice themselves?
- Am I allowing my children to accept and express their emotions?
- Am I allowing my children to feel safe?

**If You Would Like to Have a Greater Understanding, Please Click The Link Below to Enroll in our Program.**

**PREVENTING OUR CHILDREN FROM BEING BULLIED -  
EMPOWERMENT BEGINS AT HOME**