

Bullying: Prevention Begins at Home

Teach your child that caring for others is a valued quality:

- ◆ Tell your children, "People like friends who are nice to them."
- ◆ Teach your children to treat others how they would like to be treated.
- ◆ Model treating all living things kindly. Practice random acts of kindness toward your children and others.
- ◆ Take your children with you to care for the elderly, a sick friend, or to help a person in need.

Let your child know how their behavior affects others. For example:

- "I think Jamie was sad when you wouldn't give him a turn to play."
- "Sarah was so happy when you shared your toys with her."

Encourage your child to remember how they may have felt in certain situations. For example:

- ◆ "Johnny's feelings get hurt when you call him names. Remember how you felt when your friends called you names?"

Teach children to treat themselves and others with respect. Children learn by watching you. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you always treat others with respect?
- How do you solve conflicts?
- Are you open-minded?
- Do you sometimes yell, use aggression, or come across as intimidating to your children?

Build communication skills.

- ◆ Teach your child how to politely and directly ask for things they want or need and how to respond appropriately.
- ◆ Honor your child's feelings.
- ◆ Help children find positive ways to deal with anger.
- ◆ Teach your children conflict resolution skills.

Teach children assertiveness skills.

- Demonstrate assertive behavior such as saying "no" to another child's unacceptable demands.
- Show them the difference between an assertive and submissive response. Children can role play using puppets or dolls.
- Teach children how to say no and that they have the right to say no.

Turn off the TV. TV often reinforces the idea that aggression is the only way to deal with conflicts.

- ◆ Discuss this with your children.
- ◆ Make sure they understand that what they see on TV is not real. In real life, people get hurt.

To tell or not to tell...a difficult situation. Children need to know the difference between "ratting" or "tattling" and "reporting."

- Ratting or tattling occurs when a student tells about an inappropriate act with the idea of getting another student into trouble.
- Reporting happens when a student "tells" to protect themselves or the safety of another.

Source: This tip sheet was originally created by the Parent Information Center in Concord, NH and reprinted on the South Dakota Parent Resource Network Web site at www.bhssc.org/sdprn.

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