



What Can You Do about Bullying?

With bullying such a common problem in Australian society parents can't afford to ignore this issue. Here are 10 coaching questions to ask yourself to help you be proactive about bullying. These ideas will help children feel better about themselves and consider the feelings of others - useful strategies for children whether they are being bullied or are doing the bullying.

1. How do I show respect to my children? Respect your child's positive qualities and tell them what they are to boost their self-esteem. The better children feel about themselves the more bully proof they are and the less likely they are to bully others. E.g. "You are very caring/creative/intelligent (etc)"
2. How do you model respectful behaviour yourself? Our children copy what we do. E.g. How do you react if someone cuts you off in traffic and your children are in the car?
3. When do you listen to your children with empathy so they grow to show it for others? Saying things like "That must have been very scary for you" helps your children, because their feelings are being acknowledged and they truly feel heard.
4. How do you encourage your child's social and emotional intelligence by talking about feelings and how other people feel? Questions like: "What do you think it was like for the others when that happened?" help children to see things from outside of their egocentric point of view.
5. How can you talk to your children about aggressive, submissive and assertive behaviour so they understand about power in relationships? Can you point it out in their stories or in programs they see on TV?
6. Have you thought that fighting at home is just another form of bullying? Notice when your children are behaving well and tell them! Focusing on positive behaviour is such a simple way to get more of it as well as boosting your children's self-esteem!
7. When do you give your children opportunities to share their ideas about fighting and bullying and what might work to stop it? Ask questions like: "If ... happened, what could you do to keep yourself safe?" to allow children to work out what they could do by themselves.

8. What concrete strategies are you teaching your children to try if they are being bullied? E.g. instead of focusing on the bullying imagine the bully swelling up and popping. Strategies like this which help a child stay calm can be very helpful. When children learn to be aware of their reactions and the part this plays in being bullied, they can choose to react differently.
9. How are you staying up to date with your child's school's bullying policy and about bullying in general? What do you know about bullying and technology?
10. How can you support your children in solving their own fights or bullying issues rather than stepping in and doing it for them? Remember your response as a parent models a powerful message for your children.

If you ask yourself coaching questions such as these you will be building a close and loving relationship with your children as well as supporting them to deal with bullying and other challenges to the best of their capabilities.

If you would like to know more about bullying and how to support your children you may wish to come along to our **Need2Connect** "Bully Breakthroughs" workshop.