

Cyberbullying

Bullies and mean girls have been around forever, but technology now gives them a whole new platform for their actions. The old "sticks and stones" saying is no longer true - both real-world and online name-calling can have serious emotional consequences for our kids and teens.

It's not always easy to know how and when to step in as a parent. For starters, most kids use technology differently than we do. They're playing games online and sending texts on their phones at an early age, and most teens have devices that keep them constantly connected to the Internet. Many are logged on to Facebook or Tumblr and chatting or texting all day. Even sending email or leaving a voicemail can seem old-school to them. Their knowledge of the digital world can be intimidating to parents.

But staying involved in kids' cyber world, just as in their real world, can help parents protect them from its dangers. As awareness of **cyberbullying** has grown, parents have learned more about how to deal with it. Here are some suggestions on what to do if this modern type of bullying has become part of your child's life.

What Is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. Sometimes cyberbullying can be easy to spot - for example, if your child shows you a text, tweet, or response to a status update on Facebook that is harsh, mean, or cruel. Other acts are less obvious, like impersonating a victim online or posting personal information, photos, or videos designed to hurt or embarrass another person.

Cyberbullying also can happen accidentally. The impersonal nature of text messages, IMs, and emails make it very hard to detect the sender's tone - one person's joke could be another's hurtful insult. Nevertheless, a repeated pattern of emails, texts, and online posts is rarely accidental.

Effects of Cyberbullying

No longer limited to schoolyards or street corners, modern-day bullying can happen at home as well as at school - essentially 24 hours a day. Picked-on kids can feel like they're getting blasted nonstop and that there is no escape. As long as kids have access to a phone, computer, or other device (including tablets), they are

at risk.

Severe, long-term, or frequent cyberbullying can leave both victims and bullies at greater risk for anxiety, depression, and other stress-related disorders. In some rare but highly publicized cases, some kids have turned to suicide. Experts say that kids who are bullied - and the bullies themselves - are at a higher risk for suicidal thoughts, attempts, and completed suicides.

How Parents Can Help

If you discover that your child is being cyberbullied, offer comfort and support. Talking about any bullying experiences you had in your childhood might help your child feel less alone.

Let your child know that it's not his or her fault, and that bullying says more about the bully than the victim. Praise your child for doing the right thing by talking to you about it. Remind your child that he or she isn't alone - a lot of people get bullied at some point. Reassure your child that you will figure out what to do about it together.

Let someone at school (the principal, school nurse, or a counselor or teacher) know about the situation. Many schools, school districts, and after-school clubs have protocols for responding to cyberbullying; these vary by district and state. But before reporting the problem, let your child know that you plan to do so, so that you can work out a plan that makes you both feel comfortable.



Excerpts from kidshealth.org

Visit Your Title I Neighborhood Resource Centers

Neighborhood Resource Center - North
7900 N.W. 27th Avenue, Suite F9
(Northside Shopping Centre, 130 South Ct.)

Neighborhood Resource Center - South
5555 S.W. 93rd Avenue, Portable #3
(FDLRS South Site)

Neighborhood Resource Center - Gratigny
733 East 57th Street
(M-DCPS North Region Center)

Nutrition And Your Child

Carbohydrates are the body's most important and readily available source of energy. Even though they've gotten a bad rap lately and are sometimes blamed for the obesity epidemic in America, carbs are a necessary part of a healthy diet for both kids and adults. The two major forms of carbs are: simple carbohydrates and complex carbohydrates.

Simple carbohydrates include fructose, glucose, and lactose, which are also found in nutritious whole fruits. Complex carbohydrates are found in foods such as starchy vegetables, grains, rice, and breads and cereals.

So how, exactly, does the body process carbs and sugar? All carbohydrates are broken down into simple sugars, which are absorbed into the bloodstream. As the sugar level rises, the pancreas releases the hormone insulin, which is needed to move sugar from the blood into the cells, where sugar can be used as energy.

Despite the recent craze to cut carbs, the bottom line is that not all foods containing carbohydrates are bad for kids, whether they're complex (as in whole grains) or simple (such as those found in fruits). Still, some carbohydrate-dense foods are healthier than others. For kids over 2 years old, a healthy balanced diet should include 50% to 60% of calories consumed coming from carbohydrates. The key is to make sure that the majority of these carbs come from good sources and that added sugar in their diet is limited.



Making sure that kids get a balanced, nutritious diet isn't as hard as it may seem. Simply make good carbohydrate choices (whole grains, fruits, veggies, and low-fat milk and dairy products), stock your home with healthy choices, limit food containing added sugar (especially those with little or no nutritional value), and encourage kids to be active every day. Above all, be a good role model. Kids will see your wholesome habits and adopt them, leading to a healthier lifestyle throughout childhood and into adulthood.

Excerpt from kidshealth.org

Helping Your Gradeschooler With Homework

During grade school, kids start getting homework for the first time to reinforce and extend classroom learning and help them practice important study skills.

Parents can give kids lots of homework help, primarily by making homework a priority and helping them develop good study habits. Some tips to help make homework easier for kids are:

- * Establish a routine
- * Strategize for homework sessions
- * Instill organization skills
- * Apply school to the "real world"
- * Be in touch with teachers
- * Offer guidance and support

The key to truly helping kids with homework is to know when to step in. Make sure your kids know that you're available if there's a snag, but that it's important to work independently. Encourage effort and determination - not just the grades they get.

Be a good example by showing your own love of learning. While your child does homework, do your own - read books, magazines, and newspapers. By showing that learning remains important, you'll help your kids understand that building knowledge is something to enjoy throughout life.

Excerpts from kidshealth.org

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Editor.....Marta E. Salas