

What Parents Can Do to Support Their Children

Children learn how to get along by watching adults.

- ▶ Model appropriate ways of getting along with others: showing empathy for others, managing angry feelings, accepting differences, and coping with peer pressure.
- ▶ Monitor your child's television watching. Discourage TV programs that model antisocial and aggressive behaviour.
- ▶ Help your child find ways to express anger that do not involve verbally or physically hurting others. When you get angry, use it as an opportunity to model these appropriate responses for your child and talk about it.

Children learn by doing.

- ▶ Help your child develop interpersonal skills by providing opportunities for practice.
- ▶ Help your child think of and practise quick verbal comebacks to use when peers are teasing or being verbally abusive.
- ▶ Teach your child how to stick up for herself or himself through assertive, not aggressive, behaviour.
- ▶ Encourage and expand your child's interests and abilities.
- ▶ Involve your child in group activities that will enhance her or his interpersonal skills. Invite your child's friends to your home and have lots for them to do. Boredom can breed bullying.
- ▶ Discuss with your child examples of bullying that he or she notices on television, in video games, or in the neighbourhood. Help your child understand the consequences of bullying.
- ▶ Teach your child problem-solving skills. Acknowledge your child when he or she follows through.
- ▶ Help your child understand the value of accepting and celebrating individual differences.

Children need adults.

- ▶ Ask your child about his or her relationships with friends and peers.
- ▶ Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if she or he is bullied or sees another child is being bullied.
- ▶ Keep lines of communication open with your child. Encourage your child to always let you know where and with whom he or she will be. Get to know your child's friends.
- ▶ Intervene in bullying incidents. Make it clear to all the children involved that bullying will not be tolerated. Ensure that those being bullied are safe.
- ▶ Inform school staff if your child tells you about bullying happening at school.
- ▶ Learn more about the topic of bullying and share your knowledge with your child. There is a wealth of information for parents and children on bullying. Check your local library.
- ▶ Talk with other parents.
- ▶ Get involved in bullying-prevention efforts at your child's school.
- ▶ Foster your child's self-esteem. A strong sense of self-worth can be a good defence against being pressured or bullied by peers.
- ▶ Be alert to signs that your child is being bullied or may be bullying others, such as torn clothing, mysterious bruises, falling behind in school work, returning home to use the washroom, changes in behaviour (e.g., angry outbursts, fighting, behaviour problems at school and in the neighbourhood, lack of friends). Get help for your child. Talk with a school counsellor or teacher.
- ▶ Talk with your child about the school's discipline policy and the school plan for bullying prevention. Talk to your child about what she or he is learning in school about bullying.