



Kindness Campaign

October is the National Anti-bullying month. More than half of all children are, at least on occasion, directly involved in bullying as a perpetrator, victim, or both. Many not directly involved witness others being bullied on a regular basis. Following are ideas from Education.com's top actions that you can take to help address bullying and to start your own Kindness Campaign.

1. **Talk and listen to your children everyday.** Research shows that parents are often the last to know if their child has been bullied or has bullied. Make your children comfortable about talking to you about their peers. Engage in frequent conversations about your children's social life. Spend a few minutes every day asking open-ended questions about with whom they spend time in and out of school, what they do at recess or between classes, and what happens to and from school.
2. **Be a good example of kindness and leadership.** You are a role model for your children. Your children learn from your behavior. When you get angry at a sales clerk, waiter, another driver, or your child, or speak to another person in a mean or abusive way, you're teaching your children to bully.
3. **Create healthy anti-bullying habits early.** Teach your children to be kind, empathic, fair and turn-taking. Teach your children not to hit, push, tease or be mean to others. Help your children understand how they would feel if this happened to them.
4. **Spread the word that bullying is not a normal part of childhood.** Bullying is not a normal part of childhood and should not be endured to "toughen up" as part of growing up.
5. **Establish household rules about bullying.** Teach children just what bullying is and teach them that such behavior is harmful and not acceptable. Your children need to hear from you that bullying is not normal. Do not tolerate their bullying, them being bullied, or to stand by and watch others being bullied. Teach your children positive ways to show leadership and personal power by working with their teachers or coaches to implement a kindness plan at their school or soccer team.
6. **Learn and teach the signs of bullying.** Learn the signs of being victimized such as frequent loss of personal belongings, complaints of headaches, avoiding recess or school activities, getting to school very early or late.
7. **Teach your children about cyber bullying.** Teach your children that sending mean, rude, vulgar or threatening messages or images; private information about another person; pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; and intentionally excluding someone from an online group is cyber bullying. These acts are as harmful as physical violence and must not be tolerated. Limit online time. Research shows that the more time a teen spends online, the more likely the teen will be cyber bullied.

8. **Learn what to do if you suspect your child is being bullied.** Talk to your child about their social life. Talk with your child's teacher or find ways to observe your child's interactions to determine whether or not your suspicions are correct.
9. **Teach your child about what to do when other kids are mean.** Following are some effective strategies. Tell your child to get an adult right away, tell the child who is teasing or bullying to "Stop", walk away and ignore the bully. It may help to role play what to do with your child. Repetition helps so go over these techniques periodically.
10. **Teach your children how to be good witnesses.** Research shows that children who witness bullying feel powerless and seldom intervene. Although it's never a child's responsibility to place himself/herself in danger, children can often diffuse a bullying situation by yelling "Stop! You're bullying!" Children can also provide support to the victim and report what they witnessed to an adult. Children who take action can have a powerful and positive effect.
11. **Help your child's school address bullying effectively.** Learn what your children's school is doing to address bullying. Research shows that zero-tolerance policies are not effective. Ongoing educational programs that create a healthy social climate are more successful. Talk to your school about establishing effective bullying strategies and policies that teach children to be inclusive and empathetic leaders and teach victims effective resistance techniques. Implement these strategies in your soccer club.
12. **Spend time at school and recess.** Research shows that 67% of bullying happens when adults are not present. You can make a real difference by being present and helping organize activities that encourage children to play with new friends. Be sure to coordinate this with your coach or teacher.