

Pointers For Parents

The Class Bully: Protecting Your Children

(NAPSA)—Your child: bully or victim? Whether it's in the classroom, the neighborhood or even in cyberspace, bullying is a serious issue for children and teens. Thirty percent of sixth- through tenth-graders report being involved in bullying, either as a bully, a target or both, studies show.

The consequences to those affected by bullying—as participants, victims or witnesses—can last a lifetime. Children who chronically bully others seem to maintain their behaviors as they grow up, often getting in trouble with the law as adults. For children on the receiving end of bullying, the result can be increased anxiety, depression and feelings of worthlessness, which can persist into adulthood.

By taking an active role in combating bullying, you can help not only your own children, but also their classmates and, over time, your community as a whole. Here, from the experts at the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (NYVPRC) are some basic steps every parent can take to prevent bullying:

- Learn to recognize the signs of bullying—coming home with bruises is an obvious sign, others are more subtle. If your child is afraid to talk about certain situations or people, goes to elaborate lengths to avoid them or shows a sudden change in school perfor-



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mance or behavior, it's time to start asking questions.

- Talk to your children. Who are their friends? Are they afraid of any of their peers? Are they tormenting more vulnerable classmates? If so, why?

- Talk to their teachers. Ask them to describe your child's interactions with peers. Engage teachers in helping to resolve problems.

- Talk to other parents. Parents can offer each other insights and practical advice and be effective in breaking a bullying pattern that involves their children if they approach the matter in a spirit of collaboration.

You can help make the class bully a relic of the past. To learn more, visit the NYVPRC Web site at www.safeyouth.org.