

Pointers For Parents

What You Can Do To Prevent Bullying

(NAPSA)—It's important to take a stand because every day more than 160,000 students miss school—not because of illness but due to fear of being bullied.

“Bullying is a serious public health issue that affects countless children and adolescents every day,” said Aaron Walton, chairman of the board of the Highmark Foundation, which works to promote lifelong healthy habits in children. “Bullying can be extremely painful and humiliating, causing children to suffer from depression and low self-esteem.”

There's a lot parents can do to help prevent bullying and to ensure that their children have a safe and successful school career. First, look for the common signs to ensure that your child is not a target of bullying. Second, contact your school and make sure that they are implementing a proven bullying-prevention program.

Cyberbullying

A newer form of bullying—cyberbullying—happens when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology.

It can involve sending mean text, e-mail or instant messages, posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on websites or using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies.

One program has shown signif-



Bullying in school is associated with increased reports of physical illness, academic failure and school absence.

icant results in changing anti-social behavior; the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, is a system-wide approach that has resulted in decreasing bullying behaviors among children in grades K-10.

The Bullying Prevention Institute provides the tools and resources that school administrators, counselors, educators, school nurses, policy makers and social workers need to create or improve their bullying-prevention program.

“Safe school environments are critical to the academic success of students,” said Matthew Masiello, M.D., director of Community Health in Pennsylvania's Cone-maugh Health System and architect of the Highmark Healthy High 5 HALT! Bullying Prevention Program. “If students are worried about their safety in school, their focus gets diverted, making it exceedingly more difficult to succeed academically.”

For more information, visit www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org.