

What to Do If Your Child Tells You They're Being Bullied



Step 1: Stay Calm & Stay Grounded

When your child shares something painful, it can be heartbreaking — and feelings of anger, fear, or helplessness can rise up fast. But **how you respond in that moment** sends a powerful message.



Take a Deep Breath

Before you react, pause. Staying grounded helps regulate your child's nervous system and their emotions.



Your Calm Is Contagious

Children take in emotional cues from you. When you respond calmly, you send the message: *"You are safe with me."*



Build Their Confidence

The goal is for them to know: *"This is hard, but we can handle it together."*

Step 2: Create a Space for Them to Talk

Don't rush in with questions or solutions — just be close and curious. These questions get information **and** send the message: *"You don't have to hide. There's no shame here."*



"Can you tell me what happened?"

Opens the door gently without pressure or judgment.



"Has it happened more than once?"

Helps you understand the pattern and severity of the situation.



"How did it make you feel?"

Invites them to reflect on their emotions without escalating the stress they're already carrying.



Just Listen First

Your presence and curiosity matter more than having the right answers in this moment.

Step 3: Make It Clear — It's NOT Their Fault

When kids are bullied, they often wonder if *they* did something wrong. Some even feel ashamed. Say it directly and firmly.



Lift the Blame

"You didn't do anything to deserve this." – This lifts the weight off their shoulders.



Name What's Wrong

"No one should treat you that way – ever." – Teaches them to trust their sense of what feels wrong.



Reframe Telling as Bravery

"You're not tattling by telling me. You're being brave by getting help."

- ✔ Saying these words builds self-confidence, self-trust, and emotional clarity – all in a single conversation.

Step 4: Explore Next Steps Together

Once they've had time to share and feel supported, gently talk through options – not to fight back, but to **stay safe**. Ask if they'd like to come up with ideas together.



Walk Away & Find an Adult

Leaving the situation calmly and seeking help from a trusted grown-up nearby.



Stay Close to Friends

Being around others during key times like lunch or recess can reduce risk.



Block or Don't Respond Online

For cyberbullying – don't engage, block, and screenshot for records.



Ask a Trusted Adult at School

Let them know: *"You don't have to handle this alone. There are adults who care and want to help."*

Step 5: Document & Involve the School

Keep a Record

If this has happened more than once – or if it happened online – write things down. Save screenshots if it feels safe. A clear record helps if the school or others need to take action.

- 📌 Save dates, descriptions, locations, and names of anyone who witnessed the bullying.

Talk to the School — Proactively

Don't wait for things to escalate. Set up a time to talk and:

- Ask directly how your child is doing **socially**, not just academically
- Ask if any patterns have been noticed
- Share what you've observed at home
- Make sure they have a plan for key moments like **lunch and recess**

This is a team effort — make sure the school knows your child and knows you.

Pay attention to what's happening outside of school. Stress from bullying doesn't always look like sadness — it can show up in many ways.

Step 6: Watch for Signs of Stress at Home



Emotional Signs

Seeming withdrawn, tearful, anxious, or avoiding activities they used to enjoy.



Physical Signs

Repeated stomachaches, headaches, frequent trips to the nurse, or physical complaints without a medical diagnosis.



Behavioral Signs

Changes in mood, sleep, appetite, or reluctance to go to school.

- ⚠️ These signs may mean your child is holding stress. Don't wait until things feel urgent — reach out to your Ollie team for support.

Additional Resources

☐ The following organizations offer trusted information and support for parents navigating bullying with their children.

[StopBullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov) – U.S. government resource on bullying prevention and response

[Children's Hospital Colorado](https://www.childrenshospital.com) – Pediatrician's role in bullying prevention

[SafeKids.com](https://www.safekids.com) – Bullying and cyberbullying resources for parents

[GirlsHealth.gov](https://www.girlshealth.gov) – School bullying resources

References

☐ References: American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Children's Hospital Colorado, Boston Children's Hospital, Eyberg et al. (2008).