

Ten ways to bully-proof your child

No Bully is a San Francisco based 501(c)(3) non-profit. It recommends these ten steps for parents to bully-proof their child:

- 1) Friends are the best protection against bullying and are also the best predictor of your child's lifetime success. Ask your children who their friends are and what they do at recess. If you are concerned that your child is isolated, raise this concern with your child's teacher.
- 2) Promote your child's social life. Get involved in your child's school. Make friends with other parents. Arrange frequent play dates for your child with a range of different kids.
- 3) Have conversations with your children throughout their childhood about differences. Teach them to respect and value those who are different from them.
- 4) Be mindful how you talk about others in front of your children. If you gossip or put down others, you are teaching your children to do the same.
- 5) A peaceful, respectful environment at home means we have less bullying at school. Don't allow your children to intimidate or bully each other. Be a role model for intervention.
- 6) Teach your children what happens when friendships go wrong. Tell them that feelings of anger, sadness, jealousy and confusion are normal. Explain that –whatever they might be feeling – bullying, retaliation and revenge are never acceptable responses.
- 7) Limit your child's exposure to violence in music, movies, games and media and limit your child's Internet access to computers in the shared areas of your house.
- 8) Have a conversation with your child about social networking sites and the effect of posting false words, rumors and hurtful images. If your child wants to join a social networking site, reach an agreement that gives you access, and ask that they restrict access to friends only.
- 9) Don't expect your children to tell you that they are being harassed or bullied. Watch for indirect signs that your things are not going well for your child: stomach aches, headaches, irritability, depression, social withdrawal, sudden change in behavior, reluctance to go to school and, in the case of physical bullying, unexplained cuts and bruises.
- 10) Solution Coach® your child how to deal with bullying and other life

challenges. Parents that build strong relationships with their kids often use a coaching approach to parenting. A Solution Coach parent is able to remain centered while using both their hands to coach their child. The left hand is the receptive hand of empathy that reaches out from the heart. It takes the time to notice how your child is feeling and suggest to them (tentatively) that you get it e.g. "I could imagine that you're feeling... Is that what is going on for you?" The right hand encourages action. It names the problem, sets limits and facilitates solutions. A Solution Coach parent usually starts with the left hand and only moves to the right after establishing a connection with their child. Then she or he goes back and forth between the two hands.