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by: April Jones

With all of the recent media attention surrounding the issue, you have to wonder—why are parents still blindsided by bullying?

Whether their child is the bully or the bullied, most parents claim to have no clue a problem exists.

Perhaps we don't ask the right questions. If you ask your child if he is being bullied at school, he may say no, even if he is. Most bullied children are afraid the bullying will worsen if the bully is punished. Also, from the bullied child's perspective, it can be embarrassing to admit what is going on. Therefore, bullied children are likely to keep it to themselves.

This doesn't give us the

right to keep our heads in the sand. It just means, as parents, we need to work a bit harder and become a bit more subtle.

Ask your child about her day at school: who does she

eat lunch with? Who does she sit with in class?

Keep the lines of communication open between you and school personnel. Keep aware of how well your child performs in class and what his grades look like. Be alert for signs of

withdrawal, melancholy, and poor grades.

Social media provides a new, potentially more devastating schoolyard for bullies. The insults and teasing have a larger audience on-



line. Visit your child's social media outlets. Become his friend on Facebook and follow him on Twitter to see what he is saying to and about others and to know what others are saying to and about him.

Be ready to act! What is

the point of your child revealing one of the most painful problems in his life, if he cannot depend on you to do something about it? Arrange meetings with school administrators and the parents of the bully to neutralize the problem as soon as possible. Your child needs to know that you are there to protect and look out for him—and the bullies need to know that, too.

If you discover your child is the victim of bullying and you are able to stop it, work with your child to deal with the impact of bullying. The effects of bullying are significant and long lasting.

If you discover your child is a bully, talk to them

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in their own words

Do you remember how nervous you felt before you had to speak to a group, appear on stage, or give a presentation? I feel that way almost every day when just trying to leave my home. I have social anxiety disorder and being bullied is the cause. I was

made fun of throughout school because of my love of learning, the way I dressed, for being a 'goody-two-shoes', and just not being like the other kids. The constant humiliation caused me to develop the anxiety disorder, and I struggle with it every day. Going to work, church,

and even shopping can be an ordeal. I've struggled with social anxiety disorder for years, and I wouldn't wish it upon anyone. Please, if your child is being bullied, work to stop it. Being bullied **can affect life after school.**

--Crystal Wright

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Morning Classes are from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

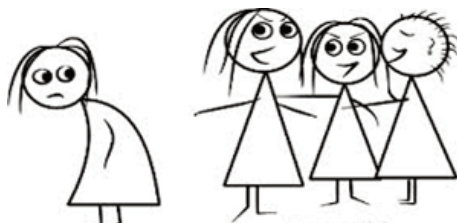
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Pat Payne 410-292-7864

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Together We Can Make A Difference!



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about the consequences and harm her behavior causes and seek professional help for you and your child.

Take bullying seriously. This isn't one of the instances when your child should "man up". The effects of bullying are enduring and can even be fatal. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people, resulting in about 4,400 deaths per year, according to the CDC. Bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than

non-victims, according to studies by Yale University.

Bullying also poses lasting risks for bullies. Bullying is a violent behavior, which often acts as a gateway to worse violent behavior later. Research shows that 1 out of 4 elementary-school bullies will have criminal records by the time they are 30.

We have to get involved and know what's going on in our kids' lives. Their lives and their futures may depend on it.

GET THE FACTS! and help fight bullying

- About 20 percent of U.S. students in grades 9 through 12 were bullied at some point in 2011.
- People are usually bullied because of appearance and social status.
- Cyberbullying is a true form of bullying that involves sending cruel texts, messages, or posting insults about a person on various forms of social media.
- Studies have shown that the stress of being bullied can initiate severe physical symptoms.
- 15% of all school absenteeism is related to fears of being bullied.

in their own words

Hi, my name is Joshua Lindsay and bullying for me throughout 4th-5th grade was hard for me, but I learned how to ignore the bad people. I know you want to cry but cry when you all get home because if you cry and let them see you crying, then they will keep on bullying you.

And when they talk about you, tell your mom or dad and they might tell you to ignore them or they will talk to them. They might stop, but if they don't, I would tell the person in charge in school and then they will stop. So, that's all about bullying. Ignore those bad people in the

world. Also, you are the child of God and God will protect you from harm and danger and bullies. So, if I were you, I would also pray to God and tell him to protect you. He will answer your prayers and you will be safe, *if only you believe in God.*

--Joshua Lindsay



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The deadline to submit any articles, pictures or other content for publication in our December 2013 issue is **Sunday, November 17, 2013.**

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