

## 7 Ways to Help Your Kid Cope with Bullying

By Jennifer Hancock  
Author of [The Bully Vaccine](#)

No parent wants to see their child suffer at the hands of a bully. As much as we would like to shield them from horrible people, as parents, we have to be realistic. Our job is to prepare our kids for life in the real world and that means helping them learn how to cope with mean people.

Here are 7 ways you can help your child cope with bullying.

1. Have your kid's back. If your child tells you that someone was mean to them. Don't brush it off as a harmless childhood interaction. This is an opportunity to help your child learn vital coping skills. If you want your child to come to you for help, you need to give them help when they ask for it.
2. Don't tell your child to ignore the mean kid or to handle it themselves. If they knew how to handle themselves, they wouldn't have come to you for advice. Telling them to ignore a bully isn't helpful. Give them real help so that they learn you really are someone worth confiding in.
3. Be Specific. You need to teach your child something specific they can do to get the bullying to stop. You also need to teach them why what you are teaching them will work and also how it works. Information is power. Share your knowledge, all your knowledge with your kid. They will tell you when too much is enough and when it is time for you to stop lecturing them.
4. Give them something constructive they can do. Don't ask them to be passive. When it comes to bullying, your kid needs to know how exactly to respond to a bully to get the bullying to stop. They need to be told what to say and how to say it. And you need to help them practice their response with some role playing before you send them back to school. The key to getting bullies to stop is to not reinforce their bad behavior. In my book, [The Bully Vaccine](#) I outline the specific steps you need to teach your child to get the bullying to stop. These are:
  - a. A phrase to say to a bully every time a bully is mean to them. This phrase should be boring and off topic so that it won't reinforce the bullying.
  - b. The critical importance of reporting each and every incident of bullying to a teacher
  - c. Encouragement to stand up and report the bullying that is happening to other kids.
5. Speak to the principal and the teacher(s) on your child's behalf. Don't just tell your kid to tell the teacher themselves. Teachers are not always aware of what is going on and some kids don't feel comfortable speaking to adults. Additionally, children learn by example. So let your child know you are planning to speak to the principal and their teacher so that the teachers at the school can be effectively mobilized to help your child. Make sure to share the outcome of those meetings with your kid so that they know what is being done to help keep them safe. When your child sees you standing up for them and sees that the adults around them are willing to help them, it empowers them to continue speaking up and to continue reporting the bullying, which is essential if the bullying is going to be stopped.

6. Encourage your child to feel compassion for the kids who are bullying them. This is very hard for a child to do, but it is essential that they learn the value of compassion. We all want our kids to grow up to be ethical, compassionate and responsible adults. However obnoxious a bully is, they are still a human being and they are still worthy of our compassion. Encouraging your child to be compassionate with everyone they meet, including the bullies of the world will not only help them cope better with the bullying. It will also help them learn how critical compassion is when solving interpersonal conflicts successfully.
7. Encourage them to love themselves. Most bullying is emotional in nature. It is a taunt or a threat that is designed to make a kid feel bad about themselves. Your child needs to understand that they are just fine the way they are and that whatever they were told is wrong about them is actually one of their strengths and that not only is there nothing wrong with them. That aspect of who they are is something to celebrate. Again, be specific and share examples from your own life and the lives of others.
  - a. For example, my son has a high singing voice and is often told by boys in his class that he sings like a girl. This obviously bothered him. Fortunately, my son is a fan of opera. So when he asked me about whether he sounded like a girl because of his high voice because some of the boys had teased him about it, I told him that all young boys have high voices, but more importantly, men with high voices are called tenors and they are some of the highest paid opera singers in the world! He immediately started bragging about how high he can sing by treating me to his rendition of the Queen of the Night aria from The Magic Flute. He hasn't questioned whether his high voice is something to be ashamed of since.

There is nothing as heartbreaking to a parent as learning that your child is being bullied. Fortunately, there is something you can do to help them. You just need to be as courageous as you want your child to be.

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### About the author:



Jennifer Hancock is a writer, speaker and a Humanist who specializes in ethics, morality and what motivates us to be a better person. She offers trainings and workshops on [Humanistic Parenting](#). To learn more, [sign up for her mailing list](#).

If you are interested in learning how to talk about ethics and decision making with your child, check out her book: *The Humanist Approach to Happiness: Practical Wisdom* at: <http://happiness.jen-hancock.com>