

BULLYING

Children are often reluctant to tell their teacher or their parents that they are being bullied, for fear they will be further victimized by the bully for “tattling”. But silence and inaction only allows bullying to thrive. If your child reveals that he or she is being harassed in the classroom or on the playground, here are some recommendations to help you formulate an appropriate response:

- ✔ **Listen** very carefully to your child’s description of the bullying event(s). Although revisiting the experience will likely be very upsetting for you and your child, it’s important that you remain calm. Your goal is to keep your child talking so you can learn as much as possible about the situation.
- ✔ **Reassure** your child that the abuse is not their fault. Emphasize that the bully is the one who has the problem – not them. Let your son or daughter know that bullying is very common and that other children at his or her school are very likely being bullied as well. If the situation is sufficiently serious, reassure your child that you will take steps to protect them from being targeted again.
- ✔ **Do not approach** the bully or bully’s parents about the issue directly. Your child’s teacher and school principal are responsible for your child’s ongoing well-being at school – they are the ones who need to **take action**. Politely but firmly insist that the school implement a plan that will address your child’s situation. Don’t give up until the issue is resolved.
- ✔ Try to **determine what messages your child may have internalized** as a result of the abuse they have suffered. No matter how frivolous and unfounded a verbal insult may seem to you, don’t assume that your child is able to shrug it off. The intense emotional impact of bullying is enormously successful in driving home false messages that erode self-confidence. For a child with already-fragile self-esteem, the results can be devastating. It’s not uncommon for a child to begin thinking, believing what the bully says about them is true or even worse that they deserve to be bullied

If you are still worried about your child, there are qualified professionals who can help your child, you, & the rest of your family find solutions. At Family TLC we believe that successful parenting is a recipe that requires love & knowledge.