

Intervention Strategies for Bully/Victim Behavior

- Parents are encouraged to call the Cobb County School's Prevention Intervention Center at 678-842-5820. The P/I Center can help set up a free assessment in the community with a clinician of your choice. This is a strategy to use if your child is having a difficult time at school, home, in the community, or with peer relationships in general.
- Often, kids who engage in bullying behavior may benefit from social skills training. These kids seem to have a difficult time making & keeping friends.
- Sometimes, kids who are engaged in bullying behavior are very popular. Many of them have friends, but have little empathy for others who appear to be different, without friends or unpopular. Empathy training and teaching students to understand the feelings of others may be helpful. But remember, this is not conflict resolution, anger management or peer mediation.
- If your child has been bullied, a geographic move or transfer may be helpful. It depends on the extent of the bullying behavior and the school's and community's ability to stop the behavior. Sometimes those who are bullied, bully others. This is called provocative behavior. In these cases a geographic move may not help if your child continues to be provocative.
- Sometimes those who are bullied may need some outside assistance if the bullying behavior has created a sense of shame for the victim. Many times further intervention is unnecessary once the bullying behavior has stopped.
- Sometimes taking self-defense or assertiveness training may help the individual who is being victimized, especially if the child has had to deal with bullying behavior most of his/her life.
- An essential ingredient in parenting is role modeling respectful behavior and teaching by example. It is our goal to not use threatening or intimidating behavior as a method of getting our way. James Baldwin stated that *children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them*. It is essential that we treat others, as we want to be treated.
- Often when a parent has identified victim behavior, the first reaction is to feel sympathy for or blame the victim. As we have learned in domestic violence cases, *Best Practices* is to support the victim through examining and capturing his/her perception of the incident. Life is perception, not reality. The victim may need additional support on how to respond differently.
- Lastly, when a parent recognizes bullying behavior, the first reaction is to punish the child. John Rosemond, a nationally syndicated parenting psychologist, maintains that *punishment only fuels the fire*. Where punishment can foster anger and revengeful feelings in a child, logical and natural consequences, on the other hand, are a more respectful way to build a child's self-esteem and problem-solving ability. It is important to channel the anger and need for power into a leadership direction, maximizing the child's potential. Some of these strategies are involving the child in community service, cooperative activities and mentoring.