



HOW TO EMPOWER YOUR CHILD WITH VERBAL DEFENSE SKILLS

One of the most frequent questions I am asked after teaching a self-protection class is, "How can I reinforce the lesson of verbal defense at home?" Bullying comes in two forms; relational & physical. Relational behaviors are more common and include; teasing, name calling, picking on, laughing at, excluding, bossiness, manipulation, and gossip. Many of these behaviors are seen in situations involving "friendship drama." Physical aggression involves pushing, hitting, stealing from, cutting in line, biting etc. Like any lesson, verbal defense can be reinforced through parent-child communication and **role playing**.

Definition of Bullying: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/definition/index.html>

Children need to be taught that their "Secret weapon" is always confidence. Mean kids don't pick on confident children. Studies have found that role-playing increases a child's confidence level and self esteem by **giving them options and appropriate responses**. They then are able to diffuse a situation should it arise.

Remind your child that the "key" to keeping their power, is NOT TO REACT. Don't show emotion, especially attitude and anger. Smile, look the bully in the eye and use one of these "Power Protector" techniques:

POWER PROTECTORS MAKE YOU THE WINNER!

- **W Walk away** from the bully (mean person)! Say nothing. Keep walking and don't look back!
- **I Ignore the comment!** Ignore the bully as if he or she weren't there. Go on your way.
- **N No Attitude:** Tell the mean person, "O.k. sure...." "Good to know." Don't say powerless words like, "Whatever, SO! or I don't care!" Attitude only attracts attitude
- **N Nice:** Change the subject and say something **nice** to the mean person! Then keep walking.
- **E ESCAPE! Refuse to fight or argue!** Just say **STOP!** Leave me alone! Attract attention with your voice! Keep them 2-arms length away.
- **R Report it!** If you are being bullied or see someone being bullied, go tell an adult. Reporting is not tattle-telling. If you are in a group, go and get the kid who is being bullied and walk him/her away. Don't get into it with the bullies. There is power in numbers!

After discussing several scenarios, it's time to reinforce the response your child should take. They must not hesitate and they must **practice** using their voices. Your child's voice is their **biggest weapon!** The louder the better, **noise attracts attention!**

Remind them that smaller people can back off larger people just with their voices. **We taught your child to "Go Chihuahua Crazy!"** Practice and see! Remember the arms length rule- **(Keep bullies more than two arm lengths away and strangers or vehicles, more than 5 arm lengths away.)**

Conflict Resolution technique called the "Talk."

Here is the acronym for the **"Talk,"** when they need to let a friend know how they feel:

T. Take time to calm down; never confront someone when you are mad.

A. Alone; talk with that person alone.

L. Let them know how you feel. Use "I" words, "I felt hurt when you were laughing at me." Listen, get the other person's perspective. You might also have a part in this.

K. Kind; say something kind, "I really want to clear things up." "I really value our friendship." Accept their apology and if necessary apologize for your part in it too.

If the "Talk" doesn't work, or the other party doesn't want to listen to you, get help. Have an adult mediate the problem after hearing both sides of the story.

Here is a list of books I recommend for parents and children to read and also books that can be read to children to increase their awareness and present them with options:

Shore, Kenneth. The ABC's of Bullying Prevention.

Anthony, Michelle: Little Girls Can Be Mean: Four Steps to Bully-Proof Girls in the Early Grades

Rosalind Wiseman: Masterminds and Wingmen: Helping Our Boys Cope with Schoolyard Power

For information on what to do if your child is being bullied, go to:

http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_What_Do_About/

For children:

Chase Anichini Baffle That Bully! The game that puts you in control and makes the bully lose interest.

(written by a third grader and her mom)

Karen Gedig Burnett "Simon's Hook: A Story About Teases and Put-Downs." (K-5th grades)

Ludwig, Trudy. 2 great books: My Secret Bully. Just Kidding. (K-5th grades)

Criswell, Patti. Stand Up for Yourself & Your Friends: American Girl (K-6th grades)

Tracie Arlington For further information or questions, please feel free to contact us:
www.PlayItSafeDefense.net or Tracie@PlayItSafeDefense.com

For class information and dates, go to: www.PlayItSafeDefense.net

For on-line video tutorials go to: <http://www.playitsafedefense.net/online-tv/>

**We travel to your
group! Girl & Boy
Scouts, after-school
programs**