

FIVE THINGS TO KNOW AND SHARE WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

Developed By PACER'S National Bullying Prevention Center

1. Cyberbullying is an issue that can even impact younger children

Often, the perception is that cyberbullying only happens on social media platforms, which require individuals to be at least 13 before signing up and using these services according to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) regulations. However, children can be subjected to or participate in inappropriate online behavior as soon as they have access to technology. If they have access to text messaging, group chats, an email address, or a gaming site, there is the potential for cyberbullying.

2. If your child sees cyberbullying, encourage them to take action when they feel comfortable

Research shows that peers can be very effective at intervening in a bullying situation. Possible responses include direct confrontation, but this can be very challenging to do and is often not as effective as being supportive of the person being bullied. When someone sees cyberbullying, their response could be to:

- Write something positive about the person being targeted
- Contact the person being bullied and let them know they're not alone
- Take a screenshot of the bullying and report it to a parent or an adult at school
- Report the bullying content to the social media platform and ask to have it removed according to the platform's community guidelines

3. Keep records of any cyberbullying

An important part of addressing a cyberbullying situation is keeping a record of what has happened. Your child may want to delete what is being sent so that they don't have to see it again, but it's important to NOT immediately delete evidence of bullying. Records can provide proof of the cyberbullying to social media providers, school personnel, or law enforcement officials.

- Parents and their children can work together to save the evidence: take screenshots of inappropriate behavior in emails, text messages, posts, website pages, and photos
- Print out evidence when necessary
- Don't delete anything until you've made a copy that includes dates, identity of sender, and other relevant information
- Make sure to record the date and description of any bullying incidents that are happening in person, as well

Recent research conducted by the Cyberbullying Research Center in partnership with Cartoon Network shows: **1 in 5 tweens (ages 9-12) have experienced cyberbullying in some form.**



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4. If your child experiences cyberbullying, encourage them to tell someone

Cyberbullying generally happens in an environment where adults can't see it; unless the kids involved tell someone, usually no adults will know. Encourage your kids to talk with you, but understand that there may be times when they have difficulty confiding in a parent about something. If you are comfortable with it, let them know they can speak with another adult they trust, like a teacher, counselor, or coach.

5. Talk with your child about policy and rights

Let your child know that they have the right to be safe from bullying at school and outside of school, offline and online. Every state has a bullying prevention law or policy that helps districts and schools address bullying. These laws and policies often require that schools address cyberbullying in their district policy. Some state laws also cover off-campus behavior that creates a hostile school environment. If your child experiences cyberbullying, ask to see the school's bullying prevention policy to learn more about the role the school can play in helping your child address the issue.

REASONS WHY YOUNG PEOPLE MAY NOT TELL AN ADULT

They were told just to "ignore it."

A common response to bullying is to "just ignore it," which is well intentioned but not helpful. It's hard to ignore negative behavior that is repeatedly directed at you.

They think they should handle it on their own.

Some kids see bullying as something they need to fix or that they maybe did something to deserve it.

They're concerned about contacting the other kid's parents.

Some kids think that their parent's response will make the situation worse, like calling the other kid's parent and getting upset with them.

They don't want their phone taken away.

Limiting your child's use of phones, tablets, or other technology won't stop the situation. It's the bullying, not the technology, that needs to stop.

They don't want anyone to worry.

Some kids believe that their parents have enough to deal with and they don't want to add another problem to handle.

The situation is too personal.

Some kids get picked on because of something they did, like behaving inappropriately at a party. If they tell an adult about being bullied, then they also have to explain their own actions. That's not an easy thing to do when you already feel bad about what happened.



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