

# Remember

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Children (and adults) will always have to cope with some cruelty in their lives.

The real trick is to make your child better able to cope with cruelty and thus, they'll be much less affected by it.

The key to making kids better able to cope socially is to play up their strengths. Make sure your child has lots of chances to play with friends they like. Praise and reward them for their skills and strengths. And above all, make sure you have some *fun* family time – it's in those relationships that they'll find their strengths!



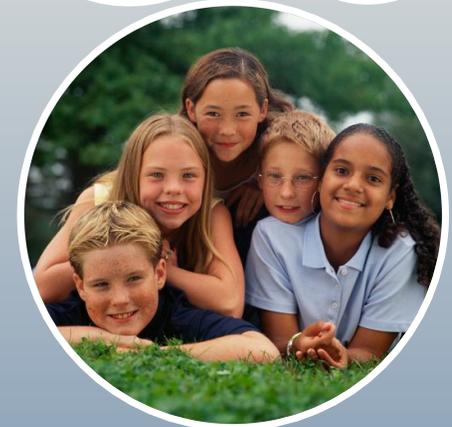
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Dr. Elizabeth K. Englander is a Professor of Psychology, and the founder and Director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

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Dr. Englander has trained tens of thousands of teachers, students, and parent and community groups. She presents at many national conferences and is the author of dozens of journal articles and book chapters, including the book *Understanding violence*.

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## What To Do If Your Child Is Being .... Bullied



**Elizabeth  
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# Dealing with a bullying situation *must* be a team effort.



If your child comes home and tells you, “I’m being bullied,” – do not panic! Remember that you’re not dealing with this alone, and neither is your child. Look below to find certain steps you need to take to resolve the most common types of situations.

Every bullying situation is slightly different. Take into account your individual situation before following anybody’s advice – including mine!

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## Step One: What’s going on?

Children tend to overuse the word “bullying” to describe many different kinds of situations. So the first job is to determine what kind of problem your child is dealing with.

Tell them you’re proud and glad that they came to you; then ask your child to walk you through the incident. What happened first? What next? Who else was there?

What did they do?

The most important thing is for you to get details – as many details as possible. It’s those details that will help you resolve this.

The situation may or may not be bullying, but that’s not the most important thing.

The critical issue to *resolve* the situation – and you need those details to do that.

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## Step Two: Working With Your Child’s School

Approach your child’s school calmly, with as many facts as possible. Here are a few tips to make the conversation go better:

Consider going in person. Phone and email contact is often not as effective.

Stay calm and listen to what the educator or administrator tells you. Don’t assume they have all the same facts that you have.

It’s not often that administrators can truly make a bullying situation vanish overnight – but they *can* immediately work to help your child feel more supported and safer.

Never assume you know *everything* about what’s going on, and never assume your child is telling you the 100% entire truth. It is *normal* for children to tell small lies to their parents, if it means they will avoid getting in trouble.

Never over-focus on whether or not the situation is truly “bullying.” Focus instead on how to resolve it successfully.

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## Step Three: Some Tips to Help

If you feel unable to communicate with the administrator, go see another person in your child’s District or school. Don’t give up.

Stay calm – losing your temper will not help your child feel safer.

Remember that schools cannot tell you anything about another child – even a bully – so don’t expect to get information about what happens to the bully. They *cannot* tell you.

When you end a conversation, be sure to ask, “When we will speak next, to check in about this situation?” Insist upon an answer.

Do you need more help? Ask your pediatrician for advice and referrals.

Finally, always ask your child if any part of the bullying is happening online or through texting. Our research shows that the older kids are, the more common that is.



Need more information? Visit <http://www.elizabethenglander.com>