

Coping with a bully, how parents can help

If you hear that your child is being bullied, your first instinct might be to intervene and immediately take action. Depending upon the situation, it may be more effective to offer support and suggestions to help your child handle the problem.

According to the 2012 RBC Children's Mental Health poll, parents would like their child to approach them about mental health issues but children are more inclined to confide in their friends. Keeping an open dialogue with your kids and talking about bullying can help open the lines of communication. Here are some additional tips on dealing with bullying.

- *Rehearse situations that might be difficult.* Give your child a chance to practice a calm reaction they can use if bullying happens.
- *Help your child understand the bully.* Children who are bullied may think they deserve to be treated in cruel ways. Tell them that everybody deserves to be treated courteously, and that bullies often act out because it makes them feel powerful.
- *Build your child's self-esteem.* Being bullied can make a child feel less self-confident. Give your child opportunities to enjoy activities that make them feel safe. Help them find groups of people with similar interests. Some children benefit from activities in another town, where the bully has no influence.

The RBC Children's Mental Health Project provides a number of trusted resources available for parents at www.rbc.com/childrensmentalhealth. These tips were drafted with the assistance of Ceridian Canada, RBC's employee assistance provider.