

## Bullies

### What is a bully?

It is someone who takes advantage of another individual that he or she sees as being weaker, more vulnerable. Bullies want to gain control over the victim or social group. They surround themselves with a group of peers that use similar aggression and tactics. Bullies tend to lack social skills to deal with conflicts. They repeatedly bother the same people. They may enjoy watching the victim's reaction.

### What causes a child to be a bully?

There are a number of different factors that have been identified which contribute to bullying problems. Three key factors all contribute: family, individual, and school.

- **Family Factors:** Child-rearing styles have been found to predict whether children will grow up to be aggressive. A lack of attention and warmth, modeling aggressive behavior at home, and poor supervision all contribute to the occurrence of bullying behavior. Research has indicated that aggressive behavior of all kinds is elevated in children who witness violence by their father toward their mother.
- **Individual Factors:** Temperament is the basic tendencies by children to develop certain personality styles and interpersonal behaviors. Children who are overly active and impulsive may have the tendency to develop into bullies. Children who develop faster in strength and body compared with their peers also have the characteristics to become bullies.
- **School Factors:** Social context and supervision at school play a major part in the amount and severity of bullying. Bullying can be greatly reduced by appropriate supervision, intervention and social acceptance in a school. The social climate in the school needs to be one where there is warmth and acceptance of all students, and where there are high standards of behavior for students and teachers.

### What harm can come of a child being the bully?

Bullying may become a way of life for the child. They may surround themselves with others who accept and promote aggressive behavior. They may not develop a mature sense of justice. If they intimidate others to cover up their own sense of insecurities, their own anxiety may increase. As adults they are much more aggressive and have a higher chance of getting in trouble with the law. They are more likely to be spousal abusers and become parents who are aggressive and abusive towards their own children.

