

How Can You Advocate for a Bullying Prevention Program in Your Child's School?

Parents can play a very important role in advocating for the implementation of bullying prevention efforts within their child's school. All it takes is a parent or group of parents with the commitment and desire to see positive change happen. Here are some steps to take if you want to advocate for bullying prevention efforts in your child's school.

1. If your child is experiencing bullying at school, contact a teacher, school counselor, or principal at the school immediately. Document what is happening, who is involved, and what, if anything, school staff members are doing about it.
2. Seek out other parents whose children are experiencing the same problem of bullying in your child's school. Try to rally the support of these parents in addressing the issue.
3. Read the fact sheets provided in the Bullying Prevention Toolkit for Parents provided by Hazelden Publishing. Become well informed about what bullying is, and the best practices for addressing bullying.
4. If you feel your school's administration will be open to the idea of implementing a bullying prevention program, ask for a meeting that includes key administrators, other concerned parents and yourself. Come to the meeting prepared to share specific examples of the types of bullying children are experiencing. Photocopy the following fact sheets from the Bullying Prevention Toolkit for Parents and provide a set to your school's administration.
 - What Is Bullying?
 - What Should Schools Look For in a Bullying Prevention Program?
 - Introducing the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*
 - Steps to Address Bullying at Your School: Tips for School Administrators

*Consider ordering a free program information DVD/CD-ROM about the **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program**. This DVD/CD-ROM gives a good overview of the program. Call **1-800-328-9000** to order a copy. Plan to give this copy to your school's administration.*

5. If you don't feel your school administration will be initially supportive of implementing a bullying prevention program, plan to meet with your school's PTA/PTO organization first. Include as many other supportive parents as possible in this meeting. Share the fact sheets listed in Step 4 with the leadership of your PTA/PTO organization. Ask for the group's support in addressing the issue of bullying. Show the program information DVD (described in Step 4) to PTA/PTO members to highlight the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* as a strong possible solution to the problem of bullying in the school.

Look into the possibility of having your school's PTA/PTO raise the funds needed to purchase program materials and other needed resources to address the issue of bullying.

6. Identify ways your group of parents can support the bullying prevention efforts of your school. For example, you could host fundraisers to raise money for program materials, offer to serve on a schoolwide committee, or offer to host parent meetings about the issue.
7. Be sure to thank your school's administrators and other staff members for any and all efforts that are made to address the issue of bullying. Work with your school to find ways to measure progress and success. The *Olweus Bullying Questionnaire* is a good tool for measuring changes in bullying at your school over time. For more information about the questionnaire, visit www.hazelden.org/olweus or call **1-800-328-9000**.