What To Do When Your Child is Cyberbullied
Top Ten Tips for Parents

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1. Make sure your child is (and feels) safe. The safety and well-being of your child should always be the foremost priority. Convey unconditional support. Parents must demonstrate to their children through words and actions that they both desire the same end result: stopping the cyberbullying.

2. Talk with and listen to your child. Engage your child in conversation about what is going on. Refrain from freaking out. Take the time to learn exactly what happened, and the nuanced context in which it occurred. Also, don't minimize the situation or make excuses for the aggressor.

3. Collect evidence. Print out or make screenshots of conversations, messages, pictures, and any other items which can serve as clear proof that your child is being cyberbullied. Keep a record of any and all incidents to assist in the investigative process. Also, keep notes on relevant details like location, frequency, severity of harm, third-party involvement or witnesses, and the backstory.

4. Work with the school. All schools in the U.S. have a bullying policy, and most cover cyberbullying. Seek the help of administrators if the target and aggressor go to the same school. Your child has the right to feel safe at school, and educators are responsible to ensure this through an investigation and appropriate response.

5. Refrain from contacting the parents of the bully. Some parents confronted with accusations that their child is engaging in cyberbullying may become defensive and therefore may not be receptive to your thoughts. Be judicious in your approach to avoid additional drama and possible retaliation.

6. Contact the content provider. Cyberbullying violates the Terms of Service of all legitimate service providers (websites, apps, Internet or cell companies). Regardless of whether your child can identify who is harassing them, contact the relevant provider. An updated list of contact information can be found here: cyberbullying.us/report.

7. Contact the police when physical threats are involved. Most states have laws related to online threats, and law enforcement can assist in these cases either informally or formally. If your local department is not helpful, contact county or state law enforcement officials, as they often have more resources and expertise in technology-related offenses.

8. If the bullying is based on race, sex, or disability, contact the Office of Civil Rights. The U.S. Department of Education takes these cases very seriously if children are limited in their ability to learn and thrive at school because of discrimination.

9. If necessary, seek counseling. Your child may benefit from speaking with a mental health professional. Children may prefer to dialogue with a third party who may be perceived as more objective.

10. Implement measures to prevent it from reoccurring. If your child is being bullied through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.), set up privacy controls within each platform to block the bully from contacting them, and file a report (see #6). Also encourage them to keep talking to you before small issues flare up into major situations.