



## **Parenting Tips: Supporting Bystanders**

### **What we know:**

Eighty-five percent (85%) of school aged children witness bullying in their schools, neighborhoods and homes. Their action or inaction plays a crucial role in whether an incident of bullying stops or is reinforced. As adults, we have the responsibility to teach and support our children when they encounter bullying.

### **What parents can do:**

- **Become Informed**  
Educate yourself about the facts of bullying, the warning signs that a child may be the target of bullying or bullying others, and steps you can take to prevent bullying.
- **Examine Your Personal Feelings, Values, Experiences**
  - What kind of group, if any, did you belong to in junior high or high school?
  - When you were a teen, what got a boy high status and what got him teased? What got a girl high social status and what got her teased?
  - Did you ever watch a friend be cruel to another child but do nothing to stop it? If you did try to stop it, what happened?
  - Were you ever cruel to other children? What motivated you?
  - How do these experiences guide your interactions with your children now?
- **Walk the Walk**  
Model the behavior you want from your child. This not only includes treating others with respect and kindness, but also refraining from gossiping and spreading rumors.
- **Take a Stand**  
If we want our children to stand up to bullying behavior, we have to be willing to take a stand too. Adults are also bystanders to bullying. Use teachable moments to support targets of bullying or to intervene during a bullying incident.
- **Communication**
  - Start an ongoing dialogue with your child
  - Messages about bullying behavior must be consistent between parents, school staff and other caregivers