STAND UP AND SPEAK UP | CONVERSATION GUIDE

How to talk with your child about bullying.

Short, calm and often. These conversation starters help kids open up without shutting down.



Make it easy to start

Kids talk more when it feels casual: in the car, on a walk, while cooking, at bedtime. Skip the interrogation. Try one question and listen.

Open questions

“Who do you sit with at lunch?”
“What was the hardest part of today?”
“Is anyone being treated unfairly at school?”

About the internet

“Did anything online make you feel bad this week?”
“Have you ever seen something mean you did not know how to handle?”

If they say 'fine'

“I am not asking to get anyone in trouble. I just want to know you are okay.”
Try again another day.

Name the plan

“If something happens, here are four ways to tell someone.” Walk through the card together.

Do and don't

Do

- Thank them for telling you
- Stay calm, even if you are upset
- Believe them
- Ask what they want to happen
- Keep the details and screenshots

Don't

- Say “just ignore it” or “toughen up”
- Blame them or ask what they did to cause it
- Confront the other child or parent yourself
- Promise to keep it secret if you need to tell the school
- Take away their phone as punishment

Tell them the plan: “I might need to tell someone at school to help. I will tell you before I do, and we will do it together.”

When your child opens up: a script

1. **Say thank you**
   “Thank you for telling me. I am glad you did, and I am on your side.”
2. **Reflect what you heard**
   “So some kids have been calling you names at lunch, and it has been going on for a couple of weeks. Is that right?”
3. **Ask what they need**
   “What would help most? Do you want me to just listen, or help figure out what to do?”
4. **Decide next steps together**
   “I would like to tell the school so they can help. Which way do you want to do it?”
5. **Follow up**
   “Let's check in again on Friday.” Then do it.

If you are worried about your child's safety

If your child says they want to die, or you are worried they may hurt themselves, ask directly, stay with them, and get help now. Call or text **988**. If they are in danger right now, call **911**.

> **If someone is in danger right now, call 911. If you or a friend is thinking about suicide, call or text 988.**