GETTING BULLIES AND VICTIMS TO SEE EYE TO EYE

If possible sit down with the child who is teasing or bullying and the child who is on the receiving end and talk the situation through.

Getting kids seeing eye to eye is challenging but let them each tell their story.

You need to see this as a teachable moment and create some empathy in the person who is bullying and also help the person on the receiving end come up with a strategy to stop this or any other situation from happening again. It also helps if they can see if their behaviour in some way may have lead to it. Be careful with this as all kids have a right to feel safe and just because they behave in a certain way doesn’t mean they should be victimised.

Create empathy with the following statements:

“What were you thinking when you did…….?"

“How did you feel?”

“How do you think …… feels in this situation?”

“How do you think they were affected?”

“How can you repair the harm?”

“Imagine if this was your sister/brother/mother how would you have reacted or treated them?”

Look for some resolution and be forward-focused rather than looking backward and talk about how to make things right:

Ask the person bullied:
“What would ………. have to do to make this situation better?”

Ask the bully:
“What can you do now to make things better for….?”

The restorative justice process gives us an alternative, which I like. The person who did the bullying should ask for forgiveness from the other person. This can be tricky to do but powerful when it happens as it seals the relationship

HELP YOUR CHILD BEAT BULLYING

Bullying is common despite heightened public awareness in recent years. Recent research shows that 67 per cent of children experience bullying at some stage.

Bullying transgresses a child’s fundamental right to feel safe and secure. It is the selective, uninvited, intentional, often repeated oppression of one person by another person or group. It can happen at school, within the neighbourhood and, in some cases, within a family.

Children can be bullied in a number of ways – physically, verbally or through exclusion. Both boys and girls can bully although girls are more likely to use verbal taunts and exclusion, while boys are more likely to use physical means.

When a child is bullied he or she generally feels powerless and lacks the ability to fend for himself or herself. A child who is bullied over a long period of time can experience significant long term affects. It can affect a child’s
learning, peer group relations and self-esteem.

Children who are bullied generally need help. They need someone to believe their story. If you suspect your child is being bullied take him or her seriously. Sometimes the only thing a child wants is the knowledge they have their parents’ support.

Gain a clear picture of what happens and help your child identify any behaviour, such as playing alone or annoying others, that may contribute to the bullying.

If appropriate, provide your child with some ideas based on the information you have gathered that will reduce the likelihood of being bullied. Resist the emotive reaction to confront the bullies yourself as this often causes an escalation and invites retaliation.

Bullying is best handled in partnership between parents and school or other institution, so present your concern to the relevant teacher or professional so that you can find a joint solution to the problem.

Do you know the warning signs of bullying? They include:

- Complaints about stolen items
- Unusual behaviour at home such as aggression or timidity.
- Physical injuries such as bruising or repeated accidents
- Reluctance to go to school or lack of interest in school
- Pretend illness or injury
- Sudden or unusual clinginess