



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Alane Fagin or Donna Cattano
516-621-0552 or 631-289-3240

10 Warning Signs a Child is Being Bullied and What Parents Can Do to Help Keep Them Safe

***In every classroom, 2 to 3 children spend their day afraid of being bullied;
this fear prompts 160,000 kids in the US to stay home from school each day.***

ROSLYN, NY: "Bullying usually starts in the first few weeks of school, and left unchecked can quickly escalate," said Alane Fagin, MS, Executive Director, Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS). "There are definite signs that parents should be aware of to determine whether their child is a target of a school bully." CAPS is Long Island's leading not-for-profit provider of youth violence prevention and child-safety education to K-12 schools, and offers its in-classroom, bully prevention programs to all Nassau and Suffolk schools at no cost.

Bullying can take many forms including physical, verbal and emotional abuse, social exclusion, intimidation, racial/ethnic slurs, sexual harassment and cyber-bullying. It can occur in such places as on a school bus, in isolated areas in the school, during a walk home, at after-school activities, and online. "Sudden and uncharacteristic changes can indicate a child is being harassed or victimized. If parents suspect something is going on, bullying may be a possibility that needs investigation," said Ms. Fagin. Some specific behaviors include:

1. Declining grades
2. Frequent complaints of illness
3. Becoming withdrawn or depressed
4. Showing unexplained bruises, or damage to clothes
5. Beginning to bully others
6. Becoming aggressive, irritable or quick tempered
7. Having few or no friends
8. Making excuses for not wanting to go to school
9. Nightmares or trouble sleeping
10. Acting out in the classroom

"The good news is there are proven methods and bully-proofing strategies parents can learn and practice with their children to help them better deal with difficult situations, and feel safer in school," said Ms. Fagin.

"What parents say to a child depends largely on their age, but always start by listening. Stay calm and empathize. Keep it in perspective, and don't under or over react. Say nothing to escalate their fears."

Develop a Personal Safety Plan With Your Child. Assure your child that you take their concerns seriously and will work with them to help them develop a plan so they can feel safe in school and get home safely.

The plan should:

1. Identify adults in school they can turn to for help
2. Determine where the bullying took place and list alternative locations they can go to such as the guidance counselor's office (some schools may already provide options to recess).
3. Identify their friends and encourage them to travel in groups (there is strength in numbers)
4. Keep the lines open with the school, and your child.

Practice Self-Protective Strategies With Your Child. For many schoolchildren, the lessons learned through CAPS' classroom prevention programs become their first line of defense against bullying. Our presenters guide students towards positive, healthy interactions, and frank communication about teasing and bullying. CAPS' *Steer Clear of Bullies* program teaches grade 3 and 4 students the acronym "CLEAR"—the steps they can take if approached by a bully:

1. **Calm down**
2. **Leave**
3. **Enlist the help of others**
4. **Assert yourself**
5. **Report incidents**

Helping to Steer Clear of Bullies is an adult education prevention program that provides detailed instruction on bully prevention strategies that parents can role play and practice with their children.

Bullying: What Parents Need to Know, is a free brochure available to parents and caregivers. Send a written request and a self-addressed, stamped, #10 envelope to: CAPS, PO Box 176, Roslyn, NY 11576.

CAPS' prevention-through-education programs are presented at no cost to Long Island schools, thanks to our corps of professionally-trained volunteers who facilitate *Steer Clear of Bullies*, *Step Up and Speak Out*, *Friendship Matters*, *cyberSMARTZ*, *SurfSafe!* and *What's Up? Girl Talk* in classrooms across Long Island, and the support of private and corporate contributions.

Founded in 1982, Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) is Long Island's leading non-profit resource on the prevention of child abuse and neglect, bullying and cyber-bullying, relational aggression, sexual harassment, date/acquaintance rape, and how to stay safe on the Internet. In addition to K-12 student programs, CAPS offers parent and professional education. For information on how to make a donation, schedule a class or volunteer, call 516-621-0552, 631-289-3240, email speaktocaps@optonline.net or visit www.capsli.org.