**What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is repeated, intentional behavior meant to hurt, intimidate, or humiliate another person. It can take many forms:

* **Physical**: Hitting, kicking, pushing
* **Verbal**: Name-calling, teasing, threats
* **Social**: Exclusion, spreading rumors, public humiliation
* **Cyberbullying**: Harassment through texts, social media, or other digital platforms

It often involves a power imbalance—whether through physical strength, popularity, or access to private information.

**The Impact of Bullying**

Bullying can have devastating effects on victims, including:

* Anxiety and depression
* Low self-esteem
* Academic struggles
* Social withdrawal
* Suicidal thoughts or behaviors

But it’s not just the victim who is affected. Bullies themselves often struggle with emotional issues and may continue harmful patterns into adulthood. Even bystanders can experience stress, guilt, or fear when they witness bullying and feel powerless to stop it.

**What Can We Do About It?**

**1. Start the Conversation Early**

Teach young children about kindness, empathy, and respect. Talk about what bullying is, how it feels, and why it’s wrong. Use age-appropriate language and examples they can relate to.

**2. Encourage Open Communication**

Let children know they can talk to you if they see or experience bullying. Listen without judgment, believe them, and take their concerns seriously.

**3. Teach Assertiveness, Not Aggression**

Help children build the confidence to stand up for themselves and others in a calm, respectful way. Role-playing can help them practice responses to bullying.

**4. Model Positive Behavior**

Children learn by watching. Show how to treat others with respect, resolve conflicts peacefully, and speak up when something’s not right.

**5. Set Clear Expectations**

Whether you’re a parent, teacher, or coach, make sure kids understand that bullying is never acceptable—and that there are consistent consequences for it.

**6. Create Safe Spaces**

Schools and communities should have clear anti-bullying policies, support systems, and programs that promote inclusion and belonging.

**Everyone Has a Role**

Preventing bullying isn’t just the job of schools—it takes all of us. Parents, educators, caregivers, and peers all play a vital role in creating a culture where cruelty is rejected and kindness is the norm.

Let’s commit to raising strong, compassionate children who lift each other up rather than tear each other down. Because every child deserves to feel safe, seen, and supported.