



How to Stop Bullying in Youth Sports

This information is adapted from “How to Stop Bullying in Youth Sports Protecting your child from abuse in athletics” Published by Frank L. Smoll Ph.D. 31st May 2013” For more information visit <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/coaching-and-parenting-young-athletes/201305/how-stop-bullying-in-youth-sports>

What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated aggressive behaviour that can be physical, verbal (name-calling, taunting, insulting), or relational. Bullying is a serious problem that has harmful effects on both the victim and the bully.

- Boys frequently bully using physical threats and actions.
- Girls are more likely to engage in relationship bullying, which includes refusing to talk to someone, excluding the victim from a group or activity, or spreading lies or rumors about the child.
- Bullying can occur in virtually any setting, including the sport environment.
- Social media have magnified the problem, with the internet enabling an epidemic of Cyber-bullying that can follow a child into his or her home, which would otherwise be a safe haven.

What are the effects of bullying?

Regardless of the form it takes, bullying takes a terrible emotional and physical toll on many children and youth.

- Victims of bullying feel hurt, angry, afraid, helpless, hopeless, isolated, and ashamed. They may even feel guilty that the bullying is somehow their fault.
- Victims of bullying are at greater risk of developing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.
- When it occurs in athletics, victims are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of sports to avoid being bullied.
- The scars inflicted by bullying can persist long into the future and can predispose a young person to develop psychological problems in adulthood.

What can parents do to prevent bullying?

Because of its pervasiveness and harmful consequences, parents should discuss bullying with their children. They should open the lines of communication to find out if anyone is treating their child or any other child badly and, if necessary, should take steps to stop the abuse. Simply talking about the problem can be a huge stress reliever for a child who's being bullied.

FULHAM UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

CLUBROOMS / HOME GROUND
Collins Reserve, Valetta Road
Kidman Park SA 5025

POSTAL ADDRESS
PO Box 148
Torrensville SA 5031

f /fulhamunitedfc
www.fulhamunited.com.au
TEAM APP: Fulham United FC



- Be supportive and listen to a child's feelings without judgment, criticism, or blame.
- Don't minimize the child's feelings or tell the child that he or she should simply ignore or shrug off the bullying unless the child is capable of doing so (and few children are).
- Try to find out if your child is doing anything to evoke negative responses and dislike from others. Aside from children who come across as anxious, socially awkward, insincere, and withdrawn, those who are annoying, argumentative, and aggressive are also targets of bullying. If your child fits into these victim categories, counsel your child on how to change the offending behaviour and become more socially successful.

What if your child is a bully?

Children who engage or participate in bullying also deserve attention.

- If you find that your child is a party to bullying, make sure he or she understands how hurtful such behaviour can be.
- Foster empathy by encouraging your child to look at their actions from the victim's perspective, and how they would feel if they were treated in that manner.

What special attention is warranted in sports?

In sports, program directors and coaches should make sure that bullying does not occur.

- Coaches should put an emphasis on team-building and creating a "family" atmosphere. This can reduce the chances that bullying will occur and create a cohesive team experience that will benefit everyone.
 - If you witness bullying or hazing in the sport setting (whether the target is your child or not), arrange a conference with the coach to communicate what you've seen or heard about and ask the coach to take measures to stop the abuse.
 - If the coach is unresponsive to your request, communicate your concerns to the program director. Any quality sport program will want to promote a positive, fun, and growth-inducing setting for young athletes, and bullying has no place in such a program.
-