

Be an **Upstander!** *Not a bystander.*

Project Prevent and Address Bullying (PPAB)

for Students with Disabilities

For Parents

Northern Illinois University | School Psychology Program

When bullying occurs, there are behaviors other than the bully and the victim, and these behaviors can positively or negatively contribute to the situation.

In a bullying situation, an **upstander** is someone who recognizes when something is wrong and does something to make it right. If an upstander sees or hears about bullying, he or she will **do something**. This could mean stopping the bully, reporting the event, or otherwise helping the victim even after the fact. Upstanders do their best to **support and protect** their peers.

On the other hand, a bystander is someone who sees bullying happening but does not do anything to stop it. People who laugh at something mean a bully says or don't say anything when they see bullying happening are bystanders. By doing nothing, the bystander is negatively contributing to the bullying situation.

Bystanders are often afraid of retaliation and fear that their own group of friends will exclude them for going against the child who was bullying. Help your child see that it is better to **do something** and be an **upstander** than to be a bystander.

There are many different ways to be an upstander. Encourage your child to pick a strategy that fits their personality. They should avoid doing something that is unsafe or makes them feel unsafe. Here are some ways your child can be an upstander:

- Respect others' differences.
- Be kind and compassionate to all students.
- Reach out to new students at school and help them feel comfortable.
- Don't encourage the child who is bullying. Do not join in, laugh, or stand guard for them.
- Stop and report untrue and hurtful messages to slow the spread.
- Be a friend to the child who is being bullied. For example, ask the victim of bullying to walk away from the situation with you and your friends or include them in activities with you so they feel safe.
- Show friends how to be an upstander.
- Tell an adult about the bullying.
- Tell the person who is bullying to stop. You can also say something such as, "That isn't funny."

As a parent, there are strategies you can use at home to help foster upstander behavior in your child:

- Praise your child when you see upstander behavior such as being courageous, empathetic, or assertive.
- Model these behaviors by being kind and standing up for others.
- Build empathy by finding opportunities to ask your child, "How do you think that made that person feel?" or "How did you feel about that?"
- Build assertiveness skills by encouraging your child to say no when he or she does not want to do something.
- Brainstorm with your child ways he or she would respond when someone has been bullied or when your child sees a bullying situation.
- Practice responses through role play. Think of possible bullying situations and have your child act out how to react.

Find additional handouts on our website at go.niu.edu/PPAB



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