Does Back to School Mean Back to Bullies?

What Every Parent and Child Should Know

As a new school year is well under way, bullying is still an unfortunate fact of life. Is your child prepared? Dr. Ken Druck, psychologist, violence prevention expert and author of <u>How to Talk to Your Kids About School Violence</u> (Onomatopoeia, 2003), offers 10 ways to prevent school bullying.

5 Ways Your Child Can Handle a Bully

The best strategy is to avoid people and situations that are risky, but danger cannot always be avoided. Here are some ways your child can safely defend himself:

- 1. Stay calm and alert. Consider the options and do nothing to escalate the situation.
- 2. Walk away. Fighting isn't worth it. You do not have to prove yourself by fighting.
- 3. Take a nonviolent stand. Speak respectfully: "I don't want to fight you."
- 4. Report it to authorities, but discuss with them how your child will be protected from retaliation.
- 5. Get away. Find safety or call for help.

5 Ways to Prevent Children From Bullying Others

Parents often do not learn that their children are bullying other kids until they get a phone call from school or another child's parents. If you suspect your child is picking on other kids, here are some ways to intervene:

- 1. Notice if your child lacks empathy, dominates others, is selfish or refuses to accept responsibility.
- 2. Help your child understand that physical or emotional abuse is never acceptable.
- 3. Make sure your child doesn't hang out with other bullies who may be influencing his behavior.
- 4. Talk to your child, other parents and teachers about what is going on.
- 5. Your child should apologize to victims and undo any damage, such as replacing stolen or destroyed property.