

TrueSportPARENT Bullying Prevention



The Center for Disease Control and Prevention says at least 5 million American school children are bullied every year. Bullying often takes place outside normal school hours, especially in sports where approximately half of youth athletes report being a target at some point.

In youth sports, bullying can present itself among teammates who are jostling for starting positions, with opponents who are targets of aggression, or even in hazing incidents when a new team member is “initiated” to the team.

Bullying is a learned behavior, but preventing it is something that can be learned by victims and bystanders, too. Reminding your athletes regularly about the following can help their school and sport become safe places to be:

- 1. Bullying in sports is common, but that doesn't make it ok. If you see bullying on your team, tell an adult.**
- 2. Trust your instincts—if you think the way someone being treated is wrong, you are probably right.**
- 3. Remember that everyone deserves to be treated with respect, so stand up for someone else if you see bullying.**

Recognizing the Different Kinds of Bullying

Bullying is not confined to one aspect of youth athletes' lives, and as a parent it's important to recognize that it occurs in many ways and locations:

Verbal: Name-calling, taunts, put-downs, threats, intimidation

Relational: Group teasing, exclusion from peer groups, spreading rumors

Physical: Punching, kicking, fighting, shoving

Cyber: Using social media or technology to harass or threaten

Damage to Property: Stealing or damaging property

Hazing: Any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of a person to belong to a group, regardless of their willingness to participate

For any setting, one of the best preventative methods is to establish a zero-tolerance bullying policy. Address any bullying when it occurs and reinforce that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstance.

A respectful and safe environment can be created by encouraging teamwork, promoting cooperation, emphasizing accountability, acknowledging leaders, and serving as a positive role model.

To learn more about how to teach athletes more about Bullying Prevention, check out:

- Learn.TrueSport.org for insightful articles and videos about bullying prevention
- Teach.TrueSport.org for an entire lesson plan surrounding preventing bullying
- Play.TrueSport.org for TrueSport activities you can complete with your athletes