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How to Tell if it's Bullying

It's important to be on the lookout for bullying, because someone who is being bullied needs your help.

But sometimes kids can get into a fight with each other, or argue with each other, or even joke around teasing each other and it's not really bullying.

Bullying always includes these three elements:

1. Imbalance of power — The bully might be older, bigger, stronger, more popular, or powerful in some other way. Or a few kids might gang up on one kid to create this imbalance of power.

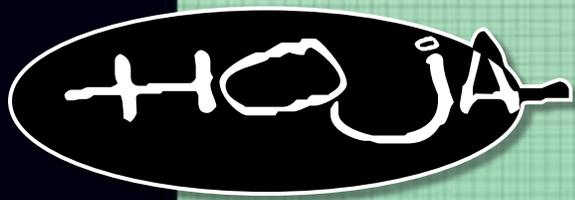
- Fighting that happens between two evenly matched kids who have a conflict is probably not bullying.
- If a smaller kid is being hurt by a bigger kid or a group of kids it's probably bullying.
- If two girls get into an argument and call each other names, it's probably not bullying.
- If a group of popular girls are getting everyone to call another girl names, it's probably bullying

2. Intent to harm — The bully means to cause emotional and/or physical pain, and takes pleasure in witnessing the hurt. It's not an accident or mistake, and not playful teasing.

- A ball accidentally hitting a kid in the face is probably not bullying.
- A ball that is thrown by a bigger kid trying to hit a smaller kid in the face is probably bullying.
- Two friends joking and teasing each other back and forth for fun is probably not bullying.
- If the kid being teased is upset or can't take turns teasing back then it is probably bullying.

3. Threat of further hurt — Both the bully and the bullied kid know that the bullying probably will occur again. This is not meant to be a onetime event.

- Two kids that have a fight one time and then leave each other alone is probably not bullying.
- If the same kid has been hurt more than once by someone then it is probably bullying.
- If one kid has been hurt or teased by a lot of different kids at different times then it is probably bullying.



So the important things to look for are if someone is being hurt or teased and is not able to fight back very well, if it looks like the hurting is being done on purpose, and if it has happened to this kid more than once.

Ask yourself: ***Does it look like someone really needs help?***

If you are not sure whether it's bullying or not, please tell an adult anyways. It is better to be safe than sorry, and hopefully the adult will understand that you are trying to help and not just tattling. If someone is being hurt, an adult should know about it even if it was an accident and not really bullying.



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