

Cyber-Bullying

The number of kids who have been victims of cyber-bullying is at an all-time high. According to Love Our Children USA, 1 in 4 kids are bullied, and 42 percent are bullied online. Cyber-bullies antagonize kids and teens using tactics including writing hateful blogs, sending nasty Instant Messages, stealing passwords, and posting embarrassing photos of their victims.

Top 5 Steps to Take If You Believe Your Child is Being Cyber-Bullied

1. Keep the lines of communication open between you and your child. Your child needs to know you are there for her now.
2. File a complaint with the website in question.
3. Alert school officials to the situation. Encourage them to institute a school-wide no-bullying policy.
4. File a police report, or even a civil suit, against the cyber-bullies in question.
5. Be on the lookout for warning signs of depression. If your child becomes quiet or withdrawn, or doesn't want to go to school or to after-school activities, talk to a guidance counselor or school psychologist immediately.

Many children being victimized do not tell their parents, because they are afraid that parents getting involved will make the situation worse. The pain of cyber-bullying has been shown to have devastating effects, including suicide. Therefore, it is important for parents to know what is happening in their child's virtual world.

What Moms Can Do to Help Prevent Cyber-Bullying

In general, parents should become as savvy as possible about the Internet to understand what kids are doing online.

Make the whole family aware that cyber-bullying is wrong. According to Love Our Children USA, you should keep children's computers out in the open where you're able to keep an eye on the usage. Know your kids' log-in information and which websites they visit. This way, if something seems to be going wrong, you'll be aware and able to respond quicker.

Be sensitive if you discover that your child is being cyber-bullied. The pain can be devastating for children and should not be ignored. Ask your school guidance counselor to watch for signs of your child being bullied in school as well.

If any threats are made to your child or if you discover that your personal contact information has been posted online, Love Our Children USA suggests immediately contacting your local law enforcement agency.

Not all cyber-bullies are children. Moms have started "bodysnarking" online -- bodysnarking is when someone posts an unflattering photo of an unsuspecting victim on their blog, then invites others to comment on her appearance -- in order to bully each other.

Psychologist Dr. Lisa Boesky says one way to prevent bodysnarking is by refusing to comment (or even read the comments) about negative photos online. Dr. Boesky explains that the comments on the photos are what drive bodysnarking. Once people stop commenting, bodysnarking will stop.

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Related Momlogic Stories on Cyber-Bullying

- [When Cyber-Bullying Turns Deadly](#)
- [Cyber-Bullying for Moms?](#)
- [Mom to Mom: From Bullying to Suicide](#)

Additional Resources for Cyber-Bullying

- [Love Our Children USA](#)
- [Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use](#)
- [United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team](#)