




DECREASING BULLYING



What Parents Should Know About Bullying and Prevention

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a brighter future for children with disabilities

www.tnstep.org

STEP: Who We Are & What We Do

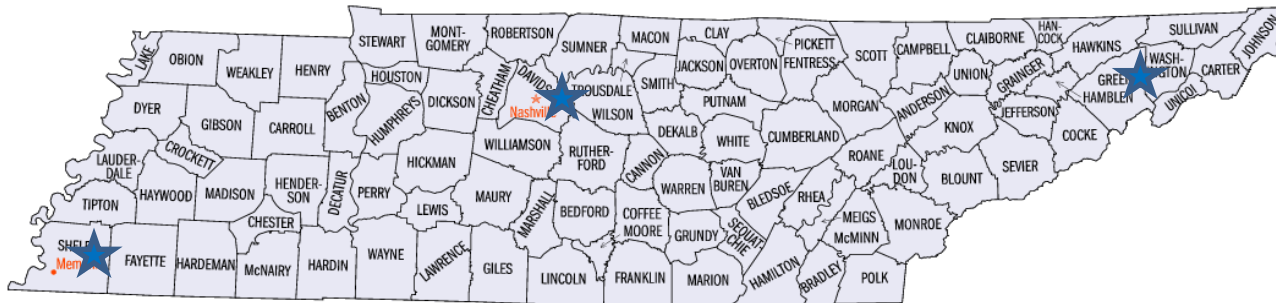
STEP, Inc. is a not for profit organization serving families who have children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 26.

Support and Training for Exceptional Parents, Inc. administers and partners on:

- Tennessee's Parent Training & Information Center (PTI)
- TN Department of Education Family & Youth Information and Involvement (FYI)
- The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)

Our services are funded by:

- Grants from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs through Part D of IDEA
- Tennessee Department of Education grants
- Donations, Foundations, and Fund Raising Events.



Our Mission

STEP's mission is to ensure a brighter future for children and youth in Tennessee, with an emphasis on those with disabilities, special health care needs, and mental health issues.



Our Services

- Trainings across TN
- Webinars and electronic information
- One on One Assistance
 - Phone and In Person
- IEP/504 Preparation
 - Record Review and Strategy Planning
- Some attendance at IEP/504 meetings
- Letter writing help
- Referral to other agencies
- Information and awareness events/conferences
- Conflict resolution assistance
 - Communication strategies, building relationships, training on procedural safeguards



We provide statewide support, information, and training to parents of children with disabilities, professional development services to school districts, and information to youth with disabilities.

Learning Objectives

- **Definition of Bullying**
- **Understanding Types of Bullying**
- **Laws and Policies**
- **Helping Your Child**
- **Working With Your School**
- **Resources**



What is “Bullying?”



Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

stopbullying.gov

Understanding Types of Bullying

- Verbal Bullying
- Physical Bullying
- Social/Emotional Bullying
- Cyber Bullying
- Sexual Bullying



Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying can include:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Making demeaning jokes about someone's differences
- Spreading rumors
- Gossiping
- Slandering (spreading false, negative information)
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Intimidation
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm



Physical Bullying

Physical bullying can include:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures
- Forced or unwelcomed contact



Social Bullying

Social/Emotional bullying can include:

- **Leaving someone out on purpose**
- **Telling other children not to be friends with someone**
- **Spreading rumors about someone**
- **Social manipulation**
- **Humiliation or Embarrassing someone in public**



Cyber-Bullying

Cyber Bullying can include:

- **Sending harassing, embarrassing, or otherwise unwelcome emails or text messages**
- **Threats**
- **Sexual harassment**
- **Hate speech**
- **Ridiculing someone publically in online forums**
- **Posting lies, rumors or gossip about the target and encouraging others to distribute that information**



Sexual Bullying

Sexual Bullying can include:

- **Sexually charged comments**
- **Inappropriate or lewd glances**
- **Inappropriate physical contact**
- **Targeted sexual jokes**



What are the Laws Against Bullying?

- **NO Federal Law to Address Bullying Directly**
- **There are Legal Protections & Provisions for Students with Disabilities Who are Being Harassed**
- **Certain Cases Overlap with Discriminatory Harassment When Based on Race, National Origin, Color, Sex, Age, Disability, or Religion**
- **Such Cases are Covered Under Federal Civil Rights Laws Enforced by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)**

Addressing Bullying in Tennessee



- **Public Schools are Required by State Law to have Policies in Place; Some Include Disability Specific Information**
- **Generally Included in the School Handbook or on Their Website**
- **Typically Designed to Protect Students from Bullying and Give Schools a Roadmap for Handling Bullying Situations**

Children with Disabilities Experiencing Bullying

- Parents have legal rights when their child with a disability is the target of bullying or harassment related to their disability.
- Schools are required to respond to harassment or bullying of a student with a disability.
- Parents may consider filing a formal grievance with the Office of Civil Rights.
- The Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be a helpful tool in developing a bullying prevention plan for students with disabilities.



Helping Your Child

- 1. Talk with your child.**
- 2. Support and empower your child.**
- 3. Learn your rights.**
- 4. Think through who else should be involved.**
- 5. Get involved in the community.**



Working With Your School

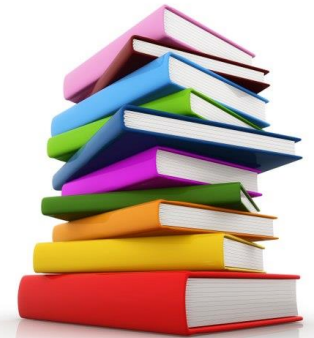
When Your Child is the Target of a Bully:

- Develop a Parent Action Plan
- Talk with Your Child
- Request a Meeting in Writing
- Report the Incident(s)
- Develop a Bullying Prevention Plan for Your Child
- Get Involved in Education & Prevention



Resources

- Office of Safe & Supportive Schools (615)741-3248
http://www.tn.gov/education/health_safety/bullying.shtml
- Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center; <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>
- TN Department of Education: Bullying and Harassment;
<https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/bullying-and-harassment>
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services , 200 Independence
Washington, D.C. 20201; <https://www.stopbullying.gov>



Empowering Families to Ensure A Brighter Future for Children with Disabilities



This is a journey and the STEP staff is available to provide support, information, and training to families and students! Call 1-800-280-7837 or your regional office

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