



Building skills

**Bullying & Easing the
Teasing: How Parents
Can Help Their Children.**

Differences between Bullying and Peer Conflict/Mean Behavior

Normal conflict / mean behavior

- Equal power or are friends
- Individuals often play together
- Happens occasionally
- Accidental
- Not serious
- Equal emotional reaction
- Not seeking power/ control
- Shows some remorse
- Effort to solve the problem

Bullying

- Imbalance of power
- Individuals rarely play together
- Repeated negative actions
- Intentional
- Physical or emotional harm
- **Strong** emotional reaction
- Seeking control/material things
- No remorse-blames victim
- No effort to solve the problem

Strategies to help you child deal with conflict

- **Stay calm:** Teach emotional control,(keeping it together, not crying), Teach child to do positive self talk- “I can handle this”, “I'm not going to let this get to me”, “ I have other friends who like me” “ everyone gets teased sometimes”
- **Relaxation:** Teach several relaxation strategies – three deep breaths, counting to ten backwards
- **Body language:** Practice assertive body language with your child: standing tall, head held high, use direct eye contact - teach your child a good shrug!
- **Ignoring: Role play with your child. Anger & tears can invite more teasing as it gives some pay off to the teaser. Teach your child to ignore:** Role play works best – teaser is invisible, turn body away or walk away.

Resilience- teaching our children to solve problems

- 1 Identify the problem:** What's going on? Who with? how often? – understand and validate child's feelings
- 2 Generate solutions** – WITH your child, child to come up with solutions first then parents can offer more. When children develop their own solutions their sense of ownership & confidence is reinforced.
- 3 Evaluate the possible solutions**, decide on the best course of action, and put it into practice. Make a list and child to choose one to try out
- 4 Evaluate the outcome.** Check frequently on how the chosen solution is/ is not working . If the problem is not solved, modify & repeat from step 2

Strategies that require more assertive behaviors. These require a momentary confrontation.

- **SO? & AND?:** Effective when used with a shrug- leaves teaser with no pay off.
- **LEAVE ASSERTIVELY:** Teach a script to your child “I’m leaving” or “I have more important things to do,” and to walk away quickly.
- **MAKE ONE ASSERTIVE STATEMENT:** Teach your child to say “Stop it I don’t like it.” “You can’t talk to me like that,” or “Leave me alone ,” or “I don’t have to listen to this,”

These strategies are for when your child feels a little more in control. They require more skill, confidence and more practice.

- **Broken record:** say something EXACTLY over and over again until teasing stops.
- **State the obvious:** COMMENT TO TEASER: “You’re kicking my chair.” WITH gesture such as raised eyebrows..
- **Dealing with Whispers:** “Do you have something to say about me?”. ASSERTIVE BODY LANGUAGE HELPS..
- **Negative Questions:** designed to neutralize what’s said. “I don’t understand what is so interesting about my glasses.”
- **Ask for Repetition:** “What did you say?” Usually teaser doesn’t know what to say, if teaser repeats walk away.
- **Agree with the facts:** - REQUIRES GOOD EMOTIONAL CONTROL. Teaser - “You have a million freckles.” CHILD: “ probably.” , or “You’re right, I blew it.”
- **Compliment:** - Can diffuse a tease “You’re a faster runner than me.” If teased about poor academic performance, teach your child to say, “You’re good at maths, how about helping me?”

These next few strategies are assertive

Remember: Parents need to identify strategies that fit your child's situation / level of teasing their age, their skills & temperament

- **Call a halt: Designed to stop the teaser in his/ her tracks** “I didn’t do anything to you, why are you teasing me?” “That’s not funny” or “I don’t like this,” “Could you please stop?”
- **Fogging: Agree with everything that the teaser is saying.**
“Yes that’s true,” or “I see what you mean,” or “Makes sense to me.” Teach your child to say “Hard to believe isn’t it?” “Old clothes are in, didn’t you know?”
- **Come-backs: Best to teach one only & practice**
“Don’t blame me for your problems ,” or “Get a life” might work for older children, and sayings such as “I’m rubber, you’re glue, It bounces off me and sticks to you,” may fit younger children.
- **Reframing: Turn the tease into a comment.**
If your child is being teased about wearing glasses, the teaser might say, “Thanks for noticing my glasses” or “Thanks for noticing me.”

What if my child teases and bullies others? Some things that parents can do

- Set a good example by not bullying/ teasing at home or others. Model standing up to others who act like bullies
- Talk to your child about the fact that teasing & bullying is wrong and hurts other people – Don't assume that they just know
- Make clear family rules about bullying and that any form of bullying is not acceptable – reinforce no tolerance & consequences for bullying behaviour (loss of privileges).
- Help children learn to empathize with others- label feelings, praise when your child has been kind to others –describe what you saw and how the other child may of felt. “ wow you made Johnny happy when you offered your help, that's so kind”
- Praise positive social interactions or non-violent problem solving – be aware and praise these pro social behaviors at every opportunity.
- Spend time with your child- hang out together and have some fun

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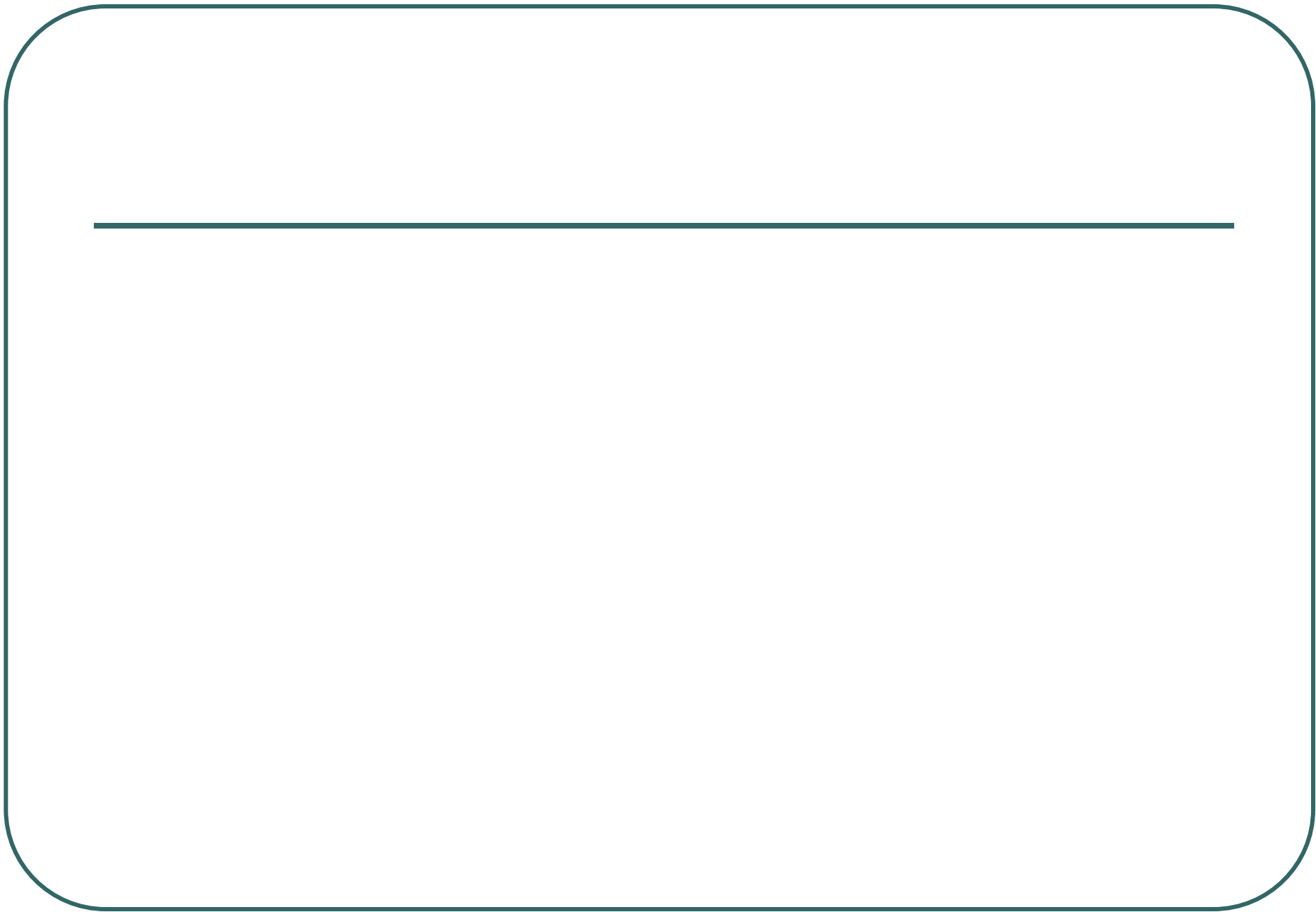
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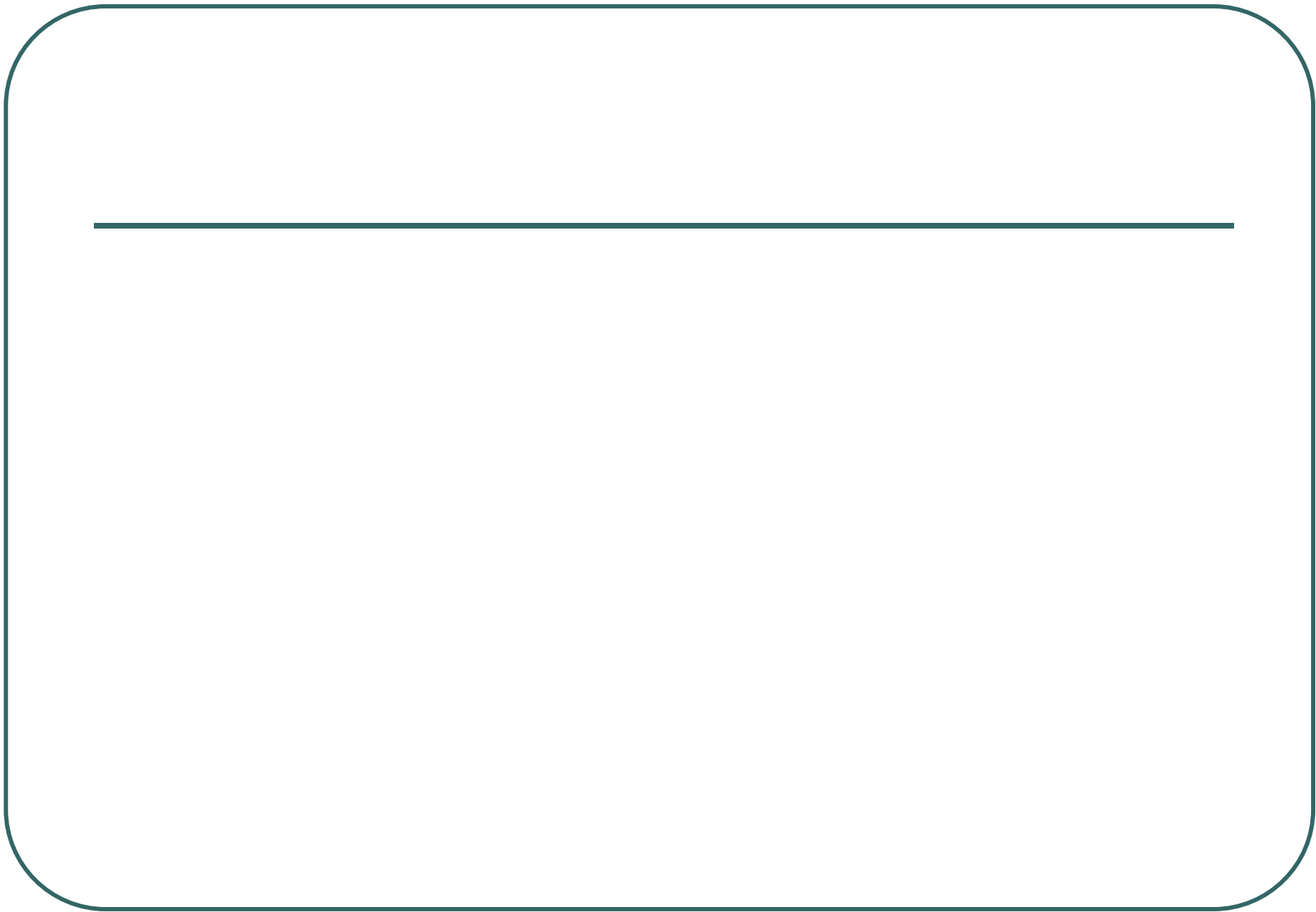
Family Works

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Possible signs of bullying

- Not wanting to go to school
- Avoiding certain activities
- Cuts and bruises
- Asking for stolen possessions to be replaced
- Falling out with previous friends
- Being moody and bad tempered
- Being quiet and withdrawn
- Refusing to talk about what happens at school
- Loss of appetite, bedwetting
- Aggression with brothers and sisters
- Doing less well at schoolwork
- Insomnia, anxiety
- Talking about not having friends

