

Often a conversation with the classroom teacher may be a good beginning but sometimes that is not adequate and you will need to take your concerns directly to the building administrator.

Put your report of bullying in writing with as much detail as possible:

- Describe what happened – be specific-who, what, when, where, how often
- Describe the impact of the bullying on your child- how your child has been affected
- If there are other details that could be helpful or that the school needs to know include those- e.g. past history of bullying, community or neighborhood issues, family concerns

Ask for a safety plan for your child while this is being addressed.

School staff should not have a joint meeting with your child and the child who bullied them. This could be very embarrassing and intimidating for your child. They should not refer the children to mediation. Bullying is a form of victimization, not a conflict. It should not be mediated

Let the school know you want to be apprised of the outcome of the investigation/inquiry. Set a follow-up appointment to discuss the progress and outcomes. Make sure to give the school reasonable time to investigate but assure that a safety plan is in place for your child during and after the investigation until this is settled.

If there is no progress or if your child is not safe from retaliation or continued bullying, you may want to let the administrator in the building know that you will need to contact the Superintendent to assure your child's safety is addressed. Ultimately local boards of education are responsible for assuring a safe learning environment in the schools. You may decide that you want to address the board.

Consider involving the police if another child has physically assaulted your child or is seriously threatening him or her with bodily injury.

Bullying overlaps with discriminatory harassment when it is based on race, national origin, color, sex, age, disability or religion. If you have concerns in any one of these areas, you may contact. You may decide to contact The Iowa Civil Rights Commission and/or the Federal Office of Civil Rights as well as the school.

If the problem persists or escalates and your school officials are unable to stop the bullying, you may want to consult an attorney.

Bullying prevention

Bullying happens in every school, but with effective bullying prevention programming, bullying can be reduced. If your child is being bullied, chances are that there are other children in the school who are having similar experiences. Consider getting involved in your school and district bullying prevention and intervention efforts. Parents should know the district official anti-bullying policy and prevention efforts. There are federal recommendations for best practices in bullying prevention.

