



Effects of Bullying on Children

Bullying happens most often in highly competitive environments that promote a 'win at all cost' mentality.

As the coach, you can prevent bullying behaviours from starting by emphasising other aspects of sport, such as: enjoyment, teamwork, sportsmanship and skill development.

Types of Bullying:

Physical

Pushing, Shoving, Punching, Hitting, Kicking, Stealing
(this may also constitute assault)

Verbal

Name-calling, Threatening, Teasing, Intimidating, Yelling abuse, Using put-downs

Psychological

Ganging-up, Sending hostile or nasty emails or text messages

Social

Excluding, Alienating, Ignoring, Spreading rumours

Children Who Are Bullied Are More Likely to:

- Have low self-esteem
- Develop depression or anxiety
- Become socially withdrawn, isolated and lonely
- Have lower academic achievements
- Be unable to form trusting, healthy relationships with friends or partners in the future

Kids may not always ask for help when they need it, so it's important to look for signs of bullying among your athletes. **Remember, anyone can be bullied.**

Signs to Look for:

- Excuses for not attend training/games (e.g. feeling sick, frequent injuries, too much work to do)
- Talks about hating their sport
- Regularly the last one picked for team/group activities
- Seems alienated from social activities
- Bruising or other injuries
- Uncharacteristically nervous, shy or withdrawn
- Clothing or personal possessions are missing or are damaged
- Suddenly prone to lashing out at people (physically or verbally)

The Role of the Coach:

- Coaches set the stage for how kids on a team treat one another
- Set expectations from the first practice about how your athletes will communicate with one another
- Make it clear that you will not tolerate bullying each other or members of other teams
- Identify consequences for bullying and the impact this will have on their teammates
- Ask parents to speak directly with you if they observe any forms of bullying. Parents should not be confronting parents of other athletes

References: Play By The Rules (2020) Bullying
Alberta's Children's Services & Education (2015) Bullying Prevention in Sport