

ENCOURAGE KIDS TO DO WHAT THEY LOVE

In Kicked, Karen and Diondre play soccer. Doing what they love helps Karen and Diondre work through the difficulties of bullying off the field.

Help kids take part in activities, interests, and hobbies they like. Kids can volunteer, play sports, sing in a chorus, or join a youth group or school club. These activities give kids a chance to have fun and meet others with the same interests. They can build confidence and friendships that help protect kids from bullying.

Studies show that middle school students participating in theatre arts programs have fewer behavioral and emotional problems than students who don't. Cleveland Play House offers many opportunities for children to engage in theatre. If you live outside of our community, then seek out other theatre education options for your child within your neighborhood.

MODEL HOW TO TREAT OTHERS WITH KINDNESS AND RESPECT

In *Kicked* the bullying subsides when the children come together and act with kindness and respect.



As Diondre says: "If someone's on your team help them to the goal line. If someone's not on your team, respect them. And if you're trying your hardest to prevent them from scoring and they score anyway, congratulate them 'cause you better believe they were trying their hardest too."

Kids learn from adults' actions. By treating others with kindness and respect, adults show the kids in their lives that there is no place for bullying. Even if it seems like they are not paying attention, kids are watching how adults manage stress and conflict, as well as how they treat their friends, colleagues, and families.

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?

Some helpful tips for parents of children who are being bullied include:

- Never tell your child to ignore the bullying.
- Don't blame your child for the bullying. Don't assume your child did something to provoke the bullying.
- Allow your child to talk about his or her bullying experiences. Write down what is shared.
- Empathize with your child. Tell him or her that bullying is wrong, that it is not his or her fault, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it.
- If you disagree with how your child handled the bullying situation, don't criticize him or her. It is often very difficult for children to know how best to respond.
- Do not encourage physical retaliation.
- Check your emotions. A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, step back and consider the next steps carefully.
- Contact a teacher, school counselor, or principal at your school immediately and share your concerns about the bullying that your child has experienced. Work closely with school personnel to help solve the problem.
- Encourage your child to develop interests and hobbies that will help build resiliency in difficult situations like bullying.
- Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his or her class, or help your child meet new friends outside of school.
- Teach your child safety strategies, such as how to seek help from an adult.
- If you or your child need additional help, seek help from a school counselor and/or mental health professional.