



# **FAST Bully Defense for Children**

## **“Empowering kids in our community **FAST**”**

**Note to Parent:** These homework sheets are best used when reviewed by both child and parents together to help reinforce skills learned in the **FAST** Bully Defense course. This reassures children that you are invested in their safety and happiness. Also bear in mind that these same techniques and concepts work very well for adults!

## **Defending Against A Bully**



This teaching module helps children identify the common traits that can get many people into trouble by drawing a bully to them, or by acting bullish themselves and provoking a fight. In **FAST** Bully Defense we use the same Passive, vs. Aggressive, vs. Assertive model

that is taught in many health classes across the U.S.. First we identify the ways that do not work, (passive & aggressive), and then provide the correct way, (assertive model), that will be reinforced for the duration of the course.

Research has shown that Bullies usually look for specific cues that identify a potential easy victim. Awareness of these cues provides information to avoid being picked out by a bully. Also be aware that these are not absolutes. Sometimes bullies pick on children simply because they are different, smart, popular, etc...

**\*Parents:** Be sure not to be judgmental if your child exhibits any of these passive or aggressive traits. We all have developed coping methods to stress, and children are simply trying to do the very best they know how. Be sure to be supportive and positive when helping change ineffective traits. This is new information for most of us. This can be a very rewarding and enjoyable process as you identify old disempowering behavior and explore new empowering ones!

Use the following to help identify what is your child's personal style:

### **PASSIVE**

**Common traits that may convey passive behavior:** slumped body posture, lack of eye contact, quiet meek tone of voice, gets picked on a lot, lets people get too close, does not stand-up for themselves, lack of friends, easily intimidated.

### **AGGRESSIVE**

**Common traits:** easily roused to anger, disobedient, fights a lot, talks back to others, plays rough, gets too close to others, tense, stressed out, tight facial muscles, clenched fists, loud abrasive tone of voice.

Most people lean more toward one of these 2 styles. They can both create a great deal of trouble for the defender of a bully attack or threat. A key point is that they are both fear-based reactions where fear is control. The trick is to find the middle assertive ground where a multitude of possible choices reside to deal with the situation they are experiencing. In such a way we can learn to control the fear that naturally arises in scary situations.





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**Zero Tolerance:** As a result of increased incidents of fighting, many public and private schools have adopted a zero-tolerance rule towards fighting. This simply means that both parties will be punished in any type of physical altercation. Although understandable, this can be a very unfair policy to victims of bullying who decide to fight back. Thus it is very important to provide children with non-physical skills to deter a bully before the incident becomes physical.

### **Proper Distance to keep from a bully?**

At least 2 footsteps

**Appropriate Verbal Commands:** “Back away, you are too close” This is telling the bully what you want and establishing a clear firm boundary. When said with assertive force it has amazing effects on most bullies.

**Can a small person back away a larger stronger person?** Yes! Just like a cat that is cornered by a large dog. If the cat really fires up, (raised back, hissing, teeth bared) the dog usually leaves!

**Fear Is Okay!** Dealing with Bullies can be very scary, even in low-level altercations. The sooner we can accept this fear and not hide from it, the better we can learn to deal fear when it arises. The best way to avoid be controlled by fear is to quickly take 3 deep breaths when we feel threatened. This helps minimize the stressful effects of fear so we can react in a cool controlled manner.

**Tip for parents:** Bullying is a serious problem that can hurt your child’s self esteem for many years if not handled correctly. The flip side is that when a child learns to handle these situations assertively, it carries over into the rest of their lives in powerful ways. If your child is being bullied at school, it is very important to inform the school administration of the problem. Together you can develop strategies to deal with the situation. This reassures your child and will also help the teachers and principal assess appropriate action should physical defense ever be necessary.

## Getting Lost

- Develop strategies when lost or separated from parents. Discuss staying in the store or place where lost. (Empower the students to take charge and delegate “safe places” to go whenever entering a store or other location)
- Knowing personal info: phone #s, (work, home, cell’s), address
- What is a family Password, and why is it important?





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**Safe vs. Unsafe People:** Assure your children that most adults are very nice and would never even think of harming a child. But there are bad adults out there and we want them to have some simple skills if they should ever come across such an adult. A stranger could be dressed any way, man or woman, kind or mean, pretty or ugly.

### **Distance to keep away from Unsafe Adults**

4 footsteps or more! New Defensive Voice Commands for the children to use:

*“I don’t know this person!”*

*“This is NOT my Father (or Mother)!” “Someone Help Me!”*

*“FIRE!”*

**When is it okay to hurt someone?** Many children have no conceptual framework to determine when it’s ok to hurt someone or not. Worse yet, many kids learn incorrect information on this from video games, movies, and from their friends who usually have no better information than they do. Discuss the following:

When a child at school stole their favorite pencil? NO!

When their brother or sister takes the last cookie? NO!

When Mom or Dad asks them to clean their room? NO!

When someone is trying to hurt them or take them away from their home and family? YES!

### **Discuss inappropriate touch:**

This is when anyone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. Talk about appropriate touch and inappropriate touch. Encourage them to tell you when someone has been touching them in a bad way. Children rarely lie about being victims of sexual abuse, but may be confused or frightened by it.

### **NO Secrets:**

The vast majority of sexual assaults on children are perpetrated by someone they know. A common ploy is to do favors for the child and coerce them into keeping it a “secret”. Emphasis on “No Secrets” between you and your child is important. Should anyone ask them to keep a secret, they should be taught to “tell” you immediately.

## **Rules for parents to discuss with children:**

- Don’t go anywhere with a strange adult
- Even if they do know the person, don’t go with any adult or other child without your parents OKAY
- Do not accept money, toys, candy, or other gifts from anyone without your parent’s permission.

Tell your children that they do not have to talk to an adult if they feel at all funny about that person. Many children get lured in by engaging in conversation with an unsafe adult.





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## **10 Safety Tips for Children**

1. **Don't look like an easy victim.** Present assertive, self-confident body language and eye contact, not passive, not aggressive behavior.
2. **Know your numbers.** Memorize important phone numbers, address, and practice how to make phone calls from a payphone.
3. **Have a Password,** and family strategies for being home alone and answering the phone, and the door.
4. **Never go anywhere with a strange adult or child.** Also, never go anywhere with anyone you do know without your parent's permission.
5. **Have a strategy for getting lost.** Empower your children to practice designating “safe places” like a store clerk or security station whenever you go shopping or to other places.
6. **Know your neighborhood and other common routes.** Designate safe places to go to in an emergency, (a neighbor's house, store, etc...).
7. **Never accept anything from a stranger.** Always trust your guts whenever anything feels funny to you, and be on alert!
8. **Fire Proof Your Children.** Work out an escape plan and basic fire strategies.
9. **Unwanted Touch.** No one has the right to touch a child in a way that feels uncomfortable. Empower children to say “No” to an adult or another child in this situation.
10. **Teamwork Rocks!** There is safety in numbers. Watch out for your friends and each other. Report anything strange that happens, to your parents, a teacher, or principal.  
**NO Secrets!**

