



# Au Pair Extraordinaire

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## **Guide to Handling Bullying – January 2010**

By Ilze van der Merwe

Bullying is a difficult issue for parents and children to deal with and many parents and children experience pain and fear around bullying. A child who bullies another child is usually in pain. They feel insecure, have a low self concept and self esteem in some areas– so they try to build themselves up by bringing others down. Usually, a child who bullies have found themselves in situations where they feel powerless. The bully might be overpowered at home by an older sibling and the only way they can feel empowered is by trying to make someone feel just as bad. By focusing on another child's vulnerability, they try to avoid their own. A bully will go for a child who shows fear, insecurity and uncertainty.

“The one with the most certainty always rules “ states dr. John Demartini therefore the bully will target the child who is vulnerable and “open” to being bullied. A wise parent will seek to empower their child when the child is being bullied. The fact that your child is subjected to bullying is feedback to you and your child that there are areas that you can pay special attention to empower your child. Teach your child for instance to handle name calling by saying “if you spot it you got it”, meaning that the name caller can only call you the name because the name belongs to the name caller as well.

Empower your child to choose to respond differently to the bully: Instead of responding to the bully in fear and unhappiness, teach your child to say a firm “NO” to the bully, “NO you cannot kiss me or NO you cannot write over my work or NO you cannot hurt me when you play me”. Teach your child to show the bully that the bullying is not having the response of overpowerment and fear on your child. Teach your child to look the bully in the eyes and to believe in their own genius and ability to know how to be strong and courageous. Tell your child “you are a genius and you know how to stand up for yourself”. Your trust and believe in your child that your child can do it, will go miles in empowering your child. And of course, step in when your child needs protection and does not know how to handle it.

Another approach is also to help your bullied child to own the trait of being a bully. Help your child to recognize where they are a bully. Very often the child who is bullied go home and bully a sibling, a pet or even a parent. Remember “if you spot it, you got it”.

A powerful parent will always attempt to empower their children before you take over and protect or even over protect. Take the opportunities that life brings to you to empower your kids and equip them for life. This is an ideal time for the bully to learn to respect others and for the bullied to learn to respect self.

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