



# BULLYING & INCLUSION: WHAT FAMILIES NEED TO KNOW

Presented By

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# Why we're here?

## Because...

Middle school is messy.

Kids change daily.

Friendships shift hourly.

Emotions run high.

Confidence runs low.



# Parents often ask...

**“How do I help my child survive socially... without hovering?”**

**Answer: Not by hovering but by focusing on belonging, not just bullying. Belonging is what every child needs, and something every parent can build.**

**By the end of this session, you'll know how to:**

- How to spot real bullying
- How to help your child handle social drama
- What to do when things escalate
- Skills to build belonging at home
- Simple actions that help kids feel seen
- Create safe and supportive environments







# Story: The 12yr Who Had no where to sit



Last month, a 12-year-old told me:  
“I hate lunch because I don’t know where to sit.”

That wasn’t “**bullying.**”  
That was **loneliness.**  
And loneliness in middle school can hurt just as much.





# How do you know if it's:

Bullying

Meanness

Conflict

Just a  
bad day



# The difference

**Bullying** = a pattern + harm + power imbalance.

A group chat roasting one kid → **bullying**.

A child left out on purpose every day → **bullying**.

A "popular" kid mocking someone's clothes → **bullying**.

**Meanness** = a one-time unkind or hurtful moment.

A child saying something rude out of frustration → **meanness**

"I don't want to play with you today" → **meanness**

Rolling eyes or walking away in a bad mood → **meanness**

**Conflict** = two kids with equal power who disagree.

Two friends arguing over rules in a game → **conflict**

A misunderstanding that turns into a heated moment → **conflict**

Both kids upset but neither has more power → **conflict**





# PARENT SKILL

Ask your child:  
"Is this a pattern... or a  
moment?"





# What Middle Schoolers Wish Parents Knew

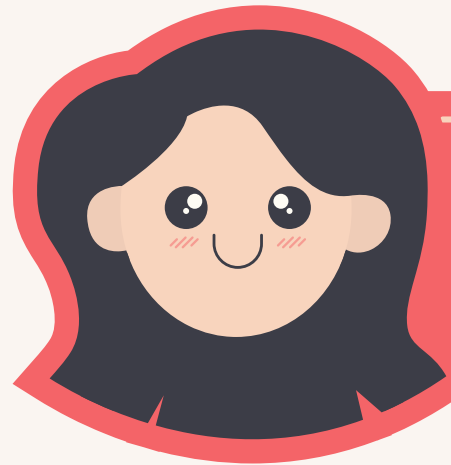
They won't say these words, but they feel them:



**"PLEASE DON'T OVERREACT."**



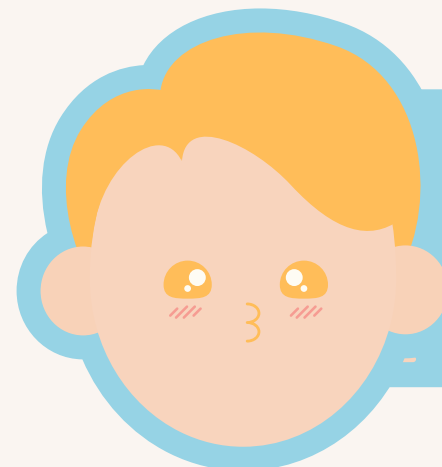
**"PLEASE DON'T TELL ME  
I'M BEING DRAMATIC."**



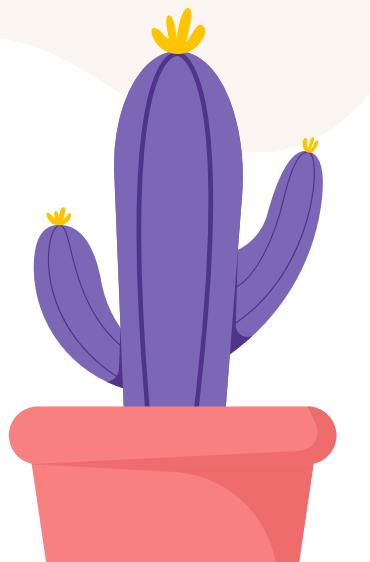
**"PLEASE DON'T EMBARRASS ME."**



**"PLEASE DON'T CALL THE SCHOOL  
WITHOUT TELLING ME."**



**"PLEASE LISTEN BEFORE FIXING IT."**

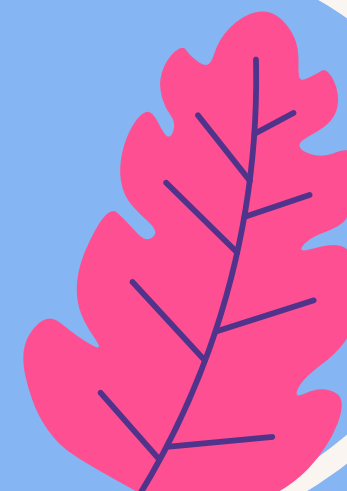




# PARENT SKILL

The Magic Question  
"Do you want me to listen, give advice,  
or take action?"

This question lowers defensiveness  
instantly.



# Story: The Girl Who Thought No One Noticed

A 7th grader once told me:

"I walk around the hall hoping someone sees me."

She wasn't being **bullied**.

She was being **invisible**.

Inclusion isn't about preventing cruelty.

It's about preventing loneliness.



# Warning Signs Something Is Wrong

You may notice:

"I don't want to go to school."

Personality changes

Suddenly losing or breaking things

Fear or stress around group chats

More headaches or stomachaches

Eating lunch alone but not telling you



# PARENT SKILL

Say this:

"I'm not mad. I'm just paying attention.  
What's happening socially?"  
Calm > Correct.



# When Your Child Is Struggling Socially

What helps:

- A calm parent
- A safe place to talk
- A plan for tomorrow
- Follow-up the next day

What never helps:

- ✗ "Just ignore them."
- ✗ "Be nice to everyone."
- ✗ "Maybe they didn't mean it."
- ✗ "You're being sensitive."





# PARENT SKILL

**The 24-Hour Plan**  
"Tonight, we talk.  
Tomorrow, we try.  
The next day, we check in."

# Skills Kids Need to Protect Themselves

Short, simple phrases middle schoolers actually use:

## Assertive Lines:

- ✿ "Not cool — I'm out."
- ✿ "I don't play like that."
- ✿ "That's crossing a line."
- ✿ "Stop. Enough."

## Exit Skills:

- ✿ Walk away with confidence (not anger)
- ✿ Stand with a friend
- ✿ Go to a safe adult
- ✿ Switch seats/groups

# What Inclusion ACTUALLY Looks Like

Inclusion is:

1. "Sit with us."
2. "Want to join?"
3. "I'll walk with you."
4. "We save a spot for everyone."
5. "We don't laugh at people."





# PARENT SKILL

Kids don't copy what we say.  
They copy what we do.  
Say out loud:  
**"Everyone deserves a place."**



# Core Inclusion Skills Every Child Needs

**Reading the room**  
(tone, facial expressions, space)

**Setting boundaries:**  
"I need some space right now."

**Repairing mistakes:**  
"I didn't realize that hurt you — I'm sorry."

**Starting conversations:**  
"Hey, can I join?"  
"What are you all doing?"

**Safe bystander support:**  
"Come sit with me," not "Be brave and confront them."

# Story: The One Sentence That Changed Everything

A 6th grader who was constantly teased finally practiced one line:

**"I don't play like that."**

The teasing stopped within a week.

Not because the bully cared —  
but because the child sounded sure.

Confidence is a skill.

And it can be taught.

# When Your Child Is the One Hurting Others

It doesn't mean they're a "bad kid."  
It means they need skills.

Signs:

- Minimizing the situation
- Blaming everyone else
- Laughing at others' feelings
- "Everyone else is too sensitive"





# PARENT SKILL

## Parent Script:

"I love you.

And we fix what we break.

Let's talk about how to repair this."

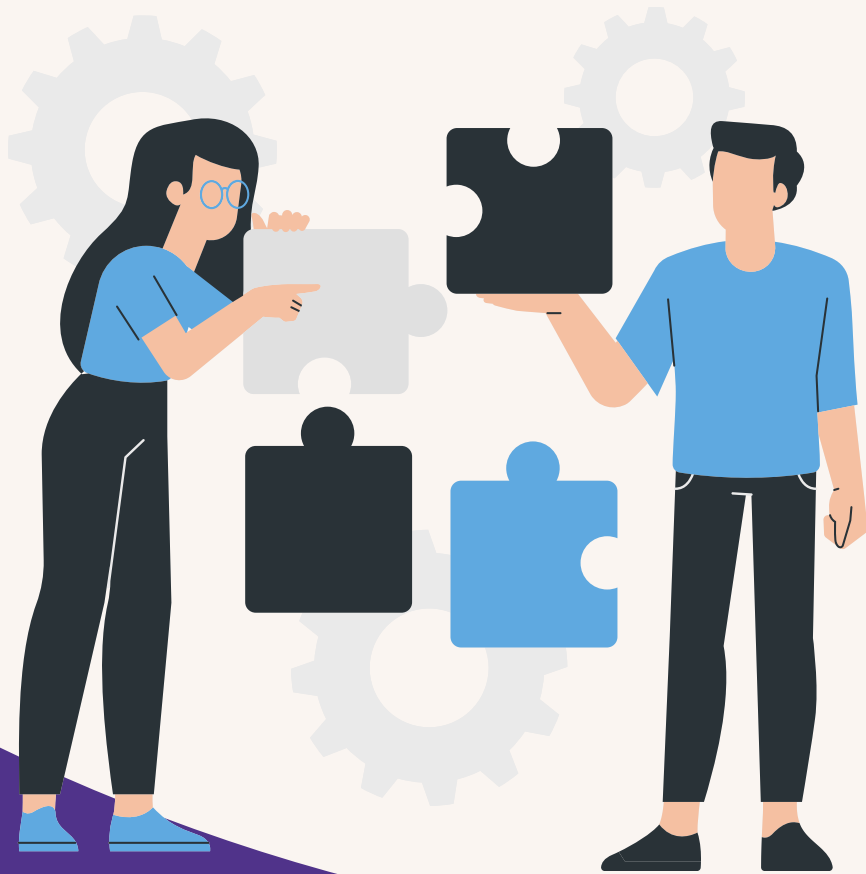
Repair > punishment.



# Partnering With the School

Approach the school like this:

- "Here's what my child reported."
- "Here's what we tried at home."
- "I want to partner, not blame."
- "What's the next step together?"



Collaboration gets better results than confrontation.







# PARENT SKILL

**Powerful Question to Ask Your Child Every Week**

**"Who might have needed someone today and how could you include them?"**

**This question changes how they walk through school.**

**Inclusion starts before something goes wrong.**



# Thank You!

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