

### General Effects:

**Low Self-Esteem/Depression:** Bullying can lead to feelings of worthlessness, loneliness and depression, which can interfere with schoolwork. Kids who experience bullying may be fearful of being made fun of or harmed. They may lack positive social interaction with peers. These kids are more likely to act moody, sullen or withdrawn from family or close friend interaction.

**School Performance:** When a child is worrying about bullying, it may make it difficult for them to concentrate on necessary tasks. Therefore, academic performance may suffer. Often times, this furthers a lack of confidence and leads to feelings of inadequacy or perceived unintelligence.

**Physical Effects:** Bullying may take the form of physical aggression. Bullying may lead to physical harm such as bruising, scrapes, cuts and damaged clothing. Bullies may also attempt to steal or destroy objects a child enjoys.

### Advice for Mentors:

#### **Provide positive encouragement and self-esteem boosters**

- Create a safe environment for your Little can thrive and be successful; avoid excessive competition and activities that may make them feel inadequate. Encourage a Little to participate in things they are interested in and compliment your Little on what they do well. This will allow a Little to understand positive self-worth and a sense of competence.
- Have a Little come up with ideas and solutions and provide positive reinforcement for good ideas, decisions and behavior. Let your Little make the decisions and be proud of them.
- Focus on the positives. Explain to your Little what they are doing well. Provide lots of positive encouragement.
- Ask questions about a child's vision for who they want to be and the choices they want to make for themselves. Also, share experiences about how peer pressure has affected you.
- Be a role model to a Little and provide an example of how someone should act, demonstrating strong character.

#### **Showing your support**

- Show a Little that you care by keeping in touch on a regular basis and acting excited during your time together. Openly communicate, express flaws, and show vulnerability. This will allow your Little to understand that you care and trust them and will help to build a connection.
- Try to avoid canceling plans. If you need to, do it ahead of time and give a guardian and Little a reason why, prioritizing rescheduling. This will prevent your Little from feeling unworthy of your time.

#### **Academic performance**

- While it is not your job to help a Little academically, it may be nice to help them think outside the box. Allow your Little to make rules and regulations and try to incorporate activities that will allow a Little to feel confident about something they are struggling with. For example, if your Little struggles with reading, find a game that will allow your Little to practice reading without making it a lesson. Allow a Little to feel good about what they are doing and promote a love of learning.
- Create a sense of trust. Allow a Little to understand that they can come to you with any questions or concerns. If a Little knows they have someone to talk to, they may feel more secure in other areas- i.e. academics.

#### **Physical**

- If you notice any physical harm on your Little's body, be sure to inform guardians and Match Support. Act as an outlet if they need to talk about it, but it is not your responsibility to solve all of a Little's problems. You can help by passing this information along to guardians and Match Support.