

# Standing Up For Yourself

*An **advocate** is a person who stands up for someone else.*

## What we know:

It's inevitable that situations will arise when our children will need to stand up for themselves. 25-30% of students in the United States say they have been bullied at school. However, a recent report shows that less than half of the time children report what happened to them. Parents need to help children practice talking about what happens when they are away from home so they can feel comfortable talking with adults about their safety.



As parents, we protect and advocate for our child. From their earliest moments, we are in charge of almost all of the decisions regarding their safety and environments. As children grow older and gain independence, they start to make more decisions for themselves. We can help children make responsible choices and learn to promote their own safety. Parents and caregivers can teach children skills that will help them make good decisions, stand up for themselves, and be safe.

## Try this:

- Research tells us that children really do look to parents and caregivers for advice and help with hard decisions. Spend 15 minutes a day talking with your child. Talk about daily life. Suggest words they can use to describe both good and bad things that happen each day. This reassures your child that they can talk to you if they have a problem.
- Help your child feel safe describing their emotions. Ask about their feelings so they know they can talk about problems with you.
- Set clear limits and expectations about how to act. Separate emotions from actions. Tell them it's ok to be angry, but it is not ok to hit someone or be unkind because you are angry.
- Create times children can solve problems on their own in a supervised environment. This can help them become more confident about making their own decisions.
- Check out [StopBullying.gov articles](https://www.stopbullying.gov/articles) for ideas about what kids can do to help prevent bullying and what to do when it happens.

## For fun:

Watch the Raising Caring Kids video “[Responsibility](#)” and talk about what skills your child can “wear” to protect themselves from difficult situations.