



Parenting

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 Posted by u/kingvitaman 9 years ago 

131

Teaching your little ones how to fight (protect themselves)



As a parent of a toddler we've all seen it. Some asshole kid in the sandbox hits your kid, and instead of standing up for his/herself she comes running to you. Obviously, this is understandable, children shouldn't resolve all of their conflicts with violence. But at the same time, standing up for yourself, and fighting back is also a skill I think is important to know. When I was 6 I was bullied. One time. A kid pushed me from behind for no reason and laid me out on the ground. I came back and hit him in the nose as hard as I could, and then held him face first down in the snow as his nose bled out for like 5 or 10 minutes. Now, I know, this sounds pretty rough, but guess what? I was never bullied or pushed by anyone again after that. So when my daughter (3.5 yo) started telling me that another girl was pushing her around, I asked her what she did. And she told me she said "stop it stop it" but the girl hasn't stopped. Of course we talked to the school, and asked about what they could do, but really, their efforts haven't proven to have done anything. So, I told her next time she does it, push her back, if she hits you, punch her as hard as you can in the nose. So a few days pass, and my wife comes home all frantic that my daughter got into a fight, and so I ask her what happened, and she told me, and I'm like "good, she did what I told her to". Now about a month has passed, and there's been no more incidents. In fact, my daughter now says that nobody likes the bully, and nobody plays with her anymore. It's really a win for all the other kids she was bullying as well. But now, my wife is still freaking out. And I think it's simply because of the fact that she's a little girl. We often tell boys to stick up for themselves, be tough, and to fight back, but little girls are treated differently. I think that's bullshit, and if some little shit is messing with my daughter then I have no sympathy for her if my daughter lays her out.


Now, I know, many reading this may think it's abhorrent, and that adults should solve these situations. But if we look at bullying we see there's really not much that parents, and teachers can do to stop it. And this behavior starts when they are 3 and 4 years old. So I don't see anything wrong with nipping it in the bud.

 138 Comments

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 Tip



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MotownMama · 9 yr. ago

kids: 12M

I think it's great that your daughter stood up for herself and that the bullying has stopped. Now that she's learned to defend and protect herself it might be a good time to talk about empathy and forgiveness. And that people can do bad things sometimes but not be bad people. Your daughter had just one other kid making her feel bad, imagine how this other kid must feel when no one wants to play with her.


 165



 Share

 Tip



 Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

livin4donuts · 9 yr. ago

Excellent points. Some people, adults and children included, don't get it or refuse to let up when asked to stop. Those people usually wise up after a sock in the nose.

I don't want my kids to have to fight for their safety, but I don't want them to be bullied even more. I will teach my kids to stand up for themselves, and especially others.

 2



 Share

 Tip



jet_heller · 9 yr. ago

Teaching your kid to fight is the easy part. . .

Teaching your kid not to fight is the hard part. There's a line where fighting may be an appropriate response, but for most interactions, fighting is absolutely not an appropriate response. I hope your kid has learned where that line is. And I hope



r/Parenting



Personally, I've been teaching my kid that we simply don't cause physical harm to others. He's this is a hard lesson because shoving is a very natural reaction. In the next year I plan on taking my kid to start learning martial arts in a place that will do a good job of teaching my kid how to avoid fighting while giving him the ability to fight well should it ever be required.

45 Share Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

Teaching your kid to fight is the easy part. . . Teaching your kid not to fight is the hard part.

So much this. It's a slippery slope, OP.

9 Share Tip ...

apatheticnihiliist · 9 yr. ago · edited 9 yr. ago

The other day my 5YO daughter did something that made me really proud of her. Fast food restaurant with an enclosed kids play area. She's playing inside with a bunch of other kids. At some point I notice she's stopped playing and is sitting by herself on a little bench in there. She also has a certain look in the face that I recognize when she's upset. I went in and asked her if everything was okay. She said some little girl had called her stupid. I said something like "well it's certainly not okay for her to call you that; some kids are just mean and say mean things". I was trying to think of how to proceed when, without any prompting on my part, she marches over to where the little girl is now seated with her whole family, completely unafraid of the presence of the other little girls' mom and dad, and looks straight at the little girl and tells her, with confidence, "You called me stupid. I'm not stupid. That was a mean thing to say and it's not okay!" I went and sort of collected her and moved her away and we went quietly back to our table and I could tell that the other mom and dad were floored and that the little girl was in trouble now with them.

I don't think she could have handled the situation much better. She didn't get violent. She expressed herself verbally and communicated directly at the other girl, and made it very clear that she had overstepped a boundary of good behavior and that she would not tolerate it. And most importantly she wasn't at all deterred by the presence of other people and the intensity of the situation, which I'm pretty certain I would have been at her age.

Pretty proud of her in that moment.

17 Share Tip ...

SherrickM · 9 yr. ago

This is a much better way to educate your child about defense. Words and logic are far more effective as weapons.

Martial arts has it right..learn all this stuff in self defense, but hope you will never have to use it.

8 Share Tip ...

clownpenisdofarts · 9 yr. ago

That's really impressive of your daughter. I'm also glad that it had the desired impact. I don't think it's a good comparison to OP's story though, because OP's kid tried words first. Tried appeal to authority with unacceptable results. When diplomacy fails, force is what is left.

5 Share Tip ...

apatheticnihiliist · 9 yr. ago

Agree. I've been fortunate so far that that hasn't come up yet with us. I'm honestly not sure how I'm going to react if and when that happens.

2 Share Tip ...

clownpenisdofarts · 9 yr. ago

One of the hardest things to teach is judgement.

When is it okay to use foul language?

When is it okay to be naked?

When is it okay to resort to violence?

In other words, when is it appropriate to break the rules? Very difficult concept, and even harder to practice. I know I still make bad judgements, but I'm doing better than I did when I was 3.



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2wsy · 9 yr. ago

Reminds me of the quote that goes something like:

"The purpose of rules is for us to *think very hard* before breaking them."



1



Share



Tip



ZaiRoX · 9 yr. ago · edited 9 yr. ago

I got three points here.

1. You've only heard one side. For all you know your daughter could be the instigator for these events. Children lie and make up stories to appease their parents. I'm sure you've heard the old phrase "He started it" coming from both players in a fistfight?
2. Theoretically the bully could live in a troubled home with abusive parents. If this bully learns that violence is a normalized social behavior they will also be less likely to ask others for help.
3. There is actually a much closer social connection between bullies and victims than most will care to admit. Bullies can easily turn victims (as shown in your story), but victims can also very easily turn into bullies. Positive recognition for violence is rarely a good thing. They've even stopped doing it in the Army for similar reasons.



96



Share



Tip



Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

IkeClanton · 9 yr. ago

The part that really bugged me was that "nobody plays with [the bully] anymore." So this little girl is getting completely ostracized from her peers now and Dad is acting like it's a good thing. Yes, standing up for yourself is awesome- But so is compassion and forgiveness.



51



Share



Tip



[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

"nobody plays with [the bully] anymore."

This upsets me too, but I feel more rage and anger at the parents of the child for letting get this far without realizing... but and maybe this is an opportunity for you to encourage your daughter to make like Theodore Roosevelt and befriend her. Leadership training 101!



7



Share



Tip



Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

ox_ · 9 yr. ago

Exactly. Worst case is that some poor kid who is getting a rough time at home is now getting just as rough a time at school through no fault of their own and OP is bragging about how tough his 6 year old is.



10



Share



Tip



e2s0h3 · 9 yr. ago

The child is 3. Not 6.



2



Share



Tip



cheesegoat · 9 yr. ago

You've only heard one side. For all you know your daughter could be the instigator for these events. Children lie and make up stories to appease their parents. I'm sure you've heard the old phrase "He started it" coming from both players in a fistfight?

FWIW, we're only seeing a slice of OP's life here too. He's in a much better place to assess his daughter's description of events than anyone here. We have no context.

(I'm of the opinion that violence is never the answer, but I was never (badly) bullied, and my kids have never been involved in a situation that, in retrospect, would cause me to question my stance on this subject.)



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ChrisRhino · 9 yr. ago

You've done a good job playing devil's advocate here but, somehow the original OP's story rings true more so than your points.

8 ...

maumacd · 9 yr. ago

I taught my daughter to stand up, yell as loudly as she could "I don't like that" and puts her hand in your face like a "talk to the hand" sort of action.

Alerts adults to the situation at hand, no violence, gets the message across.

Win-win-win.

33 ...

Terohx · 9 yr. ago

Except the act of putting your hand in someone's face can be taken as an aggressive action and get you hit.

2 ...

SherrickM · 9 yr. ago

Still better than teaching your three year old to be a bare knuckle boxer.

8 ...

Terohx · 9 yr. ago

I disagree.

0 ...

The_Fuad · 9 yr. ago

You would be wrong.

-1 ...

STL_reddit · 9 yr. ago

I'm all for everything you describe, except the toddler part. Even at 6(the age in your personal example) i would disagree. Standing up for yourself is one thing, but hitting a bully in the face shouldn't be a suggested retaliation for toddlers. If it happens naturally and has the desired result, great. But i would never plant that seed in a toddlers head.

At higher ages, and further into school. retaliating bully violence with a little violence is fine IMO. But I wouldn't suggest it to a toddler, you're introducing a solution that will probably work, but also create a mentality of "hey, it worked last time, I may start using this hitting thing for other interactions with people. What's to say the toddler starts getting verbally abused or made fun of, and relates that back to when the bully punch worked? Now your toddler is initiating the physical altercation to solve a non-physical confrontation.

17 ...

VampirePirateNinja · 9 yr. ago

This is a tough situation, especially if you haven't witnessed the behavior. It sounds like everything worked out for your family.

I run a martial arts gym and have had many, many parents come in and ask for classes for their kids to prevent/stop bullying. When asked, we always say that the kids should get an adult and avoid becoming physical unless absolutely necessary (backed into a corner, attacked from behind, etc). Upon freeing themselves from the other kid, we advise the kid go directly to a teacher/admin/adult.

We have had many parents tell us that the bullying stopped after their child started classes. Occasionally because their child finally was able to defend themselves. Frequently because the child is now more confident and has better physical skills (better balance/spatial awareness) and social skills.

I am glad that it worked out for your daughter, but as some others here have pointed out telling her to



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they teach your daughter to use this tactic in an inappropriate way (like if another kid takes a toy, etc.). Perhaps this is the thing your wife is worried about, that your daughter doesn't have the decision making skills to determine what is and is not bullying.

On a separate note, you might also consider reminding your daughter that it would be nice to play with the "bully" if she changes her behavior. The "bully" might well be a child from an abusive home or just have poor social skills, in either case alienating her isn't good for her or your daughter. Your daughter did learn to confront an attacker, the next lesson might be to teach her to reconcile with the other girl.

6 ...

e2s0h3 · 9 yr. ago

I'm not a big fan of labeling toddlers as bullies.

84 ...

runreadtravel · 9 yr. ago

4 years old boy

I see where you are coming from. The kid who bullies my son and others in the playgroup is also tiny. When I see him sitting quietly sometimes, my heart goes out for him. However, when he screams and shouts in my son's ears and pushes him for no reason, I think my son should defend himself and push him right back. I also hope that having this done to himself might just help the bullying kid to come out of this phase.

18 ...

e2s0h3 · 9 yr. ago

I'm not saying toddlers shouldn't learn how to physically defend themselves. Far from it.

But labeling a three year old as a bully and then being glad that nobody likes her or plays with her? She's three. It's a shit age and most of the kids are shitty to each other at least sometimes.

Most of the time at that age three year olds will tell on their friends and conveniently leave out how they contributed to the situation. I once had a three year old tell me sadly about how the mean child in his class snatched a toy out of his hand (conveniently leaving out how he had snatched the toy from the other child a minute prior).

34 ...



Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

ruetaine · 9 yr. ago

I completely agree! Most of them are aggressive and have aggressive attitudes and reactions. This absolutely doesn't make them "bullies".

4 ...



Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

NatskuLovester · 9 yr. ago

Haven't had to deal with anything quite like that yet, but the local kids can be a bit mean to my 4 year old from time to time as she's rather socially awkward and is the newcomer to the group. I try and leave the kids to sort it out themselves most of the time (I talk to her about it though, its mostly them teasing her and running away when she wants to play, so I explain that sometimes kids don't want to play, and sometimes they can be mean, and told her to ignore it and not play if they're acting that way, as sometimes its all fine and they play nicely together), as its a skill they need to learn I think.

One day this winter two of the boys (about a year older than my kid) were playing with her in my back garden, playing nicely to begin with but then they started to push her around. I was debating whether to go out there or not when I saw her wrestle one of them to the ground and chase after the other and a landed a couple of punches on him. They switched to snowball fighting before I could go out there and calm them down, so I let them carry on with the snowball fight. There's been no trouble since then.

I'm not so sure about how I would deal with bullying at school though. I don't really like the idea of her fighting back if its a kid I don't know.

7 ...



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I see your logic and I'm glad it worked out. I would just worry about other ways it could have gone. Like turning your kid into a bully. Or starting a recurring struggle between her and another kid. Or one of them actually getting hurt. Your story works out handily in the end but it is pretty dangerous territory.

6 Share ...

supcaci · 9 yr. ago

a buddy & a bellydweller

I actually agree that it's good to teach kids to stand up for themselves, but we should be careful not to label toddlers as bullies. Toddlers are violent in general. Some more than others, but that's just part of being a toddler. It's appropriate for a child to learn, "People don't like being hit, and if I hit I will get in trouble & might even get hit back," and that learning should go a long way toward helping a child emerge from this phase the way they're supposed to - less violent, better able to express emotions and work/play with others productively. But permanently ostracizing a toddler for what is actually developmentally normal behavior is way more harmful than what this kid did. If she doesn't have the opportunity to play with other children, she may develop enduring anti-social tendencies.

Bottom line, they're three, not six or ten. I agree that it's good to teach kids to stand up for themselves, but they also need to develop empathy and forgiveness. This is a great time to teach that lesson since this child is still young enough for us to expect her to outgrow this bad behavior.

11 Share ...

Joe_Alcohol · 9 yr. ago

You keep referring to this kid as a "little shit." You're talking about a 3 year old kid.

29 Share ...

teapotshenanigans · 9 yr. ago

I've met plenty of 3yo little shits.

8 Share ...

heavyhandedsara · 9 yr. ago

I have yet to meet a 3yo that wasn't occasionally a little shit. It's part of being three.

16 Share ...

TheBestWifesHusband · 9 yr. ago

My Dad sent me to Karate lessons from age 6/7. I trained for about 10 years.

Seriously considering sending my son to something similar.

Learning how to remove someone's hand from holding you, in a painful but not damaging way will avoid the need to punch them in the face.

However knowing how to throw a punch will be helpful if that fails as a long term solution.

I had a very similar experience as you, big guy at school punched me, so I kicked his leg out from under him and kneed him in the face as he fell.

Never, ever got bullied again.

I plan to teach my son some self defense, and will not punish him if used reasonably to defend himself.

4 Share ...

libertao · 9 yr. ago

I agree with the general sentiment of course (stand up for yourself) but 3.5 year-olds are just too young to tell to solve problems by punching a classmate as hard as he/she can in the nose.

4 Share ...

bo_knows · 9 yr. ago



r/Parenting



with everyone. For a
e side or whatever.

I told my Dad. He said nearly the exact same thing. "Next time, tell him not to do it again, and if he does, punch him right in the nose as hard as you can." I told the kid to stop, he grabbed my hair this time, and as him and his friend were laughing it up, I casually walked around the seat to his and punch him in the nose. Blood. Everywhere.

I never even got in trouble in school. I think the bully was too ashamed to even tell people what happened. The kid never messed with anyone on that bus again.

I'll be teaching the same thing to my son. I feel like in this day and age with cyberbullying and all this psychological warfare that kids do, a swift punch in the nose can get a lot done.

15 ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

EatATaco · 9 yr. ago

IMO, and I might be in the minority here, but you didn't teach her to protect herself, you taught her to solve a problem with violence.

This "bully" (can a 3 year old really be a bully yet?) was never really a physical threat to her. Sure, she pushed her around and this is unacceptable. But was her life or health really in jeopardy when she struck back? You don't give any description of how the fight went down, but it certainly doesn't sound like it. That's not "defending herself" it is ending something she doesn't like with more violence.

I don't think it is abhorrent, I see the logic behind it and why one might encourage this, it also may even work. I just think it isn't the best path and might have unintended consequences, teaching your child that violence solves problems and isn't only reserved to when you are really in danger.

Using my own anecdote. Like most kids, I was the victim of a bully here and there. However, I didn't need to smash anyone's face in to get it to stop. I spent my life being nice to people and simply avoiding the conflict. Bullies aren't bullies because they are monsters, they are bullies because something has gone wrong in their life. Or, I suspect in the case of a 3 year old, they are still figuring out social boundaries and what is acceptable and what is not. Becoming violent with them doesn't make them stop being a bully, it might actually only reinforce the anti-social behavior. Also, everyone avoiding the toddler is almost certainly to not help with the anti-social behavior.

10 ...

Axon14 · 9 yr. ago · edited 9 yr. ago

Well, I agree generally that kids of this generation are very coddled and not really equipped to defend themselves. Personally, I believe a 3-4 year old is not mentally equipped to understand when to haul back and jack someone and when not to. I suspect my daughter would punch someone for hitting her, but is as likely to hit over something that should not be a fight, like taking a toy. Still, it's an odd age, and some kids are more advanced than others, so your daughter might get it.

Now, my 7 year old, yeah, he needed to learn this stuff. I learned that he was being picked on early in the school year, so I trained him in some martial arts I know, mostly to make him feel better. He actually took to it well. He finally lost it after about 6 months of harassment and put the other kid (a 9 year old) into a front facing ("guillotine") headlock. He later told me that, as I taught him, he knew that such a hold would end the fight without really hurting the other kid. It's a move we work on daily.

I don't know if I was more proud or more upset. He handled himself well, but did I do the right thing? I am always worried that my son will now become the bully, even if nothing in his nature suggests that to me.

16 ...

medialunas · 9 yr. ago

what kind of crappy daycare do you send your kid to that they are abused and need to fight for themselves at the age of three? I would take issue with the staff and lack of supervision rather than some other three year old.

4 ...

Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

NightPhoenix35 · 9 yr. ago · edited 9 yr. ago

By the way, I think it's awesome that you treat your little girl the same way you would a little boy...



r/Parenting



solving a problem
but if it doesn't

work, get physical? I don't want my child to get walked all over, I want them to walk tall with a confidence that a bully wouldn't dare challenge. But if the day ever comes, I want them to be able to defend themselves. How do I teach them against the idea of "might is right" but at the same time it's ok to defend yourself if necessary? I want them to be able to stick up for themselves as well as others; is it naive to think they can do it without hitting anyone?

Edit...after reading more comments further down, I'm also concerned about how to instill a sense of empathy and forgiveness in the same breath. How do I teach them that everyone is fighting a battle, you never know how bad it could be...whatever it is that's causing the bullying, it's probably worse than what they are experiencing.

3 ...



Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

hottoddy4me · 9 yr. ago

I'm conflicted about this. If someone was picking on my kid, I would absolutely want her to punch some little shit in the face. However, I have an 8 year old nephew who gets into trouble a lot about fighting because he literally is socially inept. He doesn't understand what the appropriate response is to someone taking is ball or telling him he can't be on their team. He gets picked on a lot because he is socially awkward and has behaviorial issues. And honestly he is the sweetest kindest little kid. I can see both sides to the story

3 ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

I'm curious, though -- why not try talking to the other kid's parents, or their teacher if it's at school, or even intervening yourself? I'm a new parent and haven't gotten to 3 yet, but it seems like an age at which adult intervention would still be necessary.

3 ...

kingvitaman · 9 yr. ago

We have done both. The mom seems a bit (shall we say) slow. She completely pampers her and refuses to acknowledge any problem (even multiple parents have complained to both the school, and the teachers) . Believe it or not, her grandmother actually is a teacher at the school as well! Didn't even help since she's obviously not in the class, or at recess when these things happen.

-3 ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

I've always wondered (well, since I had a kid anyway) what I might do in a situation like this. Thanks for posting about it.

1 ...

agentfantabulous · 9 yr. ago

My husband (a martial arts instructor in a traditional karate style) is teaching our 8 year old son to punch and kick and defend himself.

He's had trouble with a few boys. A few weeks ago he punched one of them at school. The kid is known as a trouble maker, and our son never gets in trouble, so the teachers believed him when he said he was defending himself.

He knows the rules: don't start a fight, try to get out of it with words, try to get the adult in charge, and if none of those work, defend yourself by whatever means necessary and we will back you up if you get in trouble.

3 ...

therealrenshai · 9 yr. ago

I have a hard time justifying teaching a kid to fight back at 3-4 years old. I think theres a difference between teaching your children to stand up for themselves and teaching them that violence is the right answer.

I know this because when I was 4 my neighbors and I played together a lot. We played outside, we rough housed and had a good time. Eventually some new kids moved in and I stood roughly a head taller than them even though we were all 6. They got hurt as it happens and the kids told their parents. Now instead of coming to me this father taught his kids that if I'm this big kid that they should fight back and he had them throwing rocks and swinging sticks.



r/Parenting



nasty cut and one
explained what

their father told them to do.

Needless to say that my father was upset that this was the advice given and went over to discuss his concerns with their father. (This discussion consisted of my father shaking this man around and asking if he should come over with a stick to beat him around with).

I apologize for this wall of text but sometimes its not as simple as telling a child that they should fight back in these types of situations. Sometimes an adult should be involved to address these issues before things spiral out of control.

3 Share Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

Instead of advocating violence, I try to instill the good things in my child and let them be an example for others.

Instead of admonishing bad behavior, we overpraise good behavior. Instead of yelling at him for hitting his baby sister, we make a big deal when he's gentle and tell him we love that HE IS gentle, not that he is CURRENTLY BEING gentle. It's a subtle, but important, distinction. When they internalize good behavior, you won't even have to correct bad stuff, because it simply won't happen very much.

3 Share Tip ...

calmkitty · 9 yr. ago

Wow. I don't even know where to start. This will be a long comment but I hope you read it all, as every point I make is important.

Firstly, be really clear about what you're teaching her - causing someone physical harm is OK if you feel as though you're getting picked on.

Is it OK to hit if someone accidentally bumped into you? What if they're poking or tickling you and you don't like it, is it OK to hit? If you had another younger child who hit her, is it OK for her to hit back? What about another child with a disability? What about a child that comes from an abusive household that puts up with getting hit everyday and sees this as normal behaviour? What if she thinks you are giving her a hard time? Can she hit you? When she's an adult and her boss is picking on her, is that OK to hit them? Do you think a 3 year old can think rationally through these scenarios?

Any action that causes harm to another person is wrong. And this is not related to gender. I would deal with this in exactly the same way for a boy.

If she is hitting people, no matter at what age, what do you think other children will think of her? Not just the 'bully', but other children who witness her behaviour? How would you feel if this behaviour excluded her? What will other adults think of you if she tells them you told her to hit back? Do you want your daughter to think of herself as someone who hurts other people?

Do you think violence is the only way to stand up for yourself? Yes, there will be many people in our lives who do wrong by us, but for you to teach your daughter the correct way to deal with problems (ie the way an adult would handle the situation) would be much more powerful and meaningful rather than the lesson that hurting someone is OK. Start how you mean to go on.

Children's brains take a looong time to develop (eg girls don't fully grasp consequences of actions until late teens, for boys even longer) - so especially at a very young age, they may not even see the correlation between their original action and her reaction. They are more likely to think 'Wow, she's mean' than 'Oh, I hit her, so she hit me back, which I didn't like, so I won't hit her again'.

You didn't say if you had any idea why the other kid hit her. What if he was feeling really upset and only knew how to express this through hitting? If this was the case he would need support and guidance from adults as well as his peers. What if no one had talked to him all day and he was feeling lonely? What if it was an accident? Have a think about what you think was going on in that kid's head when he was hitting.

If your daughter was feeling really upset and hit another kid, would it be OK for them to hit back?

Bullying is something that occurs over time with the intention of causing harm. On the odd occasion I see this kind of behaviour it comes from older children - around 7 or 8 it can start. But 3? No, this child is certainly not a bully. Yes they are pushing boundaries of social interaction. That is how children learn. And your daughter, by hitting back, is telling the other child that hitting is an acceptable behaviour.

Now hopefully you're reading this and a part of you agrees with me. So where to from here? It will depend on her understanding of the situation as she is still very young.

She must know that she should not tolerate being hurt by anyone, because hurting another person is wrong. It is OK to tell her you thought about it and decided that for her to hit back is wrong. Brainstorm options for if she is being



🔍 r/Parenting



I of volume and friends, finding an

activity with more direction, playing near an adult, going straight to an adult... She needs a variety of strategies and they need to be explicitly taught and practiced. Talk to the teachers about it. Discuss these strategies. Communicate with them regularly. Ask them whether they can do whole group lessons about keeping hands to self/dealing with anger (this is hard without knowing why the other child was hitting in the first place - there may not even be a reason).

Please think about what I've written. Your daughter can learn to be a confident woman who stands up for herself without needing to resort to violence.

👍 18 📄 Share 🚩 Tip ...

manup_suitup · 9 yr. ago

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

I'm in total agreement. Teachers etc can only do so much - there are too many shitty parents. Violence should never be the first reaction, but at some point it becomes the only thing the bully understands. They usually target the weak, so it makes sense not to be the weakest.

Knowing *when* to fight is equally, if not more, important than knowing *how* to fight though.

👍 12 📄 Share 🚩 Tip ...

kingvitaman OP · 9 yr. ago

Knowing when to fight is equally, if not more, important knowing how to fight though.

Yes, this is a really good point. Especially since often their little brains aren't exactly the most accomodating of these types of nuances about when it's ok, and when it isn't. To be honest I would have never, in a million years, told my little girl to punch someone if she hadn't come to me sad, day after day, about this same girl bullying her.

👍 8 📄 Share 🚩 Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

I have the exact same attitude as you, I would have told my little girl the exact same thing in your situation! Hopefully the bully has some good parents who will help her though, it's really quite sad to think she doesn't have any friends and doesn't know how to play with other children.

👍 0 📄 Share 🚩 Tip ...

Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

If the bully had good parents she wouldn't be a bully. Bullies usually have low self esteem developed at home

👍 -1 📄 Share 🚩 Tip ...

Doza13 · 9 yr. ago

father of two (10 yrs, and 14 mo)

This thread seems like something out of the 1950's.

Teaching your toddler how to hit? All of a sudden he's the bully.

👍 14 📄 Share 🚩 Tip ...

Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

runreadtravel · 9 yr. ago

4 years old boy

I heard my husband tell the exact thing to my 3 years old boy a couple of weeks back. My first reaction was to panic. However, I remembered how I was bullied as a child and never told anyone because my folks taught me to never hit anyone, I somehow internalized being bullied as my fault. So yes, I concur that little kids regardless of their gender should give one right back to the bully.

👍 8 📄 Share 🚩 Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago



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also be internalized as
at's just hard. There's

not a perfect answer because people aren't perfect. Especially at three.

↑ 2 ↓ Share Tip ...

runreadtravel · 9 yr. ago
4 years old boy

I concur. I also worry that at some point it is possible for the child to forget the blurry line between hitting back and just hitting. It is all trial and error, really.

↑ 1 ↓ Share Tip ...

teapotshenanigans · 9 yr. ago

My 4yo is getting bullied at school too. We've spoken to the teachers and they're "aware of it". So now what? My husband is teaching our son how to throw a punch, but to "only resort to it if they don't stop when you ask and if they're hurting you badly." If we get a phonecall one day I'm just going to tell them, what else was my son supposed to do when you let Kid X push him around and my son has tried going to the adults for help?"

↑ 6 ↓ Share Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

I actually had a conversation like this regarding my 5-year-old. According to her, every time she has to stand near this one girl, she kicks my daughter. Well, my daughter got sick of it and retaliated. Naturally, my daughter was the one who got in trouble. I teach my kids to walk away and only retaliate as a very last resort. She couldn't walk away because they were in line waiting to be picked up. She had told the teachers before but nothing came of it because they all claim they didn't see it. They didn't even actually see my daughter kick this girl but heard her crying, rolled down her boot after she had said my daughter kicked her, and apparently saw a bruise. I asked them why, if my daughter consistently complained about this girl, they did nothing about it. They weren't able to answer that, but my daughter also didn't face a consequences from the school administration or else I would have been up there getting to the bottom of it. I feel strongly kids should defend themselves, but this is coming from someone who gave a kid a bloody nose in 6th grade because he ruthlessly picked on me, went through my stuff to find embarrassing things to show everyone, and generally made my life a living hell for most of the school year.

↑ 3 ↓ Share Tip ...



Comment deleted by user · 9 yr. ago

albeaner · 9 yr. ago

Look, I have boys. My youngest is TOO physical and my oldest is not physical enough.

But here's the difference. Girls/women (older than 3, mind you - like 5+) are naturally more socially adept at handling situations without physical fighting. Have you ever seen a grown man get into a fist fight? It happens, yeah? Does it happen as often with women? Um, no.

There ARE inherent differences in boys vs. girls and it's NOT just how they are raised. (I am female and have 2 boys, I came to this realization a few years ago after they ceased being toddlers and started being kids.) Sure, girls can be physical just like boys can be socially intelligent. But where will that lead? At 5-6, girls start forming cliques, forming their alliances, scheming to get what they want, talking and directing their playgroups. At 5-6, boys have friends that they play with but it's not so much because Bob was kind to Joe and made him a nice picture and shared his cookie. It's because Bob and Joe both like soccer and they are on the same page with physical roughness. I've seen my kids' friends be complete jerks and they just ignore it and move onto the next thing! That'd NEVER fly with girls the same age.

My point is, you are completely ignoring the fact that women, by nature, are far more socially aware and manipulative than boys. It starts early because whether you like it or not, our brains function differently. So while you think your approach is best, you are approaching it from only a male perspective. Listen to your wife!!!

↑ 6 ↓ Share Tip ...

CaptCurmudgeon · 9 yr. ago

adult women fight in much more damaging ways than throwing a punch.

↑ 4 ↓ Share Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

I'd much rather take a punch from another woman than deal with verbal abuse.



r/Parenting



notgregoden · 9 yr. ago

If you think teaching a 3 year old to punch someone as hard as they can in the nose is a good idea, you are a shit parent.

↑ 12 ↓ Share Tip ...

thepopulargirl · 9 yr. ago

My dad taught us to fight back whenever we are being attacked/bullied by other kids. It doesn't mean that me and my sister were fighting anytime some kid touched us. We just new that it's ok to defend ourself.

↑ 0 ↓ Share Tip ...

arbitexero · 9 yr. ago

it's great she stood up for herself..... but now she needs to learn that the bully is a person too....

Because now that 'Nobody plays with the bully', the bullying scenario has changed. Your daughter isn't the plucky hero you think she is, she's just taken top rank as the bully.

Now she needs to reach out and include her.

Bullying isn't about punishing those who start it, but understanding. Understand what happened, let it go and be friends.

↑ 2 ↓ Share Tip ...

msanthropologist · 9 yr. ago

I can't believe some of the responses in this thread. These are preschoolers, not teenagers. They can't even tie their shoes yet. Encouraging a three year old to hit another three year old is setting them up for a lifetime of using violence to solve their problems. Violence begets violence. I refuse to believe that teaching your daughter to hit, and then ostracize another child was the only solution you could find to this problem.

↑ 4 ↓ Share Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

Good job dad. Pretty simple fix, really.

↑ 7 ↓ Share Tip ...

lawyerlady · 9 yr. ago

I was taught a simmilar thing.

"If someone hits you, you hit them back. You dont stop until some pulls you off or the other person cant/wont get up." As long as I didnt throw the first punch I knew my dad would back me.

Knowing that your allowed to help yourself is empowering. You have an air about you, a "dont fuck with me" vibe.

I will be teaching my kid the same thing. I was bullied and I wont let it happen to my kids.

↑ 2 ↓ Share Tip ...

ChrisRhino · 9 yr. ago

Thats going way to far. You stop when the enemy realises they done fucked up.

↑ 11 ↓ Share Tip ...

lawyerlady · 9 yr. ago

Then they wont get up. They either need to be too scared or too hurt, otherwise you will end up back in the same position but youll get in trouble with the sxhool for naught

↑ 2 ↓ Share Tip ...

CaptCurmudgeon · 9 yr. ago



r/Parenting



t" so they didn't get any
th, to remove themselves

from physical pain.

↑ -1 ↓ Share Tip ...

ShaggyDA · 9 yr. ago

Yup, never start a fight, but always finish it. Certain kids will test you. Best to make it clear you won't be an easy target.

↑ 3 ↓ Share Tip ...

patchgrrl · 9 yr. ago

I agree with you 100% but you need to have the talk about when it is OK and when it's not. You don't get physical unless you have tried everything else and nothing is working. Unless someone is trying to steal you, then fight with everything you have.

↑ 2 ↓ Share Tip ...

OsakaWilson · 9 yr. ago

I sympathize with you. My daughter, 6 at the time, was being picked on and asked to lift weights with me, so I got some small weights and read up on the safety (generally never go to failure and don't use low reps). The weight lifting really progressed fast and improved her self-confidence a whole lot. I also got her some light gloves and punching bag. She learned a few punching combinations and how to use her weight to push hard and effectively. Mysteriously, the bullying stopped. She also shows a lot of confidence and loves showing off her strength. I'm very glad I taught her these things. (She's also learning ballet, so it's not making her all butch.)

I don't know about 3 yr olds, but 5 year olds can be cruel bullies. I understand that a child can be lashing out because of problems at home, but if reporting violence at school receives the same response that I'm seeing a lot of here and is ignored, I will make sure that my child can defend herself effectively. I feel bad for a violent child that receives defensive violence in return or that is ostracized, but not bad enough to allow my child to be their victim.

↑ 1 ↓ Share Tip ...

FragileLeglamp · 9 yr. ago

As a mom of two children, a 6 year old daughter and a 3 year old son, this is a topic that's discussed in my house quite a bit. My husband and I both feel it's important for our kiddos to know how to protect themselves in situations just like this. I won't fault my daughter for sticking up for herself against a bully if the teacher doesn't intervene. I was a doormat for many years because of bullies, and I refuse to allow my daughter to go down that same path when she can be empowered and put them in their place. We tell her to first walk away and play with other kids if someone is being mean. Of course we all know that doesn't always work, so in those situations if she's feeling threatened, we told her that she can protect herself.

↑ 1 ↓ Share Tip ...

uberpower · 9 yr. ago

You did the right thing. The cost of not standing up for yourself as a kid can extend well beyond childhood.

My daughter takes Krav Maga, which is Israeli armed forces self defense that emphasizes a quick stunning/debilitating strike and then running away, so smaller people can get away from larger attackers before they're in a wrestling situation on the ground from which they might not escape.

↑ 1 ↓ Share Tip ...

CompMolNeuro · 9 yr. ago

Let me start with this. Without being there, I won't presume to judge whether you're child told the whole truth, whether she was bullied, etc. I will say that if my 4 year old boy was in the same situation that I would have, and have, done something similar.

My son is a gentle giant. He's very smart and very strong but tends to hang out with the girls, who all love him. He has a few boy friends but with the others he comes home and says he hates them one day and that they're his best friends the next. I do wish the other boys included him in more physical games.

When to fight is an important lesson for any child and one that takes decades to learn. How many times do you turn the other cheek? When do you use a proportional response and when do you end someone? These things can't be taught in a



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So sure, I think the brat deserved a response. I would have probably recommended a gut shot because blood is a big escalation but that's just me. One other thing that I would recommend in addition however. That's to have your girl talk to the brat. To try and be friendly and to forgive. I think that there should be a balance between standing up for yourself and compassion for the misguided.

The last thing I would recommend is to give your girl a dose of shame. I'm a vet. When I killed my first person, my chief made me look in the mirror. He was harsh when he asked me if I was proud of myself. That power over another person can be addictive and has to be nipped in the bud. It's good that your girl stood up for herself but she should know that it's better to never let things get to the point where violence is necessary. When it does happen, she should never be proud of it either.

1 [Share](#) [Tip](#) ...

billandteds69 · 9 yr. ago

I only have a son so I've never thought about it for girls but you are absolutely correct. It should be the same rules for both genders. My son is too young to understand but we are planning on teaching him to never start fights but to end them if they escalate.

1 [Share](#) [Tip](#) ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

Im glad to hear your advice to your daughter and that she listened to it. I've been in martial arts for over 11 years and teaching for about 7 now - its crucial that kids learn to defend themselves.

I've still got some time, but when my daughter is old enough - she'll be learning to fight.

1 [Share](#) [Tip](#) ...

edobby · 9 yr. ago

This sounds like something my husband would say! And I wouldn't disagree with that, either.

He had the same experience growing up. He had started a new school, some kid punched him, and then he punched the kid back. After getting in trouble for fighting, he wasn't bothered any further because he was no longer seen as an "easy target" for bullying.

So, although I always go for the kindness approach, if my child was suspended for defending himself/herself in that situation, without being the one to throw the first punch or "asking" for it, if you will, (such as bullying VIA words) then I wouldn't ground him or her.

I'd also be teaching my child forgiveness and how to bury the hatchet and move on from something, considering not everyone who acts out is a bad person.

1 [Share](#) [Tip](#) ...

ifartedhaha · 9 yr. ago

If I did exactly what you taught your daughter at a slightly older age, I would be attracting the attention of street gangs.

Just know that there are some things that your daughter may be unprepared for.

1 [Share](#) [Tip](#) ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

Combat skills and rectitude go hand in hand.

Both should be taught and developed.

0 [Share](#) [Tip](#) ...

somethink_different · 9 yr. ago

This is awesome. Good on you, dad. However, it might be good to talk about when force is appropriate - for example, someone calling you names doesn't mean you can punch them in the mouth, etc. Also, like someone else mentioned, maybe a lesson in empathy or a discussion about why people are mean sometimes.



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coffeeshopgeorge · 9 yr. ago

I literally was just having this conversation with my wife tonight after she told me how 3 kids (all siblings) were picking on my 2 year old daughter at the playground today. You're 100% right, sometimes a punch in the face is absolutely what is required.

I think teaching your kids to stand up for themselves (without going overboard) sets them up to be confident and assertive in the future. I don't love the idea of my little girl beating the crap out of some kid, but if her safety is at stake then that's what I'll tell her to do.

↑ -2 ↓ Share Tip ...

NightPhoenix35 · 9 yr. ago

But 3 to 1 are not good odds, I think :-/

↑ 3 ↓ Share Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

Good for you. Being nice is one thing, no one should be taught to be a sucker.

"Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery."

Malcom X

↑ -3 ↓ Share Tip ...

stutteringarmycarney · 9 yr. ago

Wow why are our comments getting down voted so hard? It seems there's a lot of overly protective "perfect soccer moms" on this subreddit. Teaching their children how to be victims, just like mommy and daddy!

↑ -1 ↓ Share Tip ...

[deleted] · 9 yr. ago

Thanks! I stand by the quote. I actually made a cross stitch of it lol. People like to feel holier than thou. But I see a lot of anger in people who were victims of bullying and did nothing- I see it a lot here, pure impotent rage that a swift throat punch may have prevented.

↑ 1 ↓ Share Tip ...

lonestarFW · 9 yr. ago

Its a little younger than I would expect a little girl to have to stand up for herself, which sucks. On the other hand, I agree. Ive got 2 little girls. Neither of which have had to deal with anything to rough. My oldest starts school next year though haha. My wife and I have discussed these kind of situations though and she completely disagrees with any kind of physical response. Myself though, grew up in a rougher-ish neighborhood and had to defend myself too often from kids just wanting to be assholes for the better part of my childhood. It was just part of it. I cant say I wouldnt do the exact same thing you did if one of my little girls comes home telling me another kid (boy or girl) is picking on her.

↑ 0 ↓ Share Tip ...

DavidAg02 · 9 yr. ago

I think teaching kids to stand up for themselves (both physically and verbally) is a very important life lesson. It's applicable to so many areas of life, because bullies can come in many different forms. Regarding standing up for oneself physically, there is no harm in teaching a child self defense techniques, as long as it's strongly reinforced that it's for only self defense, and not to be a bully themselves. My 4 year old son takes lessons at an MMA school. His lessons are mostly focused on Jiu Jitsu, but there is a striking aspect of it as well. His instructor is great about constantly reinforcing the idea that it's only to be used when he (or someone else that is defenseless) is being threatened. One of the reasons that I like Jiu Jitsu as a form of self defense is that allows you to subdue an attacker without ever drawing blood. Someone comes at you, you take them down to the ground, get them in a submission hold, and that's usually the end of it. No blood and no trips to the ER. Now obviously, if the situation is more life threatening, the ability to completely disable the attacker is there too. But for most "bullying" situations, getting them on the ground is going to be enough.



r/Parenting



s freaking out

0 Share Tip ...

W1ULH · 9 yr. ago

3 kids, 3 s-kids, 2 g-kids

Children should definitely be taught that it's not ok to hit other kids.

first.

hitting them back on the other hand? teach them to do it right, "one-and-done, now leave me alone"

0 Share Tip ...

AlwaysCorrects · 9 yr. ago

Good on you! Maybe you can consider getting her into some sort of martial arts class. It will teach her how to fight, but also when not to fight AND you get bonus discipline.

0 Share Tip ...

MamaPenguin · 9 yr. ago

I think girls need this especially. Girls don't usually resort to violence but girls are way meaner than boys.

Source: high school.

0 Share Tip ...

stutteringarmycarney · 9 yr. ago

Nice job! That's exactly how bullies should be dealt with. So many parents teach their kids not to fight back and that just turns them into victims.

-4 Share Tip ...

Mobiasstriptease · 9 yr. ago

parent

There is nothing wrong with violence, *per se*. There is everything wrong with it being misused.

I have a four year old son, and by his nature he just loves to fight, wrestle, and attack. Teaching him that that part of him is somehow *wrong* or that he's not allowed to do those things would be just as detrimental as going to the other extreme of encouraging violent retaliations. There's nothing wrong with him wanting to do those things, but they do need to be properly managed. The rules and teachings around our house are things like:

- real heroes are not just the strongest, toughest guys around, they're the ones who uses those things to help others who don't have them (The recent Captain America movies are a good example we used for this. Before he became strong, he was just as much the hero as after he became strong. What made him a hero was how he used his strength, not how much of it he had)
- fighting is for two things: fun, and defending someone. If you're not doing one of those two things, it's not the right time for fighting.
- we only shoot bad guys with our toy guns
- we also never "kill" bad guys. We defeat them. You don't have to kill in order to fight, and you don't have to kill in order to defend.
- if you ever fight to defend yourself, you do not let your emotions control you (controlling our emotions is a biggie around our house)

Although we haven't ever had an explicit discussion with him about bullying, or defending yourself, my wife and I have discussed it between us. Our conclusion is that if he is following the above basic guidelines (ie, he is defending either himself or someone else, and his actions against the bully go only as far as what is required in order to "defeat" him) then we have no qualms about him fighting.

-1 Share Tip ...



jcpuf · 9 yr. ago



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I have two boys and am dreading the day I have to have this talk with them, mainly because of the way my wife will react. My boys go to the school where my wife is a teacher. Luckily, the school is very proactive about identifying bullying behavior and dealing with it - but that's only at school. She's absolutely resolved that everything can be talked out. I do not have the same optimistic view.



-3



Share



Tip



smokecat20 · 9 yr. ago

I would teach her various choke holds.



-4



Share



Tip

