

Record Keeping and Bullying

Billy, a 12-year-old diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, had been a target of bullying since the first day in his new school. He told his parents about the behavior right away. Billy's dad bought a journal and has recorded each of Billy's conversations about the bullying incidents. Billy's father started a second section of the journal after he began having conversations with Billy's teachers and other school personnel. When the parents decided to write the school a letter, they were able to easily refer to the journal for an accurate and thorough account of the events.

When a child is a target of bullying, parents need to document the events and develop a record (or history) of what is happening to their child. This record is useful when talking with school educators, law enforcement personnel, or other individuals who may need to assist parents in intervening against bullying. Parents, as the most invested party, should do their best to keep track of events. In this way, emotions alone do not drive the discussion.

Records can help parents keep a concise, accurate timeline of events. Parents may think they are going to remember the events, but it is easier to use a written record when referring to events versus trying to recreate them afterward. The record can also help in determining if the bullying behavior has increased or decreased in frequency or duration. The record should be factual and based on actual events. Do not add opinions or emotional statements. Data is important. Remember — **if it is not in writing, it does not exist.**

Content should include:

- written information about the bullying incidents
- the date of the event,
- the persons involved,
- and the child's account of the event.

Also include:

- all communication with professionals (teachers, administrators, etc.)
- the date of the communication
- discussion (summary) of the event
- the responses of the professional
- the action taken
- reports filed by the school in accordance with the school district policy

Other methods for recording events may include pictures taken of the child after a bullying incident to document any physical evidence, health care records that indicate bullying, or a tape recording of the child talking about the bullying.