

The logo for MASSPAC, featuring the word "MASSPAC" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly slanted to the right. The logo is enclosed in a double-line rectangular border.

Massachusetts Association of Special  
Education Parent Advisory Councils

## *Parent Power Pointers™*

### **WHEN A CHILD COMPLAINS ABOUT BULLYING**

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- 1) Attend to any cuts and bruises first. If the injury is serious enough, or if there is damage to clothing or possessions, photograph the evidence.
- 2) In a calm manner, assure the child you are angry about the bullying, sympathetic with the problem, and will take appropriate action.
- 3) Never blame the child! The child is a target.
- 4) Never suggest you cannot help.
- 5) Never promise to keep this a secret. Educate the child that this protects the bully who counts on silence.
- 6) Find out what, when, where and how this occurred. Find out who was involved and if there were witnesses.
- 7) Ask how your child responded and determine if incident is an isolated one or a series of them.
- 8) Meet with the school principal or the teacher ASAP. Provide the school with a written report of the bullying incident. Keep a log of notes, calls, conversations, and reactions of school staff. Keep track of dates, names and positions of staff.
- 9) Contact the parents of the bully. Some parents will react in a concerned and empathic manner and will make reparation for damaged possessions, but many will not. If the latter occurs, advise the parents that this is an assault and that you will be reporting the incident to the school, and if serious enough, it could be a police matter.
- 10) If the parents of the bully or the school staff do not show appropriate concern followed by action, go higher in the school administration-the superintendent or the school committee. If this is unsuccessful, send a copy of the report of all events to date to the police for their files and advise them you may seek an attorney's help. Low cost legal help is available for families meeting the criteria.
- 11) Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1992, schools have a legal responsibility to ensure that a non-hostile environment is available to all students.

Source: National Education Association, and reprinted with permission from *Childhood Bullying and Teasing: What School Personnel, Other Professionals, and Parents Can Do*, Dorothea M. Ross, Ph.D.