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MEDIA RELEASE – for Sunday Mail

Sibling bullying on the rise

Sibling bullying is emerging as a growing area of concern for Queensland parents, according to interim results from Triple P's latest *Queensland Parenting Survey*.

The survey closes tonight, but it's not too late to have your say. Parents can head to www.tripleparenting.net until midnight to share their parenting fears, joys and challenges.

Overall, more than 50 per cent of parents are reporting their child has been bullied in the past year, which is so far a 10 per cent increase on last year's figure.

Most of the bullying is happening face-to-face, with more than 44 per cent of parents reporting their children have been bullied in-person by another child.

Responses so far indicate an almost 10 per cent increase over the past 12 months in the number of parents reporting sibling bullying, particularly in families with children aged six years and over.

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program founder and clinical psychologist Professor Matt Sanders said today it's not yet clear if the rise in the reporting of bullying is a real increase, or the result of increased media attention and awareness around the issue.

"What is clear from the results coming in so far, however, is that parents regard sibling conflict as a significant issue," he said.

Professor Sanders said parents are their children's greatest role models for social skills and can play a powerful role in preventing bullying, both in and outside the home.

"The most important thing parents can do is to be mindful of their own behaviour and how they personally treat and speak about others," he said.

"Parents can also make a conscious effort to notice their children doing the right thing, such as playing nicely, sharing and taking turns with a sibling, and make sure they acknowledge and praise the behaviour."

Professor Sanders said rather than ignoring bullying, parents can step in and remind children of the ground rules and ask them to try again and practise the correct way of dealing with a situation.



“When things have calmed down, be prepared to talk calmly to all of the children involved about how certain behaviour can make people feel,” he said.

“There should not be any doubt in children’s minds that you as a parent, consider bullying to be totally unacceptable.”

Professor Sanders said the best way to raise well-adjusted, well-behaved children is to focus on encouraging the behaviour you want to see, and to actively teach children the behaviours and skills they need to get on well with others.

“Research shows that just reacting and giving kids attention when they’re in conflict and doing the wrong thing doesn’t generally lead to improved child behaviour,” he said.

“Good communication and encouragement of positive behaviour is the key.”

Evidence-based parenting support through the Triple P program is free in Queensland through a State Government initiative. Visit www.triplep-parenting.net for more information.

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