Looking Bullies in the Eye: Tips for Standing Up to Bullies

• Take a deep breath and let the air out slowly.
• Sit or stand tall, head up.
• Keep your hands at your sides rather than on your hips or folded across your chest.
• Have a relaxed and purposeful facial expression, not angry or laughing.
• Maintain eye contact.
• Speak with a calm voice, loud enough to be heard clearly.
• Use non-provocative words and a confident tone of voice.
• Avoid name-calling or making threats.
• Avoid finger pointing or other threatening gestures.
• Reply briefly and directly.
• Avoid bringing up past grudges or making generalizations (You always...).

One way to help children escape their victim role is to change their outlook from one of helplessness—there is nothing that can be done to stop the bully—to one of confidence—there are specific things that victims, bystanders, and adults can do to stop the bully. Each time a child practices an assertive response, fearful and helpless thoughts are replaced by strong and confident ones.