



CHILDREN'S
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Corporate Headquarters

1300 West Fourth Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 240-5900
(213) 240-5945 Fax

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C H I L D R E N ' S H O M E S O C I E T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A

BULLYING

IDENTIFYING AND PREVENTING
BULLYING BEHAVIOR



Bullying affects the mental and physical well-being of children. Whether a child is being bullied or is the one behaving as a bully, the damage to their self-esteem, relationships, and academic success is long lasting. When children are nurtured in a school and family culture based on empathy, respect, and tolerance, they learn to develop positive relationships, better self-esteem, appreciation of diversity, and respect for themselves and others.



Parents and educators can help establish a culture of respect and acceptance at home and school. They can guide children to value the uniqueness of others, resolve conflicts peacefully, and treat people with kindness. Parents can watch for warning signs that their child is being bullied or is bullying, and report cases of bullying to school staff. Parents can also help their child understand how to identify and respond to bullying.

Bullying occurs when a person takes advantage of a power imbalance, such as knowledge of embarrassing information, physical strength, or being popular, to intentionally cause harm to another person or group of people. They usually bully the same target(s) repeatedly. Although children can experience bullying at any age, it most frequently affects children in grades six through twelve. Children may encounter four types of bullying:

- **Verbal Bullying** involves name-calling or teasing, often regarding physical appearance, behavior, or ability traits. This can also include threats, taunting, or inappropriate sexual comments.
- **Social Bullying**, or Relational Bullying, occurs when a child spreads rumors, leaves people out of activities on purpose, embarrasses someone in public, intentionally damages a reputation, or breaks up friendships.
- **Physical Bullying** is when a child hits, shoves, or kicks to impose his or her will on another. It can also include tripping, rude hand gestures, and breaking or stealing another person's belongings.
- **Cyber Bullying**, or Electronic Bullying, has developed with the growth of technology. In this case a child uses digital devices to humiliate or harm someone by posting false rumors, embarrassing photos, or sharing other negative information. Cyberbullying is unique in that it can take place twenty-four hours a day, making it difficult to escape. Negative posts are often permanent public record if they are not reported and properly removed.

30%
of students admit
to bullying.



28%
of students
in grades 6-12
report they have
been bullied.

Children involved in bullying, whether as a victim, observer, or participant, all suffer negative consequences from the experience. The negative impact of bullying can influence children's behavior, physical health, and emotional well-being.

- **Victims of bullying** may become depressed, anxious, lonely, withdrawn from activities they once enjoyed, or perform poorly in school. They may have nightmares, headaches, stomachaches, unexplained injuries, changes in eating habits, or missing or destroyed personal items.
- **Observers of bullying** are more likely to develop anxiety, skip school, or engage in risky behaviors.
- **Children who bully** often behave aggressively, get into fights, are frequently assigned detention, possess money or belongings that are not theirs, blame others, refuse to take responsibility for their actions, abuse alcohol or drugs, vandalize, end up dropping out of school, or engage in other criminal behaviors as adults.

★ WHEN YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

Sometimes children who are being bullied are embarrassed to ask for help, or they are afraid it will only make the situation worse, and so they keep silent. Get to know your child's friends, and talk about what it means to be a friend. Speak with your child honestly and openly about what is happening and reassure her of your support. Enlist the help of your child's teacher and the school counselor. Develop a plan for staying safe at school, such as staying near friends or a trusted adult. Try role playing to help her plan solutions for confronting bullying behavior and asking for help.

70.6% of students report having witnessed bullying behavior.

★ WHEN YOUR CHILD IS BULLYING

Talk to your child about your expectations for how he treats others. Try to discover what is driving him to those behaviors and work on correcting them. Consult with your child's teacher to create a plan for monitoring his behavior and develop reasonable consequences. Check in with your child daily by asking specific questions such as, "What was the best thing about today? What was the worst?" Guide your child in understanding that he is responsible for his own behavior and that he is capable of changing it.

STEPS TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Speak and behave in a way that models respect, kindness, and tolerance towards others. The example you set helps your child understand what your expectations are for his behavior.
- Talk with your child about bullying. Discuss what it means to bully others, and the importance of telling an adult when you need help or see someone else being bullied.
- Encourage your child to develop strong friendships and get to know his friends.
- Teach your child skills for resolving conflicts such as taking turns, voting, rolling dice to decide who goes first, or listening to each other and negotiating a compromise.
- Help build his confidence by encouraging his interests (hobbies, sports, or clubs).
- Build your child's empathy by allowing him to help care for a garden, take care of a pet, or do charitable volunteer work.
- Keep the computer in a central place where its usage can be easily monitored.
- Establish clear rules for using digital devices, talk to your child about digital citizenship (being kind online), and use parental controls or apps to monitor his digital usage.
- Report suspected bullying to the school. Report cyberbullying to the social network or game administrator.
- Familiarize yourself with the school's rules and policies regarding bullying. Be proactive in providing feedback about a school's position and response to bullying behaviors.

TO LEARN MORE

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

LLAMA LLAMA AND THE BULLY GOAT

Anna Dewdney

CHRYSANTHEMUM

Kevin Henkes

WONDER

R.J. Palacio

ORGANIZATIONS

STOP BULLYING

www.stopbullying.gov/

PACER'S NATIONAL BULLYING

PREVENTION CENTER

www.pacer.org/bullying/



Research for the brochure and statistics came from stopbullying.gov