

Childhood Bullying

Background

Bullying is repeated, aggressive behavior, intended to hurt another person. There are different forms of bullying: Physical (hitting, tripping); verbal (name calling, teasing); Relational (spreading rumors, social exclusion); and Cyber (emails, instant messaging, and text messaging).

Physical bullying is often the most easily observed and increases in elementary

school, peaks in middle school, and declines in high school. Girls are most often involved in verbal and relational bullying, whereas boys are typically involved in physical and verbal bullying.

The majority of bullying incidents occur in or close to school and increases where there is lack of supervision, such as on playgrounds and in hallways.

Effects of Bullying

Bullying can result in physical injury, social and emotional distress, and even death. Victimized youth are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and poor school adjustment. Some children can recover from bullying if episodes decrease.

Youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance abuse, academic problems, and violence later in adolescence and adulthood.

Statistics

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- Over 3.2 million students are victims of bullying each year
- 90% of 4th through 8th graders report being victims of bullying
- 1 in 4 teachers see nothing wrong with bullying and will only intervene 4% of time
- Over 67% of students believe that schools respond poorly to bullying, with a high percentage of students believing that adult help is infrequent or ineffective
- Technology allows a child to be bullied 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Prevention

Child care staff, parents, and other caring adults play a role in preventing and responding to all types of bullying.

- Adopt a zero tolerance policy for bullying and consistently maintain that policy within the childcare program
- Model respectful ways of interacting with children, adults, and families in order to show socially and culturally appropriate ways of behaving
- Ensure children are supervised adequately in all environments
 - Step in immediately if bullying occurs
- Make sure all children feel safe and supported in the environment
- Teach children strategies to challenge bullying-type behavior.
 - For example, how to express their feelings.
- Communicate openly and sensitively with children and families of children who are bullied
- Work with parents to develop strategies and solutions to deal with bullying

For More Information

- Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention
www.stopbullying.gov
- Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence
www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/youthviolence.htm
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/index.html
vetoviolence.cdc.gov

