

useful to disaggregate the concept of bullying into verbal, physical, and non-verbal/nonphysical types for both study and development of corrective action plans. Dr. Dan Olweus, a pioneer in studying bullying as a social phenomenon, developed this schema.

### Descriptions of Common Forms of Bullying

Type	Direct Bullying	Indirect Bullying
Verbal Bullying	Taunting, teasing, name calling	Spreading rumors
Physical Bullying	Hurting, kicking, destruction or theft of property	Enlisting a friend to assault someone for you
Nonverbal/ Nonphysical Bullying	Threatening or obscene gestures	Excluding others from a group, manipulation of friendships, threatening e-mail

D. Olweus, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc. 1993.

Researchers from the fields of psychiatry and psychology have increasingly proposed that bullying implies and requires an imbalance of power in which the victim is less powerful than the aggressor. Bullying does not occur when there is conflict between people of equal or similar power. When there is an imbalance of power, the victim feels helpless, vulnerable, frightened and powerless. Because the victim feels this way, it makes him/her a target for future aggression. (K. Rigby, "Consequences of Bullying in Schools," *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, October, 2003. [www.cpa-apc.org/Publications/Archives/CJP/2003/october/rigby.asp](http://www.cpa-apc.org/Publications/Archives/CJP/2003/october/rigby.asp)).

### Bullying: Frequency, Age, Gender and Location

In the AAUW study, both in 1993 and 2001, eight out of 10 students reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment. In the 2001 study, more boys experienced sexual harassment than in 1993, but the frequency was still less than girls. In this same study approximately 75% of all students said they had experienced non-physical harassment; physical harassment was only slightly lower. More than 50% stated they experienced it often or occasionally.

When asked which behaviors were the most upsetting, students indicated the following:

- Spreading sexual rumors about them (75%)
- Pulling off or down their clothing (74%)
- Saying they were gay or lesbian (73 %)
- Forcing them to do something sexual other than kissing (72%)
- Spying on them as they dressed or showered (69%)
- Writing sexual messages or graffiti about them on bathroom walls or lockers (63%)

Boys usually engage in direct bullying, and girls are more likely to engage in more subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors, insults and verbal threats. Direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peak in the middle school/junior high school years, and decline in the

high school years; however, about half of boys who are violent at age 10 continue to be violent at 16. For girls, only about 8% remain violent. Around age 11, girls do become more aggressive often settling matters of jealousy and revenge among their peer groups and cliques by punching and fighting. Also, boys engage in bullying behavior and are victims of bullies more frequently than girls.

School size, racial composition, and school setting (rural, suburban or urban) do not seem to be significant factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying. The most harmful behavior occurs wherever there is the least structure and supervision. Bullying occurs most frequently on the playground and in bathroom, and on the school bus for elementary students; bathrooms, hallways, and buses are more likely places of aggression for middle and high school students. For high school students, the cafeteria is also a place of frequent harassment. (R. Banks, *Bullying in Schools*. ERIC Digest. ED407154, 1997., [www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/bullying.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/bullying.htm); Susan Black, "Angry at the World," *American School Board Journal*, Vol. 190, No. 6, June 2003, [www.asbj.com/2003/06/0603research.html](http://www.asbj.com/2003/06/0603research.html); D. Olweus, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc. 1993; *Bullying*. Hamilton Fish Institute, George Washington University, [www.hamfish.org/topics/bullying.html](http://www.hamfish.org/topics/bullying.html)).

### Bullies and Bully Victims

Until recently, bullies were often characterized as persons of low esteem, lonely, and having high social anxiety. In a 2003 study conducted by Juvonen et al., it was found that bullies are psychologically strong. The data indicate bullies enjoy high social status among their classmates even though their classmates avoid them. Bully-victims, those that are bullied and also bully others, are socially marginalized and are avoided by their classmates for fear of becoming bullied. Both bullies and bully-victims are likely to display conduct problems, be least engaged in school and be among most unpopular students. Even so, bullies are considered by their classmates as being "cool" and demanding respect. (J. Juvonen, S. Graham, and M. A. Schuster, "Bullying Among Young Adolescents: The Strong, the Weak, and the Troubled," *Pediatrics*, 112, 6, 1231-1237. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/112/6/1231?maxtos>. Click on full text, pdf).

### The High Costs of Aggression

Students who are bullied at school do not see school as a safe or happy place. According to Batsche and Knoff (1994), at least 7% of American eighth graders stay home at least once a month because of bullying. They are either afraid of the bullies, do not want to show fear when they are with their classmates, or are concerned they will be suspended from school if they become involved in a situation with the bully. Studies on recent high school shooting incidents have also identified bullying as a contributing factor in recent school shootings. Of the 41 perpetrators in school shooting incidents, two-thirds described feeling persecuted, bullied or threatened by their classmates. (*Bullying In Schools*, *NASBE Policy Update*, Vol. 11, No. 10, June, 2003).

There is also considerable evidence to show that psychological disorders, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and poor social skills are among the many problems developed by children who are bullied. It is often demonstrated in poor grades, lack of engagement in school, disruptive behavior, and antagonistic peer relations. In short, many bullied students become dropouts. These behaviors translate into poor work habits, low job performance and inability to accept or assume authority.

In the last decade lawsuits have been filed against school systems for not being more proactive and assertive in addressing bullying. Mary Jo McGrath, Attorney at Law, writing for the *School Administrator* (April 2003) says that schools have three duties.

- The duty to remedy by adopting policies and procedures that clearly spell out that bullying will not be tolerated and the consequences of such acts.
- The duty to monitor and correct inappropriate behavior. An environment must also be provided where students feel safe and free from retaliation.
- The duty to investigate each complaint in a prompt and thorough manner.

The legal financial costs of bullying are high, but the highest costs are in the psychological, social and economic losses experienced by the individual and by society as these students attempt to assimilate into the adult culture.

### Resources and Assistance

A common theme running through each piece of research or article was that teachers and administrators need more training in the recognition of bullying, skills in confronting bullies, skills in deescalating highly charged situations and in teaching students how to address the issue of bullying within the school. The resources listed below offer some assistance.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law permits states to spend specified amounts on training, technical assistance, and demonstration projects to address violence associated with prejudice and intolerance. NCLB does require that each school system have a plan for keeping schools safe and drug free and a code of conduct policy for all students that states the responsibilities of students, teachers and administrators in maintaining a classroom environment where all children can learn, and where consequences are fair and developmentally appropriate.

A number of organizations offer resources and assistance on bullying prevention. The Hamilton Fish Institute at George Washington University, funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, cites a report by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, that only three models have been tested and proven effective: The Olweus Bullying Prevention

Program, Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT), and The Incredible Years (Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention, 2003).

Olweus' **Bullying Prevention Program**, the program by the Center for Study and Prevention of Violence, involves school-wide, classroom, and individual interventions. School-wide rules and sanctions that emphasize a climate intolerant of bullying behaviors are reinforced by regular classroom discussions. Individual students receive consistent supervision and discipline, accompanied by parental involvement and, in some cases, mental health interventions. For information on this bullying program, visit [www.clemson.edu/olweus/](http://www.clemson.edu/olweus/) or contact Susan Limber, Ph.D., Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life, Clemson University, 158 Poole Agricultural Center Clemson, SC 29634, (864) 656-6320.

### Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT)

is an anti-aggression intervention consisting of a classroom based social skills program, a playground behavioral program, and systematic communication between teachers and parents. Research shows this program produces long-term results from the 10-week intervention. Though LIFT has not been tested as extensively as Olweus' program, it has been tested in both first and fifth grades. In schools that received the program, aggressive playground behavior was a third less than reported playground aggression at schools that did not receive the intervention. Additionally, fifth graders who did not receive the program were 59 percent more likely to have established a behavior of drinking alcohol, and were twice as likely to have been arrested during middle school as those who participated in the LIFT program (Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention, 2003). For more information on LIFT, call (541) 485-2711 or visit <http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov/promising.cfm?pkProgramID=126>.

**The Incredible Years** is a research-based program that has been proven effective for reducing children's aggression and behavior problems, as well as, increasing social competence at home and at school. The program's parent training, teacher training, and child social skills training approaches have been selected by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as an exemplary program and as a model program by the Center for Study and Prevention of Violence. The program was also selected as a model program by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). As such, the series has been subject to three quality evaluations by independent groups, evidenced excellent effectiveness, and attained high overall ratings. The American Psychological Division 12 Task force has recommended the program as a well-established treatment for children with conduct problems. The Incredible Years is designed for children aged two to eight who show high levels of aggressive behavior and includes a

parent-training element. One study found that the program has been able to stop the cycle of aggression for approximately two-thirds of targeted families receiving help (Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention, 2003). For more information on this program, visit [www.incredibleyears.com](http://www.incredibleyears.com) or call (888) 506-3562.

Other programs developed specifically to combat bullying, but that have not been as widely evaluated as the three previously mentioned, are Bully-Proofing Your School, Steps to Respect, Bully Busters®, Expect Respect, the No Bullying Program, Aggression Replacement Training (ART), and Don't Laugh at Me (DLAM).

Other sources of assistance include: **The Children's Safety Network (CSN)** National Injury and Violence Prevention Resource Center ([www.ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org](http://www.ChildrensSafetyNetwork.org)) provides technical assistance and resources to state maternal and child health programs and other state health professionals who address injury and violence prevention. CSN can be reached by telephone at (617) 618-2207.

**The Stop Bullying Now Campaign** ([www.stopbullyingnow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, offers educational materials for parents, educators, and health professionals.

**The Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life (IFNL)** at Clemson University (<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/ifnl/>) offers technical assistance and materials on bullying prevention. IFNL can be reached by telephone at (864) 656-6271.

**The National Violence Prevention Youth Resource Center** ([www.safeyouth.org/scripts/index.asp](http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/index.asp)) offers a number of extremely valuable "frequently asked questions" documents on bullying, as well as guides and links to research and resources on bullying prevention.

**The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado** ([www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html)) offers a wealth of resources on bullying and prevention. The website also features the work of Dr. Dan Olweus, a norwegian researcher at the forefront of bullying prevention research. ■

Hamilton Fish Institute, George Washington University, [www.hamfish.org/topics/bullying.html](http://www.hamfish.org/topics/bullying.html).

Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing and Sexual Harassment in Schools, American Association of University Women, May 2001. [www.aauw.org/research/girls\\_education/hostile.cfm](http://www.aauw.org/research/girls_education/hostile.cfm) Scroll to bottom of page to access PDF.

Juvonen, J., Graham, S. and Schuster, M. A., "Bullying Among Young Adolescents: The Strong, the Weak, and the Troubled," *Pediatrics*, 112, 6, 1231-1237. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/112/6/1231?maxtos>. Click on full text, pdf.

McGrath, Mary Jo. "Capping the Heavy Price for Bullying," *School Administrator*, Web Edition, April 2003. [www.mcgrathinc.com/articles-040.html](http://www.mcgrathinc.com/articles-040.html)

Olweus, D. Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc. 1993).

Rigby, K., "Consequences of Bullying in Schools," *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 48, October 2003, 583-590. [www.cpa-apc.org/Publications/Archives/CJP/2003/october/rigby.asp](http://www.cpa-apc.org/Publications/Archives/CJP/2003/october/rigby.asp)

# Issue Brief

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## Aggression in Schools

**T**here is increasing frequency and severity of aggression in schools. Teachers and administrators are being held more accountable not only for incidents of aggression that occur, but also for not acknowledging that aggression exists in their schools and for the lack of training to help effectively deal with incidents before they erupt with devastating results.

Surprisingly there has not been much definitive research done on aggression in schools in the United States. By far, more research has been done in the Scandinavian countries, Japan, and Great Britain. During the 1990s educators and organizations across continents came to realize school aggression is a worldwide problem and one that interferes with learning, social adjustment and psychological well-being.

There are two American studies that are considered benchmark studies.

In 1993 and again in 2001, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) commissioned and published a study to investigate secondary school students' experiences with all forms of harassment—bullying, teasing and touching. The 1993 study was the first U. S. study of this kind and is a reference for all subsequent American studies on bullying. (Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing and Sexual Harassment in Schools, American Association of University Women, May 2001. [http://www.aauw.org/research/girls\\_education/hostile.cfm](http://www.aauw.org/research/girls_education/hostile.cfm))

Another study, Bullying Among Young Adolescents: The Strong, the Weak, and the Troubled, conducted by Jaana Juvonen and Associates (2003), used very sophisticated data research collection procedures involving self-reported psychological stress, peer reported social adaptation, and teacher-rated adjustment of bullies, victims, bully-victims, and youth uninvolved in bullying. Most studies use a much simpler data collection process, a perceptual survey of the student body, i.e., students responding to a battery of questions and choosing the answers which most reflect their view. This study is an ongoing longitudinal study with one phase researching the question, Do bullies in school go on to become criminals? Data have not yet been published on this question. <http://www.pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/112/6/1231?maxtos>

The results of these two studies offer some interesting insights into aggression—harassment, bullying, teasing and touching.

### Aggression Defined and Disaggregated

For decades bullying has been considered part of the normal K-12 experience. Bullying was to be expected, tolerated, and endured by

anyone who was perceived by his/her peers to be "different." During the 1990s and into the present decade, researchers have noted with alarm that bullying has become more aggressive, more targeted and in many cases more lethal.

The National Association of School Boards of Education (NASBE) 2003 has defined bullying as "systematically and chronically inflicting hurt and psychological distress on one or more students" (2003). The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in a document prepared for a March 2004 congressional briefing defines harassment as "conduct that adversely affects a student's ability to participate or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because it is so severe, pervasive or objectively offensive; and is based upon a student's actual or perceived identity with regard to race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other identifying characteristics."

It is common to think of bullying as only fighting, but in fact it has several forms and each type of bullying affects students differently depending on age and gender. It is

### Further Reading

The publications and websites below contributed to the information presented in this issue brief and provide additional information to readers.

Banks, R. Bullying in Schools. ERIC Digest. ED407154, 1997. [www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/bullying.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/bullying.htm);

Black, S. "Angry at the World," American School Board Journal, Vol. 190, No. 6, June 2003. [www.asbj.com/2003/06/0603research.html](http://www.asbj.com/2003/06/0603research.html).

Bullying In Schools, NASBE Policy Update, Vol. 11, No. 10, June, 2003. [www.nasbe.org/Educational\\_Issues/Policy\\_Updates/11\\_10.html](http://www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Policy_Updates/11_10.html)

"Bullying in Schools Pervasive, Disruptive and Serious, UCLA/RAND Center for Adolescent Health Promotion. [www.rand.org/health/adolescent/bullying.html](http://www.rand.org/health/adolescent/bullying.html).

Cohn, A. and Canter, A. "Bullying: Facts for Schools and Parents," National Association of School Psychologists, October 7, 2003. [www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/bullying\\_fs.html](http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/bullying_fs.html)

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