

Bullying is intentional and mean behavior that occurs repeatedly. The bully is often physically stronger or has more influence with peers than the victim. Bullying can be widespread in school settings.

What Is Not Bullying?

The occasional conflict or fight between two children of equal strength, size and social status is aggression, but not bullying.

Different Types of Bullying

Bullying can happen in several ways.

- **Physical:** Using physical harm to overpower others. Behaviors can include hitting, kicking and threatening harm. Among boys, physical bullying occurs more often than relational (social) bullying.
- **Verbal:** Using words to harm others, for example, through verbal insults, cursing or screaming.
- **Relational (Social):** Damaging another person's social standing or reputation. Behaviors can include starting rumors or excluding someone from a group or activity. Among girls, this type of bullying occurs more often than physical bullying.
- **Cyber:** Using cellphones and/or Internet-based social media accounts to hurt others. This can be especially harmful because the bully can be difficult to identify. Damaging comments can spread to a large audience quickly and are difficult to erase from cyberspace. Victims of cyber bullying are often also victims of traditional in-person bullying (physical, relational and/or verbal).

Different Roles in Bullying

It's important to recognize the roles participants can play in bullying.

- The **bully** has a power advantage over the victim because the bully is often physically stronger or more popular.
- The **victim** is the target of the bully's mean behavior and often has less power than the bully in terms of size, strength or popularity.
- The **bystanders** are peers or adults who witness the bullying event and play a potentially powerful role in breaking the cycle of bullying. Bystanders can assist the victim and take power away from the bully.

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Did you know? A 2009 study estimated that at least 21 percent of youth in the United States were physically bullied, 54 percent were verbally bullied, 51 percent were socially bullied, and 14 percent were cyber bullied at least once over a two-month period.

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

Tips for Parents

- Take all bullying seriously, while staying calm and not overreacting emotionally. It is important that you can calmly review the facts and options for support. Your child must be able to trust you to help make the situation better and not worse.
- Keep communication open with your child in order to recognize if he or she is bullying others or being bullied by others. Talk about how to respond and when to ask for help.
- Encourage your child to make positive and supportive friendships, perhaps outside of school in adult-supervised settings.
- Locate a trusted point person at school (teacher, counselor, etc.) to help you support your child.
- Alert school administrators (principal, dean of students) and/or police as necessary and report the facts calmly.

Tips to Share with Youth

- Be aware of repeated teasing by others that make you and/or friends feel uncomfortable.
- Stay calm during a conflict situation. Try not to show emotion that will give the bully the reaction he or she wants.
- Avoid “bullying hot spots” at school, where there is less adult supervision.
- Be a good friend to others. Invite peers to join in your activities or games.
- Talk to a trusted adult when you are bullied or witness another youth being bullied.

The “All About Bullying” fact sheets are brought to you by the Partner for Prevention Program at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s Violence Prevention Initiative, a Hospital-wide effort to interrupt the cycle of violence. For more information about bullying, visit chop.edu/violence.