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CPS Violence Prevention Hotline: 888-881-0606  
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State of Illinois Free Materials Available  
for Parents and Schools

Net Cetera: Chatting with Kids about Being Online  
and Stop, Think, Click  
Can order free copies of material through  
[bulkorder.ftc.gov](http://bulkorder.ftc.gov)

Anthony Papini (312)368-9070 and  
[Anthony@illinoisafeschools.org](mailto:Anthony@illinoisafeschools.org) for information on  
sexual orientation and gender identity issues in

# Bullying Prevention Town Hall:

## How Parents Can Be Part of a Positive School Climate

September 23, 2014  
Senn High School Auditorium



 Ann & Robert H. Lurie  
Children's Hospital of Chicago™



# What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

## In order to be considered bullying the behavior must be aggressive and include...

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

# Resources

## Internet Resources

**iKeepSafe** - iKeepSafe tracks global trends and issues surrounding digitally connected products and their affect on children. This research drives the continuous creation of positive resources for parents, educators and policymakers who teach youths how to use new media devices and platforms in safe and healthy ways. [www.ikeepSAFE.org](http://www.ikeepSAFE.org)

**Safekids.com** - SafeKids.com is one of the oldest and most enduring sites for Internet safety. [www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)

**NetSmartz Workshop** - An interactive, educational program of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) that provides age-appropriate resources to help teach children how to be safer on- and offline. [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

**American Psychological Association** - <http://www.apa.org/topics/bullying/>

**Connect Safely** - Connect Safely is for parents, teens, educators, advocates – everyone engaged in and interested in the impact of social media and mobile technology. Here you'll find tips, safety advice, articles, news, analysis, video and other resources to promote safe, effective use of connected technology. <http://www.connectsafely.org/safety-tips-advice/>

**StopBullying.gov** - A federal government website managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Offers support and resources to parents helping their children with bullying. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

**It Gets Better Project** - The It Gets Better Project's mission is to communicate to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth around the world that it gets better, and to create and inspire the changes needed to make it better for them. <http://www.itgetsbetterproject.org>

# Resources

## Recommended Books for Parents

- The Bully, The Bullied, and The Bystander by Barbara Coloroso
- Girl Wars: 12 Strategies That Will End Female Bullying by Cheryl Dellasega and Charisse Nixon
- The Bully Free Classroom by Dr. Allan Beane
- Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats by Nancy E. Willard
- Mean Chicks, Cliques, and Dirty Tricks by Erika V. Shearin Karres
- Odd Girl Out by Rachel Simmons
- Queen Bees and Wannabes
- Bully Blocking: Six Secrets to Help Children Deal With Teasing and Bullying by Evelyn M. Field
- Bullyproof Your Child For Life: Protect Your Child from Teasing, Taunting, and Bullying for Good by Joel Haber and Jenna Glatzer
- Cyber Bullying: Bullying in the Digital Age by Robin M., PhD Kowalski, Susan P., PhD Limber, and Patricia W., PhD Agatston
- Bullying, Victimization and Peer Harassment: A Handbook of Prevention and Intervention

## Educational YouTube Videos

### Impact of Bullying:

- Think Time: How Does Cyberbullying Affect You? (2:20)
- Words Hurt (00:31)

### Bystanders Can Help:

- The Price of Silence (Anti-Bullying Public Service Announcement) (1:02)

### Think Before You Post Campaign:

- Think Before You Post English: Sarah (1:00)
- Once Posted You Lose It (1:39)
- Do you really know who you're talking to? (00:25)

# Types of Bullying

## Verbal Bullying

Saying or writing mean things

- Teasing
- Name Calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening harm

## Social Bullying

Sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

## Physical Bullying

Involves hurting a person's body or property

- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Mean or rude hand gestures
- Spitting
- Tripping
- Pushing
- Hitting/kicking/pinching

## Cyber Bullying

Also known as electronic bullying or online social cruelty, is defined as bullying:

- Through instant messaging
- Through Email
- In a chat room
- On a website or gaming site
- Through digital messages sent to a phone

## Warning Signs of Verbal/Social/Physical Bullying

- Unexplained injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Has few, if any friends, with whom he or she spends time
- Takes a long, “illogical” route when walking to or from school
- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home
- Experiences a loss of appetite
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams

### How to ask you children if they are being bullied...

- I’m worried about you. Are there any kids at school who may be picking on you or bullying you?”
- “Are there any kids at school who tease you in a mean way?”
- “Are there any kids at school who leave you out or exclude you on purpose?”
- “Do you have any special friends at school this year? Who are they? Who do you hang out with?”
- “Who do you sit with at lunch and on the bus?”
- “Are there any kids at school who you really don’t like? Why don’t you like them? Do they ever pick on you or leave you out of things?”

## Sample Internet Agreement

### AGREEMENT TO ABIDE BY THE RULES

**PARENTS: PLEASE DISCUSS THIS AGREEMENT WITH YOUR CHILDREN,  
SIGN IT TOGETHER AND POST IT NEAR YOUR COMPUTER.**

- I WILL** not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents’ work addresses/telephone numbers, or the name of my school without my parents’ permission.
- I WILL** tell my parents right away if I come across information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I WILL** never agree to get together with someone I “meet” online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.
- I WILL** never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.
- I WILL** not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away so they can contact the Internet service provider.
- I WILL** talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

CHILD

PARENT(S)



Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan • Illinois PTA  
Report Internet child exploitation to [www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov)

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## Top 10 Things Parents Should Know about Bullying

- **Look for warning signs:** Since kids don't always tell us, adults need to look for warning signs that peer issues are emerging: withdrawal from friends; avoidance of activities that were previously enjoyable (including time spent on cell phone or electronic sites), changes in sleep/eating patterns, physical complaints (headaches/stomach aches)
- **Ask more direct questions about friends/social situations:** Sample questions (From least direct to most direct): Who do you hang out with? Who do you sit with at lunch/on the bus? Do you have a best friend? Are there kids who you really don't like? Are there kids who tease you? Are there kids who leave you out of things on purpose? Are there kids at school who pick on you or bully you?
- **Know when to intervene:** Kids will often tell you not to intervene. However, if you are not able to effectively coach your child out of the situation, you may need assistance from an adult. Consider a teacher, but also a school counselor, coach, youth leader or recess monitor. Can the adult help your child to find a peer group that will be supportive. Are there opportunities for small group social skills? Anti-bullying policies or lessons in place at school.
- **Build up your child's resilience:** Most powerful antidotes to bullying: having at least one good/reliable friend, having the social skills to join a group of peers and maintain friendships, having a strong sense of self (who I am, what I believe in, how I act).
- **Learn more!** Many Books and websites available for parents that want to understand more about peer relationships and ways to help equip your child for success.

## Warning Signs of Cyberbullying

- Stops using the computer unexpectedly
- Appears nervous or jumpy when an Instant Message, text message or Email appears
- Appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general
- Appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after using the computer
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing on the computer
- Becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members

### Why is Cyber Bullying Different?

- Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.
- Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source
- Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

## If you Suspect Your Child is being Cyberbullied

**\*Familiarize yourself with the computer and internet.** The more you know, the better you will understand what your child is going through.

**\*Gather as much information as you can.** Young people's relationships can be very unpredictable – friendships can change in a short period of time. What your child is experiencing might be a conflict. Find out if there is a pattern of harassment. Don't make light of the behavior or your child's feelings.

**\*Try not to immediately stop instant messaging, email, social networking sites, cell phone, or the Internet.** Your child might perceive this as punishment for reporting the bullying to you. Banning use probably will not be very effective and it may further alienate a teen who is accustomed to communicating online. Your focus should be on changing the offending behavior, rather than curtailing computer use to communicate.

**\*Encourage your child to document the bullying incidents and keep a diary, draw or engage in other creative activities that will help him deal with his emotions.** Your child may need time before he or she is prepared to discuss feelings with you, but in the meantime encourage your child to create and use a 'safe space' to express those feelings.

## Top 10 Things Parents Should Know about Bullying

- ***Don't underestimate the importance of peer relationships.*** As kids move into the tween and teen years, there is an increasingly strong relationship between self-esteem and how peers view students. (This is a shift away from family as primary determinant of self-esteem/identify toward peers as the key factor.)
- ***Kids are typically fully aware of their social status and the risk/perils of isolation.*** During this period, most youth have become painfully aware of social acceptability and popularity; and there is a strong tendency to conform and adhere to social rules.
- ***Any kid can be targeted.*** Anything that makes a child unique/different can lead them to be target of social isolation and/or bullying
- ***Many kids have experienced bullying.*** 25-30% of today's youth report being directly affected by bullying (Milsom and Gall, 2006)
- ***Kids won't tell you unless you ask.*** Recent study of bullying indicated that about 24% of youth who have experienced bullying will ever tell their parent; and only 14% told a teacher; 41% told a friend and 28% told no one (2005). When asked why they don't tell adults, number one response: "they won't do anything anyway."

## Top 10 Things Parents Should Know about Bullying: Sticks, Stone and Words can Hurt You

Colleen Cicchetti, PH,D

“ I am a child psychologist and director of Advocacy and Community-Linked Mental Health Services in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychology. In my role, I spend a significant amount of time helping parents, teachers and other adults to better understand children and adolescents and the challenges they face in our schools and communities. Recently, this work has included many opportunities to help adults understand the phenomenon of bullying. In addition, I am a mother of two girls: a teen and a tween, and I have had the opportunity to think about these issues from the perspective of a mom as well as a professional.

Most adults have some memory of an experience in middle school or high school in which we were either bullied or observed a bully in action. Most of us also have some memory of a situation in which we were excluded or ridiculed by a peer or group of peers. These memories often inform our understanding of the bullying that our children are exposed to in 2012. However, we find our own memories and experiences are not adequate for understanding the types of bullying and negative outcomes that are being reported regularly in our media. Stories of self-injury including suicides, and parents retaliating against their children's bully are not readily explained by how we understand/remember bullying.”

13

## If You Suspect Your Child is being Cyberbullied Cont.

**\*He may not want to talk about the problem** with you: make it clear that it is perfectly acceptable to you for them to want to talk to another trusted adult about what they're going through, but that you are always willing to listen and help.

**\*Don't force your teen to discuss things before he's ready**, keep him involved in family, community and other group activities while he sorts out his feelings and becomes more comfortable discussing them.

**\*Join forces with other adults.** If your child knows who is bullying him and it is someone from his school, contact the teacher or other school authority to enlist their help on how to best and most constructively communicate with the perpetrator's parents or guardians. Some teens who engage in bullying behaviors are more likely to be struggling in other areas of their lives, or may also be victims of violence or intimidation.

**\*Keeping your child involved and listening to his opinions about how to resolve the problem will empower your him.** Learning to deal with adversity and rough patches are a vital part of his developmental process.

**\*Don't hesitate to make difficult decisions** including the decision to involve law enforcement or take legal action if the bullying behavior escalates to the level of credible threats of violence.

## Steps for parents to take if you suspect, or learn that your child is engaging in bullying behavior

**\*Confront the behavior right away.** This does not mean you should be confrontational. Instead, listen and don't judge. Talk with your child, and find out what's going on. Are her or his friends also bullying? Is your child struggling with an issue that makes him feel powerless in other areas of their life? Also be prepared for your child to deny or make light of their behavior, or even to become defensive or angry. Be firm, persistent and calm.

**\*Draw clear boundaries.** Make your expectations and the consequences for violating them clear. Let your child know that bullying behavior is never acceptable and that the consequences, such as loss of privileges will be enforced. Make the connection between appropriate online behavior and behavior you require of them in person.

**\*Provide appropriate models for empathy, respect, and compassion.** Try to understand your child's feelings and talk about what the person they are bullying might be experiencing. Is your child aware of the impact of his behavior? Children and teens who bully others may have been victimized themselves, or may not have had adequate models of empathetic, respectful and compassionate behavior.

**\*Practice some critical self-assessment:** Have you modeled that behavior for your child? Have other people that are a part of their life done so as well?

**\*Give positive feedback when you notice healthy choices.** Apart from correcting negative behavior, you should also reinforce the positive, including praising the times when he practices constructive resolution of difficult situations.

## Facts and Figures on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in Schools cont.

### 10 Actions to Create Safer schools for All Students and Staff

1. Work to ensure that your school has an anti-discrimination policy that is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) issues
2. Address and stop verbal anti-gay violence
3. Confront stereotypes
4. Encourage parents to participate in the educational process addressing all forms of discrimination and harassment, including anti-gay
5. Teach students to respect differences, including LGBTQ persons
6. Use health education curricula that respect all forms of sexual orientation and have a broad and inclusive definition of family
7. Post posters regarding LGBTQ persons visibly in hallways, classrooms and meeting rooms
8. Post LGBTQ teen crisis hotline numbers with other hotline numbers
9. Make LGBTQ books, posters and images visible and available
10. Include LGBTQ issues in educational programs, especially during Gay History Month (October)



## Facts and Figures on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in Schools cont.

The solutions...

School policies inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity

- The frequency of homophobic remarks and harassment about nontraditional gender expression is great at schools without comprehensive anti-harassment policies

Professional Development on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

- Training teachers on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity is the single most effective strategy for creating a safer school climate

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)

- Students in schools with GSAs or similarly supportive clubs report that teachers and school staff intervene more often to stop homophobic language than students in schools without such clubs

## Steps Continued

**\*Show love and support.** Offer and seek support for your child. Behavior change will take time. Give your child love and support, even if you are angry or upset. Seek out the help of others who can partner with you in your efforts to put a stop to the bullying.

**\*Enlist the support of other caring adults, including teachers and school authorities. Work with them to develop a mutually agreeable plan of action to change your child's behavior.** If your child has a trusted adult he respects, ask him to step in to help find out what may be at the root of the bullying behavior, and to help you address it.

**\*Find out if expert help is necessary.** Bullying behavior can escalate quickly and turn into something much more difficult to address. If you or others have serious concerns about the nature or intensity of your child's behavior, seek expert assistance to help you decide how to address it, including whether to get them professional help.



## Facts and Figures on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in Schools

### The Problem...

Bullying and Harassment are serious problems in Illinois schools'

- 35% of Illinois students report that sexual orientation is the most common reason students are bullied or harassed
- 34% of Illinois students report that gender identity is the most common reason students are bullied or harassed

Homophobic Language is Pervasive in Illinois Schools'

- 74% of Illinois students report hearing homophobic remarks such as "faggot" or "dyke" from other students in school
- 83% of Illinois students report hearing homophobic remarks such as "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" from other students at school

Illinois Teachers and School Staff Do Not Intervene to Stop Homophobic Language

- 48% of Illinois students report that teachers and school staff rarely intervene when they hear homophobic language

Homophobic Bullying and Harassment Affects Everyone

- For each LGBT student who reports being bullied or harassed, 4 straight students report being harassed or bullied for perceived as gay or lesbian

## Facts and Figures on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in Schools cont.

### The Consequences...

Missing School as a Result of Feeling Unsafe

- LGB students are three times more likely than their heterosexual peers to miss school because they feel unsafe

Fighting That Requires Medical Attention

- LGB students are nearly four times more likely than their heterosexual peers to be in a physical fight that requires medical attention

Depression

- LGB students are nearly twice as likely as their heterosexual peers to suffer from depression

Attempting Suicide

- LGB students are nearly three times more likely than their heterosexual peers to attempt suicide

Unchecked Bullying Leads to More Violence

- 60% of boys classified as bullies in grades 6-9 were convicted of at least one crime by age 24 and 40% of them had three or more convictions