

Bullying in Different Settings

Bullying is typically understood as a phenomenon that occurs at school. Consequently, interventions have primarily focused on the school system. Although school is a setting where children and youth most frequently come together, bullying occurs wherever groups of children congregate. School is not the only place where bullying occurs – it occurs in all the places where children and youth live, learn, play, and work.

Key Research Findings

- Bullying occurs most frequently while children are at school.¹
 - Bullying is more likely to occur in areas where there are many children and adult monitoring is sparse or difficult.² For example, bullying occurs more often on the playground, as compared to the classroom.³
 - Bullying at school is most frequently reported in the following settings: on the playground (76%), in the classroom (40%), in the hallway (24%), and in the gym (19%), in the cafeteria (8%), and restrooms (4%).⁴
- Children and youth report that almost 1/3 of the bullying they experience takes place outside of the school.⁵ Many children are victimized within the community (e.g., on their way to and from school, during organized sports, in clubs, in their neighborhoods).
- Electronic bullying is a form of bullying that transcends the boundaries of the school and may occur primarily in the community. The child who is bullying may not attend the same school as the child being victimized, which is the case 1/3 to 1/2 of the time⁶, or the child who is bullying may choose to remain anonymous.
 - 30% of children and youth in grades 2 through 12 report having experienced at least one instance of cyberbullying.⁷
 - Among children who are victimized by peers at school, it is estimated that 1/3 of those children are also victims of cyberbullying.⁸

Key Themes

- Bullying occurs in any setting where children and youth gather, and often occurs across multiple settings.
- The majority of bullying occurs at school, but a substantial proportion (at least 1/3) occurs beyond the school boundaries.
- Specific forms of bullying such as electronic bullying are more likely to occur outside of school.
- The effects of bullying that takes place outside of the school likely transfer to peer interactions at school and negatively influence the school climate.

Implications

Education

- Due to the high levels of bullying that take place on the playground, as well as in other areas with lower levels of adult supervision, it is imperative to educate teachers and other adults about effective supervision and

monitoring strategies in these areas.⁹ This should include education about what the different forms of bullying can look like from both close and far distances, and how to effectively intervene when a bullying episode is underway.

Assessment

- Assessment measures of bullying should include items that index the frequency of bullying episodes in different settings at the school and within the community.
- Children and youth are the most effective at identifying “hot spots” where bullying is most likely to occur.
- There is a need to increase assessments of bullying beyond the school context – to determine the rates on sports teams, in recreation programs, etc.

Prevention and Intervention

- Comprehensive intervention strategies must include not only school-based approaches, but also community-based programming because of the extent of bullying occurring outside of school.
- Children are reporting electronic bullying and victimization at a very young age (as early as grade 2). Prevention and intervention programs for electronic bullying must begin early and involve all the contexts in which electronic media are available (e.g., home, school, community, etc.).

Policy

- Government strategies for improving school climate and reducing bullying behaviors among youth must include school- and board-based policies, as well as policies that apply to youth activities in the community, that define bullying behaviors and consequences.

¹ Delfabbro, P., Winefield, T., Trainor, S., Dollard, M., Anderson, S., Metzger, J., Hammarstrom, A. (2006). Peer and teacher bullying/victimization of South Australian secondary school students: Prevalence and psychosocial profiles. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76(Pt 1), 71-90.

² Black, S. A. & Jackson, E. (2007). Using bullying incident density to evaluate the Olweus bullying prevention programme. *School Psychology International*, 28(5), 623-638.

³ Craig, W. M., Pepler, D. and Atlas, R. (2000). 'Observations of Bullying in the Playground and in the Classroom', *School Psychology International*, 21, 22-36. As cited in Black, S.A. & Jackson, E. (2007). Using bullying incident density to evaluate the Olweus bullying prevention programme. *School Psychology International*, 28(5), 623-638.

⁴ Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F.I.M. and Verloove-Vanhorick, S.P. (2005) 'Bullying: Who Does What, When and Where? Involvement of Children, Teachers and Parents in Bullying Behavior', *Health Education Research*, 20, 81-91.

⁵ See note 4 above.

⁶ Li, Q. (2007b). New bottle but old wine: A research of cyberbullying in schools. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23, 1777-1791.

⁷ Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2006). Bullies move beyond the schoolyard: A preliminary look at cyberbullying. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 4, 148-169.



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⁸ See note 6 above.

⁹ See note 4 above.