



RESEARCH BASIS FOR SAFE AND WELCOMING SCHOOLS

BULLYING AFFECTS MOST STUDENTS.

- When asked if they had been bullied in the past month, about 30% of elementary school students say, “Yes.” But, if asked if someone has repeatedly tried to hurt them or make them feel bad by name-calling, pushing/shoving, spreading rumors/lies or other specific actions about 70% of the children say, “Yes.”¹
- Elementary school staff often underestimate the number of students involved in frequent bullying. While the majority of the school staff estimated that less than 10% of their students were bullied in the past month, over 30% of the students actually said they were frequently bullied.²
- Students who are bullied most often tell a parent or a friend. They are less likely to tell a teacher or another adult at school.³
- Over 30% of students who are bullied report that it happens in the classroom.⁴
- Elementary school girls who identify as African-American or Hispanic report less bullying and harassment if you ask them if they have been “bullied.” BUT, if you ask them specifically about name-calling, mean teasing or rumors they report higher levels of mean behaviors than girls who identify as Caucasian.⁵
- In up to 85% of bullying episodes at school, there are other students witnessing or joining in.⁶

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE ARE LINKED.

- Students who experience acceptance at school are more highly motivated, engaged in learning and committed to school.⁷
- When students report a more severe bullying climate in their school, up to 5% fewer students pass state mandated standardized tests.⁸
- Both children who are targeted and children who exhibit bullying behavior have lower academic achievement in school.⁹
- On average, about 6% of students skipped school at least once during the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school. The average ranges from 1 in 25 for white boys to almost 1 in 10 for Hispanic girls.¹⁰
- In schools with a greater sense of community, students have higher educational aspirations.¹¹



BULLYING HAS SERIOUS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES.

- Both students who bully and students who are targeted are at a higher risk for suicide than students who are not involved in bullying.¹²
- Children who are bullied fare worse on an extensive list of measures: anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, poor social self-competence, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, social withdrawal, school refusal, school absenteeism, poor academic performance, physical health complaints, running away from home, alcohol and drug use, and suicide.¹³

BULLYING IS LINKED TO HURTFUL BIAS.

- Over 75% of students who are harassed are targeted because of their identity including race, national origin, gender, actual or perceived sexual orientation, religion or ability.¹⁴
- Multiple studies indicate that students with disabilities and those who are perceived to be LGBT are most likely to experience bullying.¹⁵
- An elementary student who is significantly overweight is over 60% more likely to be bullied and harassed than other students, regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status.¹⁶
- Nearly one-third of middle school students have been the object of sexual jokes, comments or gestures.¹⁷

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- In the 28 random shootings in U.S. schools between 1982 and 2001, nearly all the boys who committed the violence had stories of being constantly bullied, teased and “gay-baited” — not because they were gay, but because they were different from the other boys: shy, artistic, theatrical, musical, non-athletic or geekish.¹⁸

BIAS BASED BULLYING HURTS MORE.

- Compared with students harassed for other reasons, students who feel harassed for their race, religion, ability, gender, or perceived sexual orientation:¹⁹
 - have higher rates of drug use;
 - are up to twice as likely to have attempted suicide;
 - are more likely to skip school; and
 - are up to 4 times as likely to have been threatened with a weapon at school.
- 5th – 8th grade students who report more daily hassles due to their gender or race, also report greater emotional problems, behavioral problems, and lower self-esteem.²⁰
- In a nationwide survey, children said they feared anti-gay harassment more than any other kind of name-calling.²¹
- Students targeted with anti-gay putdowns are more likely to report higher levels of depression and anxiety and a lower sense of school belonging regardless of their sexual orientation.²²

BULLYING CAN BE STOPPED.

- Observations at urban elementary schools revealed that, when bystanders intervened, they were often effective. 57% of the interventions stopped the bullying within 10 seconds.²³
- Student and adults who perceive that others in their school would jump in to stop bullying are more likely to intervene when they witnessing bullying.^{24, 25}
- The most effective strategies to stop bullying involve the whole school working together to change the school climate and norms of behavior. Based on research, key strategies include:²⁶
 - establishing school wide rules and consequences for bullying,
 - educator training,
 - parent engagement,
 - classroom management,
 - playground supervision,
 - and cooperative group work.



GENDER NON-CONFORMITY AND HARASSMENT

- Almost one-quarter of students in California are harassed because they are not “as masculine as other guys” or “as feminine as other girls.”²⁷
- About one in six people who had expressed gender non-conformity or a transgender identity while in grades K-12, stopped going to school for a period of time due to harassment. Almost half of that group experienced homelessness as well.²⁸
- Parents of gender nonconforming children fear for their children’s safety because of their gender identity or expression based on a geographically diverse study of supportive parents.²⁹
- Middle school students regardless of their sexual orientation who are targeted with anti-gay slurs are more likely to report higher levels of depression and anxiety and a lower sense of school belonging.³⁰
- Boys who are not athletic or “masculine” appearing are more than 3 times as likely to be a target of sexual harassment than boys who are considered “good-looking.”³¹
- In a study of gay and bisexual teens, over half reported that they were labeled as sissies by the time they were only 8 years old.³²
- In a study of LGB teens, boys who were also more gender non-conforming were verbally harassed at an earlier age and significantly more often than the other boys in the study.³³

CHILDREN, GENDER AND RACIAL STEREOTYPES AND BIAS

- A study in pre-school classrooms found that when teachers called attention to gender in even simple ways, such as the greeting, “Good morning, boys and girls” or the instruction, “Girls line up on this side, boys on that” children were more likely to express stereotyped views of what activities were appropriate for boys and girls, and which gender they preferred to play with.³⁴
- By age 3, children are knowledgeable about gender stereotypes.³⁵
- By age 4 they use both gender and race to infer relationships between people.³⁶
- Between the ages of 3 and 5 gender stereotypical behavior increases with a large increase between 3 and 4.³⁷
- In the preschool years, most children say it is unfair to exclude someone from an activity because of their race or gender.³⁸
- By age 4 to 5, children not only engage in gender-appropriate behavior defined by socially prevailing norms, they also reinforce it among themselves without adult intervention.³⁹
- By age 5 children hold gender stereotypes that associate women with nurturing or affiliative traits and men with assertive traits.⁴⁰
- The proportion of children who show consciousness of stereotypes and understand that they may lead to discrimination increases with age (30 percent of 7-year-olds, 60 percent of 8-year-olds and 90 percent of 10-year-olds.)⁴¹
- By age 10, children can recognize discriminatory actions that are both overt (e.g., name-calling) and covert (e.g., being suspected of wrongdoing) and they can understand that these actions may be caused by others’ social stereotypes.⁴²
- Students who are exposed to racially diverse and integrated settings are less likely to harbor stereotypes, as they grow older.⁴³

CHANGING FAMILIES → DIVERSE STUDENTS

- 16 percent or almost 12 million children in the U.S. live with a grandparent or other relative in their home.⁴⁴
- Almost 2.5 million fathers are the primary caregivers for their children.⁴⁵
- More than 1.8 million children are adopted and almost 40 percent of those children are of a different race, culture or ethnicity from their parents.⁴⁶
- About half of the children in the U.S. under age 5 are Hispanic, Black, Asian-American, Native American, mixed-race or a member of a minority group as of 2010.⁴⁷
- In nearly every U.S. County, there are gay and lesbian headed households according to the U.S. Census. In rural states, such as, Wyoming and Alaska, and in southern states households headed by same-sex couples are more likely to have children than same-sex households in other states.⁴⁸
- Hispanic and African-American same-sex couples are about twice as likely to be raising children as white non-Hispanic same-sex couples.⁴⁹
- 16 percent of all children live in blended families including stepparents and step- or half-siblings.⁵⁰
- Over 4 million children identify as being of more than one race.⁵¹
- Almost one-quarter of children in the U.S., have at least one parent who was born in another country, in 2012.⁵²



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