



KENTUCKY CENTER *for* SCHOOL SAFETY

www.kycss.org

Myths of Bullying

Shattering the myths of bullying

- ▶ **Myth:** Bullying behavior can't be changed.
- ▶ **Reality:** Use a positive approach to change behavior by awarding good behavior in students.
- ▶ **Myth:** Children bully because they have poor control of their anger.
- ▶ **Reality:** Children bully other children in order to gain or maintain social power in their peer group.
- ▶ **Myth:** Bullying is a natural part of childhood.
- ▶ **Reality:** There is nothing natural about being bullied. Bullying is often considered a normal part of childhood because it is such a common experience. Physical or emotional aggression toward others should not be tolerated as a normal part of childhood.
- ▶ **Myth:** You can always tell a bully from a victim.
- ▶ **Reality:** Children engaging in victim behavior and bullying behavior is actually quite common, especially in younger grades. The same child may be excluded from a playground activity one day and be the child name-calling the next. This blurring of roles between victim and bully behavior makes it challenging to figure out who started the problem.
- ▶ **Myth:** Ignoring bullying will make it go away.
- ▶ **Reality:** This solution sounds easy, but ignoring the problem will not make bullying behavior go away.
- ▶ **Myth:** Children and youth who are bullied will almost always tell an adult.
- ▶ **Reality:** Most studies find that only 25 to 50 percent of bullied children talk to an adult about the situation.
- ▶ **Myth:** Bullied kids need to learn how to deal with bullying on their own.
- ▶ **Reality:** Adults have critical roles to play in helping to stop bullying, as do other children who witness or observe bullying. Some children have the confidence and skills to stop bullying when it happens, but many do not.

You Can Help

We exist in a world that quietly condones bullying behaviors. Most of the time, no one is there to intervene. You could say that **everyone in the community suffers when bullying behavior occurs**. Bullying is terrorism on a local level.

Bullying will only be stopped by the intervention of adults in authority positions, such as educators and parents.


Parents have the power to make a difference and reduce bullying behaviors, and the Kentucky Center for School Safety wants to help you do just that.


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Myths of Bullying

Who's the bully...not my child!

Studies on bullying have been done around the world. Norway, Sweden, France, Ireland, Japan, Denmark, United States, Canada, England and Germany have all conducted research into the problems of bullying and its effects on education and on society in general. There are conclusions that we can make from this research.

Bullying will only be stopped by the intervention of adults in authority positions, such as educators and parents.

The roles kids play in bullying are not limited to those who bully others and those who are bullied. Some researchers talk about the "circle of bullying" to define both those directly involved in bullying and those who actively or passively assist the behavior or defend against it.

Those who bully cannot be allowed to continue bullying. They need immediate consequences so that they know that their school has no tolerance for bullying behavior. Consequences should be non-hostile and nonphysical.

Children who bully can be affected as much as those they target. Statistically, they are significantly more likely than others to experience school failure, depression, violence, crime, and other problems. The message is clear: bullying is too important to ignore.

Even if kids are not bullied or bullying others they can be affected by bullying. Many times, when they see bullying, they may not know what to do to stop it. **They may not feel safe stepping in in the moment, but there are many other steps they can take.**

We are encouraged. Research shows that adult interventions work.

Why don't kids ask for help?

Kids don't tell adults they're being bullied for many reasons:

- ▶ Bullying can make a child feel helpless. They may fear being seen as weak or a tattletale.
- ▶ Kids may fear backlash from the kid who bullied them.
- ▶ Bullying can be a humiliating experience. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
- ▶ Kids who are bullied may already feel socially isolated. They may feel like no one cares or could understand.
- ▶ Kids may fear being rejected by their peers.

For more information:
www.stopbullying.gov

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