

Fast Facts & Talking Pts *On Bullying in Schools*

- Focus on the Family believes that bullying should be recognized as a serious problem and strongly addressed.
- We believe schools can address this issue with a strong prohibition against any form of bullying—for any reason, against any child.
- The emphasis should be on the *wrong actions* of the bully—not on the bully’s *perceived thoughts or motivations*. It doesn't matter what the bully's reasons or excuses for targeting the victim are— bullying is always wrong for any reason whatsoever and should be stopped.
- Bullying can and should be addressed without politicizing taxpayer-funded classrooms and introducing controversial, sexual topics to children against their parents’ will.
- The data back up this approach: The latest statistics, for instance, show that approximately 30 percent of American children report being involved in bullying—either as the victim, the bully or both.¹
- Physical appearance—or the general concept of appearing different than one’s peers—is usually the most commonly reported reason for why victims are targeted.²
- Statistics indicate that racial and ethnicity tension, as well as opposite-sex harassment, account for a large percentage of bullying problems.³
- A child’s chance of being bullied can even be increased by something as subtle as difficulty reading “nonverbal” social cues.⁴
- All students—including those who identify as gay and lesbian—should be protected from harm and peer abuse. We also need to recognize the data showing that there are many different groups of students who are at high risk of being bullied.
- Students who struggle with obesity, for instance, are 65 percent more likely to be bullied⁵; children with disabilities as much as 85 percent⁶ more likely.
- That’s why, when you look at the big picture involving all kids who are at high risk of being bullied, they are all equally important. So we should be sending the message that a bully’s actions are always wrong for any reason regardless of why they target the victim.
- Therefore, an effective policy should be designed to address the widespread nature of the problem. It should not be a policy that mirrors, or is designed to appease, a narrow political agenda.
- Dividing kids up into competing categories sends the wrong message to children—it sends the message that they are only worthy of being protected because of how they identify or what social subgroup they belong to. A healthier and loving message is that students are worthy of being protected from harm because they are human beings—sacred lives created by God—regardless of how they identify.

- Policies that single out certain characteristics for special protections are counterproductive. Again, they put the focus on the wrong place—on the characteristics of the victim—rather than where the focus should be, on the wrong actions of the bullies.
- Listing certain categories creates a system ripe for reverse discrimination, sending the message that certain characteristics are more worthy of protection than others. Instead of bringing more peace and unity, this can politicize the school environment and introduce divisiveness among different groups of students and parents.
- Why not emphasize instead the things we have in common as Americans? For example, we can unite around the teachings of our Founding Fathers—in particular, the principle that all men are created equal and that they are endowed with unalienable rights.
- Therefore, all people, no matter what their sexual identities are or what particular beliefs they hold, are entitled to the same basic rights as other citizens, including the right to life and pursuit of happiness.

For more in-depth information, you can read [“The Problem with Politicized Bullying Policies.”](#)

Web links to sources for statistics are listed below.

1 Links to sources on percentage of students involved in bullying:

- Bullying Facts and Statistics from the [National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center](#)
- 2008 *San Francisco Chronicle* article: [“Bullying Takes Twisted Turn for the Worse”](#)
- 2001 *Journal of the American Medical Association* article: [“Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth”](#)

2 Links to statistics on the most common reasons cited for bullying:

- Information available online as of 2011 from the National Bullying Prevention Center (a project of the PACER Center, funded by the US Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs): <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/whybullying.asp>
- 2008 University of Virginia Curry School of Education [“High School Safety Study”](#)
- 2007 *Adolescence* journal article: [“Adolescents’ perception of bullying...”](#)
- 2004 *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association* article, [“Teasing and Bullying Experiences of Middle School Students”](#)
- 1996 *Reclaiming Children and Youth* article, [“Confronting the Bullying Problem”](#)

3 Links to information indicating that race, ethnicity issues, and opposite-sex harassment account for a large percentage of bullying problems:

- 2010 report: [“Chancellor Klein Releases Findings From First Audit of Bias-Related Bullying”](#):
- 2010 *Associated Press* article: [“Racial Bullying Roils South Philadelphia school”](#)
- 2009 [“Indicators of School Crime and Safety”](#) report from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, Figure 10.2
- 2009 [Pacific Justice Press Release](#), stating that “School records released by Alameda Unified School District show that bullying based on race and gender is far more prevalent ... than sexual orientation harassment.”
- 2009 report, [“Nowhere to Hide,”](#) on sexual harassment among middle and high school students, from the Center for Research on Women in Memphis.
- 2009 *UPI.com* article, [“Students Cited for ‘kick a Jew day’ ”](#)
- 2009 *Newsweek* blog: [“Does Labeling Bias as ‘Bullying’ Hide the Real Problem?”](#)
- 2008 [news release](#) on “how teen girls see harassment,” based on study of 600 girls from California and Georgia.
- 2008 *Associated Press* article, [“Racial bullying on the rise in OKC-area schools”](#)
- 2008 *Morning Call* article, [“BASD officials join forum on racism: Public discussion was prompted by noose left for black student last year.”](#)

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- June 10, 2006 article, “Confronting a racial divide,” *The Associated Press*. Reports that “More North Thurston Public Schools students were disciplined for racially or ethnically motivated incidents in the past 12 months than in the three prior years combined.” (Not available online)
 - 2001 [report](#) on student sexual harassment from the American Association of University of Women Educational Foundation.
 - “[Secrets in Public: Sexual Harassment in Our Schools](#)” based on 1992 study published in *Seventeen* magazine involving 4,200 girls
- 4 Links to sources on chance of being bullied influenced by inability to pick up on nonverbal social cues:
- 2010 *LiveScience.com* [news article](#), “Studies Reveal Why Kids Get Bullied and Rejected”
 - 2010 online article at Psych Central News: “[Why Kids Get Bullied](#)”
- 5 Links to sources on kids struggling with obesity having a higher risk of being bullied:
- 2010 CNN news article, “[Obese Kids More Vulnerable to Bullies](#)”
 - 2010 [article](#) published online by All Children’s Hospital
- 6 Links to sources on kids with disabilities having a higher risk of being bullied:
- 2011 *Deseret News* article, “[Battling Bullying—Abuse Still Exists, But Disabled see Progress](#)”
 - 2011 Report from AbilityPath.org: [Walk a Mile in Their Shoes](#)
 - 2011 online article at The World of Special Olympics blog, “[The Truth About Special Needs Bullying.](#)”