



Girls Inc. Guide *Bullying Awareness*

How common is bullying in Indiana schools?

28.2 percent of high school females and 21.8 percent of high school males report being bullied on school property in 2011.¹

Where is bullying most likely to occur?

Bullying occurs in all schools, at all grade levels but is most prevalent during the middle school years.² Students are more likely to be involved in bullying in schools where breaks are poorly supervised by adults, where bullying is accepted or treated with indifference, and where bullying rules are not enforced consistently.³

What is the impact of bullying?

- Victims of bullying face a greater risk for emotional problems such as depression and anxiety, as well as poor school adjustment. Those who bully others are at increased risk for substance abuse, academic problems, and violent behavior in adulthood.⁴
- Bullying undermines school success and student achievement in a variety of ways. Severe student victimization has been associated with lower pass rates on standardized tests as well as higher rates of teacher turnover, student dropout, students changing schools, and principals and teachers retiring early.⁵ Furthermore, at least 160,000 students miss school each day in the United States due to fears of being bullied.⁶
- Those who are bullied are 2.5 percent more likely to commit suicide.⁷

“The tyranny of nice and kind—the demand that girls act perfectly nice and accommodating—is oppressive to girls and wreaks havoc with their relationships.

Such expectations require girls to push everything else they feel and think, especially anger, underground or out of public view. **This creates fertile soil for those forms of aggression people have come to associate with girls—gossip, rumor spreading, subtle forms of exclusion and indirectness—because such tactics protect a girl’s image as nice while they give her some way to express her anger and experience power.** One of the best things parents can do for girls is to encourage them to speak their thoughts and feelings...”

Lynn Mikel Brown, Meeting at the Crossroads

How are girls affected by bullying?

- Boys and girls experience bullying differently. While boys often engage in physical bullying, girls tend to bully with hurtful words or intentional social exclusion.⁸

- Girls are intensely worried about fitting in. In a 2008 survey by the Girl Scout Research Institute, 1 in 5 girls listed bullying and peer pressure at school as a top fear. 1 in 3 girls listed their friends not liking them as a top fear.⁹

What can adults do about bullying?

- ✓ **Facilitate a Girls Inc. Work It Out program to empower girls with the skills necessary to navigate conflict in their lives.**
- ✓ **Advocate for strong anti-bullying policies with consistent enforcement in your local schools.**
- ✓ **Set a good example!** Be a positive role model for the girls in your life by treating others with respect, empathy, and fairness.
- ✓ **Address an underlying cause of bullying by reminding girls to focus on similarities rather than differences.**
- ✓ **Expect your girl to respect everyone and their unique qualities, but don't expect her to like everyone.** Remind her that she doesn't have to be friends with everyone, but especially those who don't treat her well or expect her to be mean to others.
- ✓ **Help your girl to learn how to speak directly.** You can't fight her battles or choose her friends, but you *can* help her to be able to say things like, 'It hurts my feelings when you don't talk to me at school,' or 'I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.'¹⁰

¹ The Indiana Youth Institute. "The KIDS COUNT in Indiana 2015 Data Book." The KIDS COUNT in Indiana 2015 Data Book (2000): 109. Web. 2 Oct. 2015. <<http://www.iyi.org/resources/pdf/KC-DATA-BOOK-IYI-2015.pdf>>.

² 2011 White House Conference on Bullying Prevention materials, "Risk Factors for and Outcomes of Bullying and Victimization" by Susan M. Swearer

³ Indiana Youth Institute, When Push Turns to Shove: Bullying Issue Alert 2009, <http://www.iyi.org/resources/doc/Issue-Alert-BULLYING-April-2009.pdf>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009 Indiana Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/2009INH_Summary_Tables.pdf

⁵ US Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics) and US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs (Bureau of Justice Statistics), Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2010, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011002.pdf>

APA Press Release, "Bullying May Contribute to Lower Test Scores", <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2011/08/bullying-test.aspx>

⁶ 2011 White House Conference on Bullying Prevention materials, "Risk Factors for and Outcomes of Bullying and Victimization" by Susan M. Swearer

⁷ Kaplan, Karen. "Teens Taunted by Bullies Are More Likely to Consider, Attempt Suicide." *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles Times, 10 Mar. 2014. Web. 02 Oct. 2015.

⁸ Indiana Youth Institute, When Push Turns to Shove: Bullying Issue Alert 2009, <http://www.iyi.org/resources/doc/Issue-Alert-BULLYING-April-2009.pdf>

⁹ Girl Scout Research Institute, "What Girls Say: Personal Concerns", http://www.girlscouts.org/research/what_girls_say/personal_concerns.asp

¹⁰ PBS Parents, Raising and Understanding Girls, <http://www.pbs.org/parents/raisinggirls/friends/>