

# Bullies and Targets — Both at Risk

Most kids agree that bullying is an everyday problem in school. It affects millions of students. Surveys find that at least 50 % of all kids are bullied sometime during their school years. Ten percent of students face bullying on a regular basis.

Kids who are victims of bullying are at risk for social and emotional problems. Targets of bullying are 5.6 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts. They are 5.4 times as likely to have suicidal attempts. However, both targets and bullies are at risk for suicidal thinking and suicide.

A new study suggests that bullies have a greater risk than their targets for problems that affect their health, education and safety. A survey of 9,600 U.S. students found that 39% were a bully, a victim or both. Compared to their peers, all of these students had an increased risk for physical injuries. The injury could be an accident, a self-inflicted act or an intentional injury by a bully.

Bullies *and* targets were also more likely to hurt animals and use weapons. Many had problems with truancy and abuse of over-the-counter medications.

Bullies, however, are at greater risk for these harmful behaviors than targets. Studies show that bullies are

- 9 times more likely than their peers to have suicidal thoughts,
- 9.9 times more likely to try suicide, and
- More likely to abuse alcohol and drugs, set fires and get bad grades.



It is not easy for parents to hear that their child is bullying others. Some parents, for many reasons, choose to ignore warnings from teachers and other parents. Kids who bully others have emotional problems. If you suspect or have been told that your child is a bully, get help. Your child depends upon you for protection. Talk with teachers and the school counselor. Find a mental health professional.

**Bullying is a learned behavior. Both the bully and the target need to learn skills that can stop bullying. Many books and videos teach these skills.**

**Call Parent Help Line—217-544-5808 or toll-free 1-888-727-5889— or log onto [parenthelpline.org](http://parenthelpline.org) to learn more about skill-building.**

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



**Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.**  
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

