

further independence. Peer groups and clubs allow children to substitute conformity to a peer group for conformity to a family at a time when children are still too insecure to function independently.

During the early school years, groups are usually small and loosely organized, with changing membership and no formal structure. They do not demonstrate the elements of cooperation and order that are seen in groups of older children. In general, girls' groups are less formalized than boys' are, and although there may be a mixture of both sexes in the early school years, the groups of later school years are composed predominantly of children of the same sex. Common interests are the basis around which the group is structured.

Poor relationships with peers and a lack of group identification can contribute to bullying. **Bullying** is any recurring activity that intends to cause harm, distress, or control towards another in which there is a perceived imbalance of power between the aggressor(s) and the victim (Hensley, 2013). Although bullying can occur in any setting, it most often occurs in school hallways or on the playground where supervision is minimal but peers are present to witness the attack (Shetgiri, 2013). Cyberbullying involves an electronic medium to harm or bother another individual and can be more harmful than traditional bullying, because the attack can instantly reach a wider audience, while allowing the bully to remain anonymous (Sticca and Perren, 2013). Children who are targeted for bullying often have internalizing characteristics such as withdrawal, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and reduced assertiveness that may make them an easy target for bullying (Arseneault, Bowes, and Shakoor, 2010). Bullies are generally defiant toward adults, manipulative, and likely to break school rules. They have aggressive attitudes, a positive view of violence, a lack of empathy, and may experience or witness violence or abuse at home (Hensley, 2013). Boys who bully tend to use physical force, referred to as *direct bullying*, but girls usually use bullying methods, such as exclusion, gossip, or rumors, which are referred to as *indirect bullying* (Shetgiri, 2013).

The long-term consequences of bullying are significant. Future problems of bullies include a higher risk for conduct problems, hyperactivity, school dropout, unemployment, and participation in criminal behavior (Shetgiri, Lin, and Flores, 2012). Chronic bullies