

# Bullying Hurts Everyone

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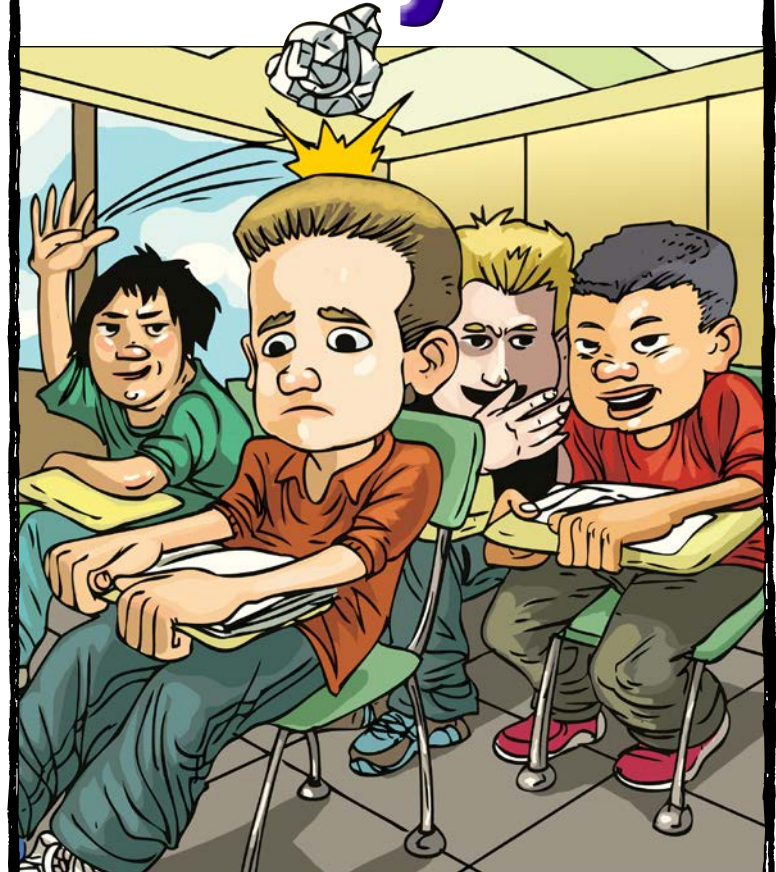


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LEVELED BOOK • V

# Bullying Hurts Everyone



Written by Jennifer Dobner  
Illustrated by Mike LaRicca

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## Glossary

- aggressive** (*adj.*) ready or likely to attack or argue (p. 8)
- behavior** (*n.*) the way a human or other animal acts in a certain situation (p. 6)
- cruel** (*adj.*) mean or unkind; causing suffering or pain (p. 6)
- prevention** (*n.*) an act of stopping something from happening (p. 15)
- ringleader** (*n.*) a leader of a group that causes trouble or opposes authority (p. 6)
- self-esteem** (*n.*) a feeling of respect for oneself and confidence in one's abilities (p. 13)
- statistics** (*n.*) numerical data that is collected, organized, and studied (p. 7)
- strategies** (*n.*) careful plans for solving a problem or achieving a goal (p. 19)
- teasing** (*n.*) an act of making fun of a person or other animal; an act of provoking a person or other animal in a playful way (p. 5)
- threats** (*n.*) dangers; statements of an intent to cause harm (p. 10)
- violence** (*n.*) a force that hurts or destroys (p. 13)
- witnessing** (*v.*) seeing an event happen, such as a crime, accident, or ceremony (p. 7)

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**Correlation**

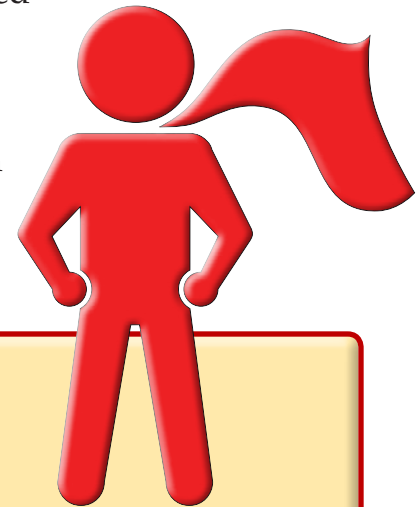
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Gardner says he tries to focus on himself and his classwork so that he doesn't give the bullies any attention or power. He's also taking martial arts classes to develop strength and confidence.

"It makes me feel more disciplined and proud of myself," he says. "I feel like I'm not as weak."

He says he tries to treat everyone the way he wants to be treated—with fairness and kindness. That's something he learned from his grandmother.

"In our family, we talk about treating people with respect," Gardner says.



**BEAT BULLYING!**

**For help, check out these books and websites:**

- *Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain* by Trevor Romain
- *Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends: Dealing with Bullies and Bossiness and Finding a Better Way* by Patti Kelley Criswell
- *Confessions of a Former Bully* by Trudy Ludwig
- <http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/bullies.html>
- <http://kidsagainstbullying.org>





Gardner's grandmother, whom he lives with, talked to the school principal, who responded by keeping the ringleader of the group inside during lunch breaks and recess for a month. That helped, but only temporarily, Gardner says.

## Resources for Teachers and Parents

### Web Resources:

[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

[www.pacer.org/bullying](http://www.pacer.org/bullying)

[www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pub/understanding\\_bullying.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pub/understanding_bullying.html)

[www.olweus.org](http://www.olweus.org)

[www.bullysafeusa.com](http://www.bullysafeusa.com)

[www.bullyingstatistics.org](http://www.bullyingstatistics.org)

### Books:

*Real Life Bully Prevention for Real Kids* by Catherine DePino

*Banishing Bullying Behavior* by SuEllen Fried and Blanche Sosland

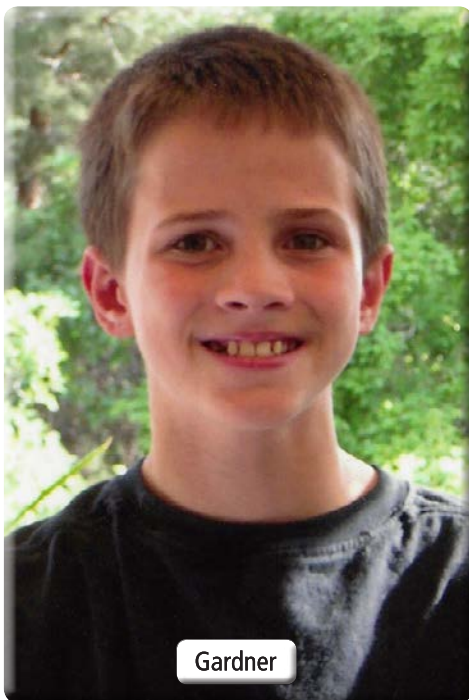
*Cyber Bullying: Bullying in the Digital Age* by Dr. Susan Limber, Dr. Robin Kowalski, and Dr. Patricia Agatston

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## Gardner and Lily: Two Tales of Bullying

Twelve-year-old Gardner doesn't always like going to school.



School is a place where Gardner doesn't always feel safe.

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**"It's like I have a 'kick me' or 'pick on me' sign on my back."**

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On the playground at lunchtime and recess, a group of about a dozen boys tease him. They call him mean names,

chase him, and throw pinecones at him. Gardner has been shoved, hit, and knocked to the ground. He's ended up with bruises and once was left with a broken finger.

"It's like I have a 'kick me' or 'pick on me' sign on my back," the sixth grader says. "They say I'm stupid and I'm not worth anything."

## Gardner and Lily Stay Strong

Gardner and Lily are working to solve their own bullying problems.

Lily talked with her mother and also spoke with her school's counselor. She was uncomfortable asking the counselor to talk with the other girls and didn't want to be called a tattletale. Still, her teacher and the counselor know about the problem, and Lily says she will go back to them for help if needed.

Lily has learned to speak up for herself and isn't afraid to tell others when their actions hurt her feelings.

Gardner has also asked his teachers for help, although each year his different teachers have given different amounts of attention to the problem.

On the playground, Gardner tries to ignore or avoid the bullies. He plays on the opposite side of the schoolyard, stays near adult supervisors, and tries to walk away anytime the bullies get too close. After a meeting between teachers, Gardner, and the group of boys who bully him, school leaders divided up the playground in order to keep the boys away from Gardner—and from the other students the boys bully.

## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO STOP BULLYING

**Stand up for yourself:** If a bully attacks with words or fists, tell them to stop. Try to use a calm voice.

**Use humor:** Try to laugh off the situation or make a joke in order to take the power away from the bully. Saying something like “Thank you” when someone says something unkind may catch him or her off guard.

**Walk away:** If speaking up seems too hard or not safe, just walk away and find an adult or a group of kids to be with. There is safety in numbers.

**Change your behaviors:** Stay safe by asking a teacher if you can move to another desk. Stay away from bullies on the playground or during lunch and stay near adults. Choose a different route to walk home from school.

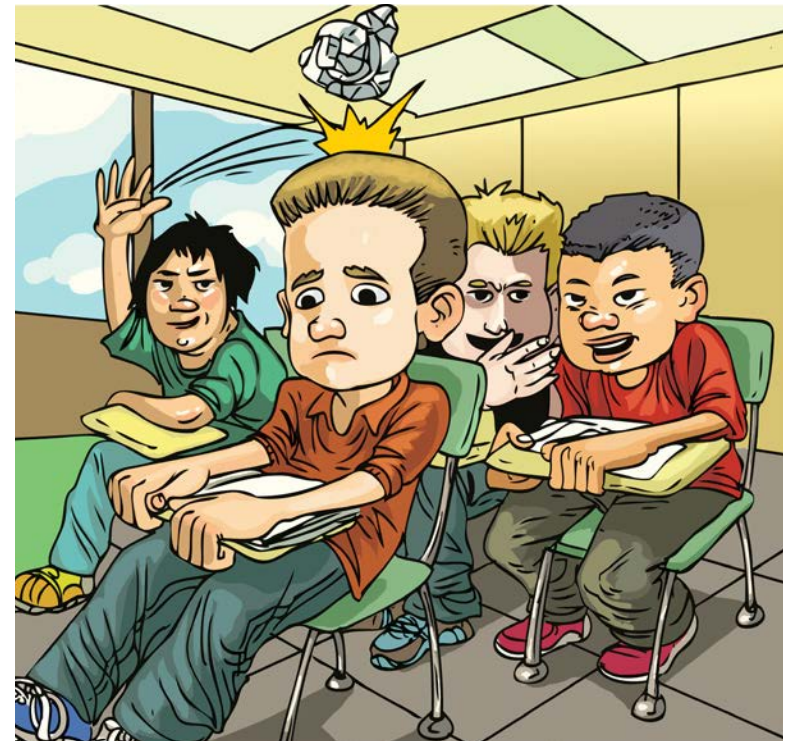
**Keep your online information private:** Block cyber-bullying by not sharing information like passwords so that others can’t access your accounts. Choose your online friends carefully.

**Stand up for others:** If you see someone bully another person, be kind. Make friends with the kid being picked on and, if it’s safe, stand up for him or her by telling the bully to stop. You can also help by telling an adult what you have seen.

**Treat others with respect:** Before you say something about another person, think about your words and how you would feel if someone else said the same thing about you.



**STOP  
BULLYING**



The name-calling also happens in Gardner’s classroom—names whispered or spoken when the teacher is busy. He says that makes it hard to concentrate and that he sometimes misses assignments from his teacher.

Gardner has been suffering the **teasing** and bad treatment by the same group of boys since the second grade. Being treated this way makes him frustrated and sad.

“I’m sick of it,” Gardner says. “I would just like to be under the radar so nobody notices me.”



Seven-year-old Lily knows just how Gardner feels. She is in the first grade at a new school and has had a hard time finding friends. Lily says that almost every day, the **ringleader** of a group of



girls says mean things and tells the others they should run away and not play with Lily.

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**"It makes me feel bad . . . sometimes I get mad."**

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"I want to tell her to stop. When I do, she just keeps on doing it," Lily says. "It makes me feel bad . . . sometimes I get mad."

Have you ever felt like Gardner and Lily? Have you ever been the target of mean words or treatment by classmates or neighborhood kids? That kind of **behavior** is called *bullying*, and it's **cruel**.

Experts agree that the most important thing a target of bullying can do is to speak up. Make sure that adults know there is a problem. It might feel scary. Some kids might be afraid that things will get worse if the bully gets in trouble, but it's the best way to get help.

It's also important to stay physically safe. That could be as simple as walking away or saying "stop" in a really loud voice to draw the attention of others who can help.

Limber also thinks it is good to have at least two **strategies** for tackling the problem. One should be a short-term strategy—words or actions that can be used at the moment the bullying occurs to stop or disrupt the situation. The second should be a long-term solution, such as asking your school to include anti-bullying lessons or programs.

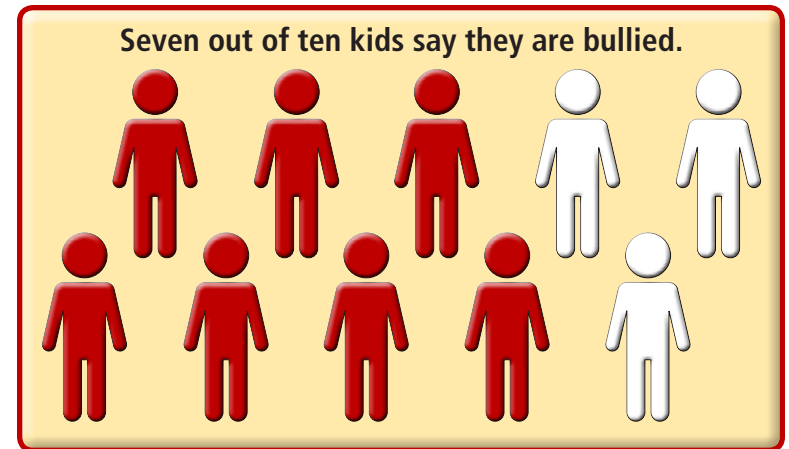
Yet many people wonder: Do anti-bullying programs actually work?

Research on preventing and stopping bullying has just begun. Still, Limber says there is some proof that programs continued over many months can reduce bullying. A 2004 study of ten elementary schools, for example, found that social bullying was reduced by 28 percent and physical bullying by 37 percent.



According to experts Fried and Limber, it takes the involvement of many people—teachers, parents, and students—to stop bullying behavior and create an environment in which everyone feels safe and is treated with respect. They also say there are things you can do.

“Kids have power and ways to make their situations better,” Fried said.



Gardner and Lily both live in Utah, but bullying can happen anywhere. In fact, the problem is so widespread that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says it’s a major public health problem all over the United States.

According to a 2010 study by the National Center for Education, more than 55 percent of all students reported **witnessing** bullying at school. About 71 percent of students said bullying is an ongoing problem for them at school.

In addition, 15 percent of students said they skip school because they fear being targeted by bullies. About one in every ten students said they quit or changed schools because they were repeatedly bullied. **Statistics** vary from study to study, but experts agree that bullying is a big problem. Let’s look at some basic facts about bullying.

## Kinds of Bullying

Bullying is any kind of **aggressive** behavior that causes physical or emotional pain to others. When people engage in bullying, they're trying to gain power over someone they think is smaller or weaker.

We all do things that sometimes hurt the feelings of others, even if it's by accident. Bullying behavior is different, however, because it is done on purpose, and it happens over and over again.

Many teachers and doctors who study human feelings have spent a lot of time trying to understand bullies and bullying behavior. Here's what they have learned: 1) Bullying can happen any time people interact. That includes at school or church, in neighborhoods, and at home. It can happen to kids or to adults. 2) Bullying can happen when two people are face-to-face or when one person attacks another by saying bad things about him or her to others.

Some common bullying behaviors include:

**Physical bullying**—when someone uses his or her body and strength to hurt another person. Bullies sometimes hit, shove, spit, and kick.



President Barack Obama speaks during a White House conference on bullying prevention.

## Stopping and Preventing Bullying

Many adults are concerned about the effects of bullying on all children, and many states have passed anti-bullying laws. President Barack Obama even held the first-ever conference at the White House to talk about the problem.

"We all remember what it was like to see kids picked on in the hallways or in the school yard. And I have to say, with big ears and the name I have, I wasn't immune . . ." he said.

"We've got to make sure our young people know that if they're in trouble, there are caring adults who can help . . ."

---

**"We've got to make sure our young people know that if they're in trouble, there are caring adults who can help . . ."**

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## Quiz: Are you a bully?

We can all do things that hurt another person's feelings, but there's a difference between an unkind mistake and the cruel ways that bullies gain power over others. Here's a quick quiz to help you decide if you might be using some bullying behaviors.

1. Do you pick on people who are smaller than you or make fun of those who are different from you?
2. Do you like to tease or make fun of other people, and do you like to see them get upset?
3. Do you spread rumors or say mean things about others behind their backs?
4. Do you purposely shut out some people from your group of friends?
5. Do you like to take or destroy things that belong to others?
6. Do you want others to think you are the toughest kid around?
7. Have you ever threatened to hurt someone, or have you punched, shoved, or hit another boy or girl?

If you answer "yes" to many of these questions, you might want to talk with a trusted adult about ways to change your behavior. Telling them the truth shows a lot of courage and is the first step in learning how to be a better friend.

"What I always say to the kids is if you think it's cool to be cruel, you will always be able to find something about someone to make fun of," Fried said.

It's not cool, though, and students who become the target of a bully should remember: It's not your fault, and you can get help.



**Verbal bullying**—using words to hurt. This can include saying mean things or embarrassing someone by calling him or her names or making fun of him or her in front of others. Bullies also might tell stories or spread lies about others.

**Social bullying**—using actions and words to exclude someone from a group or to break up friendships. This can include setting up other kids to take the blame for things that happen in class or on the playground. It can also mean forcing another person to do something, like giving food or money to a bully.



**Cyberbullying**—using the Internet, email, text messages, and other kinds of technology to hurt. This is a different kind of bullying because the messages can reach large groups of people in many different places. A bully can use technology to post messages or **threats** without using his or her real name. That’s called being *anonymous*. Cyberbullying is hard to stop because no one knows who is sending the messages.



Who can be the target of a bully? The answer is simple: anyone.

Bullies will pick on anyone they think is different, says SuEllen Fried, a Kansas-based expert who has written three books about bullying.

“You can be a target if you are too tall, too short, too heavy, too thin, too smart, too slow, too rich, too poor,” says Fried, who teaches bullying **prevention** in schools nationwide. “You can be a target if you have different-colored hair, if you have different-colored skin, if you wear glasses, have freckles, wear braces, if you have big ears, if you just moved from another school. . . . The list just goes on and on.”



## How Is Bullying Harmful?

Research shows that kids who are bullied often get sick with stomachaches or headaches, Limber says. They may have trouble sleeping and may not want to go to school or ride the bus because they are afraid. They may also have a hard time focusing and finishing class assignments.

Kids who are targeted for bullying can also spend a lot of time feeling sad or end up feeling bad about themselves. They may even start to believe the mean things the bullies say about them, even if those things are not true.

Bullying can even affect people besides the target. Studies show that children who witness bullying can become afraid that they will also become a target for a bully or feel guilty that they did not step in to help a classmate.



## A TEACHER'S VIEW



Teacher Janet Moffat gets kids talking on the playground of her school.

Catherine DePino knows a lot about bullies.

She's been a teacher and school administrator in Philadelphia for more than thirty years and has seen firsthand how a bully can change a classroom.

DePino, who has written books on bullying, says the problem is getting worse. Computers and text messaging allow bullies to attack from far away. That makes kids less likely to see or feel the suffering they are causing, DePino says.

**Gather all the parties . . . and talk it out.**

Bullies can cause problems in a classroom by distracting both teachers and other students from learning, DePino says. Yet bullies can also give teachers a chance to talk about bullying with their students in a safe space. Lessons that focus on types of bullying behavior, its effect on others, and ways to stop bullying can help, she says.

As a teacher, DePino found that the best way to deal with bullying is to gather all the parties—the bullied child, the bully, and parents—and talk it out.

"No one can do it alone," DePino says.



## Who Is a Bully?

Professor Susan Limber says there is no simple explanation for why some people become bullies. Limber studies the science of emotions and behavior at Clemson University in South Carolina and helps create bully-free schools.

Limber says studies show that certain common experiences increase the chances that someone will become a bully. Those can include living in a home that is not very loving or one with either no rules or very harsh punishments.



Experts say that both boys and girls can bully, but they often bully people in different ways. Boys mostly use physical **violence** to bully others, while girls more often use words and social exclusion.

Bullies can act alone or as part of a group. They seem to have a need for power and enjoy causing others to suffer. Studies also show that bullies are more likely to get into more serious trouble as they get older, such as committing crimes and using drugs.

“I think there is an old assumption that bullies have low **self-esteem**,” Limber says. “But research suggests that many kids who bully do it just because they can, because they enjoy it.”

