Bullying and Children with Hearing Loss

Who’s in the Audience?
Do you have experience with bullying and children with special needs?

Why This Topic? Why Now?

White House Summit

- Bullying is a public health, public safety issue — *Not* a rite of passage, or “kids will be kids”
- Affects school performance, causes injury

August 20, 2013, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is committed to working with States to ensure that school districts provide all children with positive, safe, and nurturing school environments in which they can learn, develop, and participate. OSERS is issuing this letter to provide an overview of a school district’s responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to address bullying of students with disabilities.

As discussed in this letter, and consistent with prior Dear Colleague Letters, the Department has published, bullying of a student with a disability that results in the student not receiving meaningful educational benefit constitutes a denial of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the IDEA that must be remedied. However, even when situations do not rise to a level that constitutes a denial of FAPE, bullying can undermine a student’s ability to achieve his or her full academic potential. Attached to this letter are specific strategies that school districts and schools’ can implement to effectively prevent and respond to bullying, and resources for obtaining additional information.

Bullying of any student by another student, for any reason, cannot be tolerated in our schools. Bullying is no longer dismissed as an ordinary part of growing up, and every effort should be made to structure environments and provide supports to students and staff so that bullying does not occur. Teachers and adults should respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior and
• Transitions such as going from elementary school to middle school require increasing social competence in order to be accepted by others and to develop friendships.

• In larger environments with less adult supervision, bullying and harassment become greater risks, especially if a young person is different in any way.

• Transition from middle school to high school increases the risks of bullying and abuse, increasing the need for boundary-setting, advocacy, and help-seeking skills.

Children who have disabilities are up to two to three times more likely to be bullied than their nondisabled peers.

Sobering Statistics (Hard to Capture)
• Bullyingstatistics.org: 1:7 report being bullied
• CDC: 15-25% are bullied; 15-20% bully others
• CDC: children who have disabilities up to 63% more likely to be bullied than other children

http://phb.secondsensehearing.com/content/childhood-hearing-loss-education-and-bullies

CDC 2010 Stats
• Over half of students witnessed a bullying crime take place while at school
• About 15% who don’t show up for school report it being out of fear of being bullied
• ~71% report bullying as an ongoing problem
• Top years for bullying: 4th-8th grades, in which 90% reported being victims of bullying
• One in 20 students has seen a student with a gun at school

True or False?
• Most bullying is physical.  
  False

• Girls bully just as much as boys; they just bully differently.  
  True
Teasing, Goofing Around | Fighting, Conflict | Bullying
--- | --- | ---
Friends? | | 
Power? | | 
Intentions? | | 
Mood? | | 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teasing, Goofing Around</th>
<th>Fighting, Conflict</th>
<th>Bullying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually friends Often repeated</td>
<td>Usually NOT friends; usually not repeated</td>
<td>Generally not friend Generally repeated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power: Equal</td>
<td>Power: Mostly equal</td>
<td>Power: UNEQUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No intent to harm</td>
<td>Intentional harm-doing</td>
<td>Intentional harm-doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood is friendly, positive, shared</td>
<td>Mood is negative, aggressive, hostile on both sides</td>
<td>Mood is negative, aggressive, differs for victim and aggressor</td>
</tr>
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**True or False?**

- About 10% of children are involved in bullying/victim situations in elementary and middle school.

**False:**
- About 30% report bullying others
- About 30% report being bullied
- The same kids? No, only about 6% overlap

**Defining Our Terms**

- **Bullying** is aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power or strength, often repeated over time.
- **Bullying** can take many forms, including threats, taunts, stalking, intimidation, harassment, and coercion.
- **Bullying** can be conducted face-to-face and with electronic devices (cyber-bullying).
- **Bullying** creates a hostile learning/social environment for the child who is bullied, wherein the child has a hard time defending him/herself.
- **Teasing** may be a type of bullying, if the intent is to hurt.
Not to be confused with *conflict*

- It’s bullying if the answers are YES:
  - Is there an imbalance of power?
  - Does it happen more than once?
  - Is it intentional?
  - Does it cause mental, social or physical harm to another person?

**Latest Concern: Cyberbullying**

Children’s interactions are beyond adult supervision more than ever before

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**Defined:**

Bullying via electronic technology, including:

- sending mean messages
- posting embarrassing photos on social networking sites
- creating fake profiles of another individual

*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Webcast 8/15/2012*

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**“Bullcide”**

- Suicide continues to be #1 cause of death among children under age 14

- Strong connection between bullying and suicide (Yale School of Medicine)

- Suicide rates among adolescents have increased 50% in past 30 years

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**Primary Concern: Kids Don’t Tell**

- Taught not to “tattle”
- Did bring problem to adult who did nothing (breached trust)
- Afraid adults will make it worse
- Embarrassed to indicate others don’t like them
- Ashamed that they can’t stand up for themselves
- Don’t want to worry parents
Our Challenge: Help Kids Tell

- All children need to know:
  - telling is not tattling
  - What to do when it happens
- Also: do children with HL know what “bullying” means?
- Also: Prevention, intervention
  - Communicate “red flags” with parents
  - Info to parents on how to “bully-proof” children
  - Work with community
  - Convey “connectedness” to child (you are not alone)

“Red Flags” or Symptoms

- Physical
  - Head, back, stomach aches; dizziness; difficulty sleeping or too much sleep; weight fluctuations
- Behavioral
  - Bad temper, irritable, poor concentration, academic problems
- Psychological
  - Feeling alone, left out; nervous, insecure, suicidal/escapist thoughts

In September 2012, 308 pediatric audiologists completed a short survey about their experiences with bullying and children with hearing loss


Disbursement of Respondents (N=263)

- 26%
- 30%
- 12%
- 32%

A set of questions on bullying policies and concerns provided the following information:

- Almost half (43 percent, N = 138) of respondents worked in settings that had formal policies on how to respond to/help with bullying.
  - Their role was typically to report concerns to teachers, principals, Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, parents, and/or pediatricians.


- When asked if they themselves actively screened for bullying problems, 8 percent (N = 9) said yes.
- When asked if they addressed bullying concerns on an IEP or 504 Plan, more than two-thirds (69 percent, N = 76) indicated no.
- To the question, “Is there a need for guidance for audiologists regarding bullying?” the majority (88 percent, N = 223) of respondents indicated yes.

To summarize: about half of the respondents worked in settings with formal policies to address bullying incidents after they have occurred, but in most cases these policies did not include proactive screening procedures.

It seems most policies also do not result in modifications to an IEP. There was very strong agreement regarding the need for guidance to address bullying.

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Qualitative Comments on Observations about bullying and children who are D/HOH (N = 125)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Major Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Being different / using devices (i.e. hearing aids) increases risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Children choose to abandon devices to decrease risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Children are ill-prepared to respond to bullying (language/social skills, self confidence, etc.)</td>
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Previous Research

- Current research documenting the bullying behaviors of deaf children is very limited.
- A dissertation was completed that investigated deaf students in a residential school for the deaf. The results indicated that more bullying behaviors are reported in deaf students in residential schools than in hearing students in public schools (Hogdgon, 2005).

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A Pilot Study

- Rationale for the study – the literature on the bullying of students who are deaf is limited and pulls primarily from students who attend residential or specialized schools for students who are hard of hearing.
- More information is needed on the frequency and nature of bullying of students who are deaf in the general education setting.

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<td>1. Kids misinterpret curiosity for bullying</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Kids unaware of bullying behind their backs (&quot;safe&quot; for bullies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Kids don’t report/we don’t ask</td>
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A relatively new study examined perspectives among deaf and hard of hearing students in residential and large day schools regarding bullying, and compared those perspectives with those of a national database of hearing students.

The data revealed that deaf and hard of hearing students experience bullying at rates 2-3 times higher than those reported by hearing students.

Deaf and hard of hearing students reported that school personnel intervened less often when bullying occurred than was reported in the hearing sample.

Results indicate the need for school climate improvement for all students, regardless of hearing status.
Research questions

• What is the frequency and nature of the bullying of students who are deaf or hard of hearing who spend more than half of their day in the general education setting?
• What are the demographic trends in students who are bullied and the students who bully?
• What are teacher/audiologist perceptions of the frequency and nature of bullying?
• What are teacher/audiologist recommendations for addressing bullying?

Targeted sample

• Middle school youth who are deaf or hard of hearing
• Teachers/audiologists who serve middle school students who are deaf or hard of hearing

Methods

• Recruit children through advocacy groups (i.e. Hands and Voices)
• Online Survey for parents to collect demographic information
• Administer Reynolds Bully Victimization Scale
• Interview teachers and other school professionals

Outcomes

• Analyze data for trends on nature and frequency of bullying behaviors stratified by demographic variables
• Analyze themes from interviews for perspectives from teachers and other school professionals
• Conduct a wider scale study; make comparisons to children with normal hearing
• Make recommendations to modifications in school-wide interventions tailored to this population

Bullying & SW-PBIS

Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012

Bullying & Individual PBS

Ross & Horner, 2009
Practical Recommendations Now:
Addressing These Issues in the IEP

From Screening to IEP Goals: Social Skills
• Improve social skills: sharing, taking turns, thinking before acting
• Identify social norms for child who does not catch on to them by him or herself
• Participate in friendship groups
• Improve audibility and speech intelligibility so child can interact with peers

From Screening to IEP Goals: Self-Advocacy
• Identify bullying, how to report it
• Explain intent behind “telling” vs. “tattling”
• Tell the difference between playful teasing and bullying
• Be able to say “no” or “stop that”
• Use a signal system when in need of friend or adult intervention

Examples of supplementary aids/services, program modifications, supports
• Hallway, playground monitoring by school staff
• Allow child to leave class early to avoid hallway incidents
• Use social stories to help child understand difficult situations when they occur
• In-service school staff to understand child’s disability and vulnerability

• In-service classroom peers to help them understand child’s disability and/or child’s use of assistive technology, interpreter (i.e. things that are “different”)
• Set up no-questions-asked procedure for child to remove him or herself from a situation where bullying behavior occurs
Other Ideas?

Questions?