

C1

Understanding Bullying and Its Impact on Kids with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD

Bullies! Every classroom has at least one. Whose name comes to mind when you hear the word "bully"? Who was the kid who could upset your day with his verbal, physical, or emotional insults? Most adults who were bullied remember such childhood events vividly.

Bullying among elementary school children and teenagers is a growing problem in many schools in the United States. It's happening in urban, suburban, and rural schools. Kids who have learning disabilities (LD) or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) are especially vulnerable to bullying problems.

While bullying isn't new, professionals today have a new level of understanding of the problem. **Bullying is a learned behavior that can be prevented!** Effective bullying prevention programs are being used in progressive school systems throughout the country. It's important for parents, students, teachers, and school administrators to understand and learn to manage bullying that occurs at school and elsewhere.

What is Bullying?

"A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative acts on the part of one or more other students. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another," says Dan Olweus, a prominent researcher on bullying behaviors. **Bullying may involve physical aggression such as fighting, shoving, or kicking; verbal aggression such as name calling; or more subtle acts such as socially isolating another child.** With the increase in numbers of personal computers at home, youth have also learned to use email and websites to bully or harass others.

It is important for adults and youth to understand the difference* between bullying and normal conflict.

Normal Conflict	Bullying
Happens occasionally	Happens repeatedly
Accidental	Done on purpose
Not serious	Serious — threat of physical harm or emotional or psychological hurt
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction on part of the victim
Not seeking power or	Seeking power or

