

The Effects of Bullying on Early Childhood Education Students

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EFFECTS OF BULLYING

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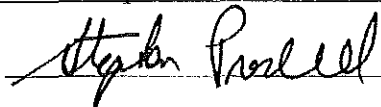
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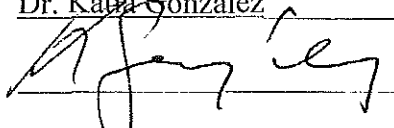
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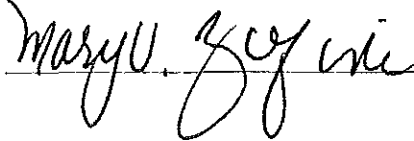
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Abstract

Bullying has reached near-epidemic proportions in today's schools, but there is little agreement among educators about what to do about it. This study investigated how teachers and principals defined, viewed, and handled bullying within their classrooms or school settings. After interviewing principals and teachers from a variety of schools, it was confirmed that there is no consensus regarding how to address bullying, though a wide range of strategies and methods have been attempted to prevent it from proliferating. It does appear that bullying is less of a problem in schools that have clear, well-defined, and easily implemented policies for dealing with bullying. The researcher recommends that schools from a variety of settings work together to develop a coherent program for addressing this serious and growing problem.

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Chapter 1**Introduction****Importance of This Study**

Pulling hair, being left out in class, not being invited to a play date, and being called fat are just a few of the issues that children deal with on a daily basis. Behaviors as small as those listed do not necessarily just have a short term effect, but they can have a long lasting effect on a child throughout his or her lifetime. ScienceDaily indicated that depression and other mental health issues can often occur as a result of leaving children out and name calling. Additionally, Waasdorp & Bradshaw (2011) explained how social-emotional problems along with academic achievement problems can also result from bullying.

Bullying has been an issue on the rise for a long time. Bullying occurs in the home, in the classroom environment, in the work environment, and even while just taking a walk in the park (Waasdorp & Bradshaw 2011). Bullying is everywhere we turn. It is not an issue that is ever going to go away entirely; it is part of human nature.

Just as bullying is a part of the world's everyday life, it is also a part of mine. I have been going to school for about twenty-one years and bullying has taken place in each one of my classroom settings. It has taken place at the different jobs that I have held, during student teaching, babysitting, and among friends. Moreover, I personally have been a target of bullying.

It is essential for educators to carefully consider the impact bullying can have in the well being of all students. Understanding the definition of bullying, different ways it may be displayed, while also reflecting on ways to collaborate with families, community,

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students and other educators can often provide different ways on how to approach bullying when it occurs. It is important to know the ins and outs of bullying, what to look for, how to handle or approach certain situations, and how to try and prevent it from even occurring in the first place. Children would be able to learn more if bullying was discouraged. Children would be more willing to go to school if they knew bullying would be addressed. Rather than living in fear of what could happen next between them and the bully, they could count on adults to intervene (Gartrell, 2008).

Bullying is a very serious topic and cannot be taken lightly. Some parents, families, teachers, and faculty members disregard bullying because they do not think that it is a big deal. However, something very slight could have a lasting effect on a child. Bullying is not just a problem that is occurring at that specific moment that it begins. Once bullying is allowed to go on, there are risks involved, especially for the victim of bullying.

By focusing on statistics, the scope of the problems, and the impact on learning when it comes to bullying, teachers and principals should have a firm grip on how to tackle bullying. Teachers and administration might handle bullying differently, but by working collaboratively, an affective approach could be made to minimize the effects of bullying.

Bullying has now reached near epidemic proportions in schools. Some children suffer for a lifetime as a result of bullying. Others take drastic measure by committing suicide. Still, others do not have the stomach to return to the site where they were bullied and so they must drop out of school. This problem of bullying requires immediate and dramatic action. This is why, how to prevent and limit bullying is the topic of this thesis.

The research questions are the following:

1. How do teachers and principals view bullying in their school and classroom based on interviews and surveys?
2. What do teachers and principals say about how serious the problem of bullying is?
3. What do teachers and principals say is being done to prevent and minimize effects of bullying on their students?
4. How are the children in their class and school affected by bullying?
5. What is being done in the school to prevent bullying from occurring?
 - a. What specific programs are in place?

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Definition of Terms

All terms were retrieved from:

Gartrell, D. (2008, May). Guidance Matters: Understand Bullying. *Young Children*, 54-57.

Bullying

Inflicting instrumental aggression or harming a person physically or psychologically to obtain a goal or to establish a perceived place of prestige by lowering the social status of others

Victim

A person that is harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“Children’s life stories lie behind every incident of bullying” (Gartrell, 2008).

Bullying at a young age can last into one’s adult life. Gartrell (2008) defined bullying as inflicting instrumental aggression or harming a person psychically or psychologically to obtain a goal or to “establish a perceived place of prestige by lowering the social status of the other” (Gartrell, 2008, p. 55).

Bullying is often prevalent in an early childhood setting and can be linked to stress, continuous brain development, and limited social perspective. This explains why children decide one day to befriend a peer, and the next day de-friend a peer (Gartrell, 2008). At this young age, children are learning patterns of social acceptance as well as rejection (Gartrell, 2008). Children at an early childhood setting are extremely vulnerable and are being molded by life experiences, behavior, and physical appearance (Gartrell, 2008). Bullying begins in preschool and it heightens in sixth grade and continues to peak into eighth grade (Feldman, 2004); however it does not stop there. Aggressive behavior in children happens rather frequently (Sanchez & Cerezo, 2010) and anything can trigger a certain behavior. People, regardless of age, at some point in time may become a perpetrator, not necessarily a target or a witness when it comes to bullying (Feldman 2004).

That odd child out that is being bullied is often moody, unfriendly, or is not outgoing (Gartrell, 2008). Children that are involved in bullying may already have some form of depression, anxiety or another mental health issue which results in those children lashing out at others and harming themselves (Melnick, 2008). A study done by

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Sanchez and Cerezo (2010) concluded that there is often a relationship between bullying and the child's age, immigration status, gender, educational support and whether they have repeated a grade. It was found that the largest number of victims were the children who had specific needs for educational support; whereas the bullies and bully-victims (those who act as both the bully and the victim) were more likely to be the grade – repeaters and immigrants (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010). Those children with a mental disability were more prone to be the victim due to being less social among peers, showing a passive attitude and lacking peer protection (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010). When these children have fewer friends and a lower social status, they tend to act impulsively when approached by a bully (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010). This study also shows that bullying is present at all levels of school, though slightly higher in fifth and sixth grade (17% and 15%), as opposed to the fourth grade (12%) (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010). Boys have an especially high involvement in bullying (25%) whereas girls (6%) are much less likely to be bullies (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010). According to this study 22% of students who are receiving specific needs for educational support (SNES) are victims, whereas 5.6% play the role of the bully or bully-victims (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010). Seventeen percent of immigrants are bullies and 10% of immigrants are victims (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010). This study shows that children, who are referred for SNES, regard this status as a target for bullies (Sanchez & Cerezo 2010).

Although bullying is just one of the many life stressors that can affect kids, (Melnick, 2008) there are psychological, physical and academic repercussions for the victim of bullying (Feldman, 2004). Indeed, one researcher has found that many victims of bullying find the memory of being bullied is especially painful (Feldman, 2004).

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Unfortunately, this same researcher has found that bullying is an unavoidable part of childhood (Feldman, 2004). Another powerful finding is that bullies, victims, and bully-victims all tend to have poor social skills, in fact they have a higher chance of testing poorly in social competencies and emotion regulation, than were children that had no involvement whatsoever with bullying (Melnick, 2008).

Bully-victims are referred to as the problematic children who are engaging in both a bully and a victim role (Melnick, 2008). Children are faced with many types of bullying which can include intimidation and teasing, and can eventually lead to physical abuse (Crockett, 2003). This physical abuse according to some students in Crockett's study goes unnoticed by teachers, parents and principals (Crockett, 2003). Students from Crockett's study also say that parents provide "little to no support" when it comes to their children being bullied (Crockett, 2003). The Committee for Children (2003) survey states that 78% of children have been bullied by someone in the past month (Crockett, 2003). Reactive aggression is when a child experiences a lot of stress and is unable to ask for help or assistance; as a result, the child acts out against this unjust world (Gartrell, 2008). The teacher then needs to determine what it is that is making this child so vulnerable (Gartrell, 2008). This is not always clear to teachers, as there are many children in the class to look after.

An approach that teachers might want to take on to deal with bullying is one that Gartrell (2008) suggests called "Liberation teaching". This refers to the teacher not giving up on a particular child and being able to comfort the victim, not punishing the victim (Gartrell, 2008). By punishing the victim, it can make matters worse. Instead the teacher should help the victim express his or her feelings about being bullied and help the

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bully to understand that it does not help them find their identity within the group (Gartrell, 2008). Bullying can include, but is not limited to threats, insults, psychical aggression as well as social isolation (Sanchez & Cerezo, 2010).

Boys and girls, especially at a young age, experience bullying very differently. Girls experience taunting, exclusion, and gossip (Gartrell, 2008). Although not as physical, it is still harmful and hurtful to the victim. Boys are experiencing just the opposite, more of a physical aggression (Gartrell, 2008).

Children with special needs are also being bullied by peers. However, research shows that children with disabilities tend to cope better with bullying when they have a friend or some sort of a support system (Bourke & Burgman, 2009). A possible explanation could be that children with disabilities are not always social and do not always have that person or support system to rely on, which is why children with disabilities tend to be an easier target. However, it is also true that students with disabilities are too often shunned by their peer group making them more liable to be humiliated and bullied. If a student with disabilities is being bullied, it is important not only to get the classroom teacher involved, but the parent and principal as well (Bourke & Burgman, 2009). The primary goal of the classroom teacher should be for all students to feel safe and comfortable. If children with special needs have this extra bond or connection with teachers or a faculty member, it might make their situation easier.

The classroom teacher needs to be aware of his or her surroundings at all times, and have a good understanding of the children in the class. When the teacher reacts to a situation that arises in the classroom it is important to be "proactive and preventative" (Gartrell, 2008) at the same time. At times mediation is the only way to immediately

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follow up with a child, but it might not always be the most effective (Gartrell, 2008). From the first day the students enter the classroom; the teacher should be encouraging children that the classroom is a place for all, and all should be respected equally (Gartrell, 2008). Teachers should be able to build an environment that models inclusive group spirit all while teaching it at the same time (Gartrell, 2008). Teachers should tell students that they can choose their friends, but that being friendly to all is imperative (Gartrell, 2008). Zero tolerance for bullying is just a quick fix for teachers to address bullying but does not give the teacher enough time to think about the individuals who are involved in the particular situation (Gartrell, 2008). Teachers need to be able to guide his or her students to befriend peers and accept others (Gartrell, 2008). Every child has a story worth knowing, one that hopefully resonates with a caring teacher (Gartrell, 2008). It is up to the teachers to guide students on how to be socially responsible for their actions as well as to find alternative behaviors to bullying. Schools as a whole need to have a unified, program wide way to approach and handle bullying (Gartrell, 2008) when a situation arises. Teachers as well as administrators need to be able to work together to make an encouraging classroom (Gartrell, 2008). This includes keeping parents and guardians in the know, and using guidance as a source for conflicts for prevention as well as intervention (Gartrell, 2008).

Anti-bullying strategies should be implemented at an early age to prevent issues before they have time to escalate. Recently there has been a growing interest in the possible risk factors to prevent these particular behaviors in an early childhood setting (Sanchez & Cerezo, 2010). These anti-bullying strategies need to be able to focus not just on the bullies, but the victims as well as the bystanders (Feldman, 2004). These anti-

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bullying strategies also need to focus on creating a balance between appropriate consequences and preventing bullying (Feldman, 2004). There is only so much that a school can do to prevent bullying, which is why it is so important to keep parents or guardians involved and informed on what goes on with their children. The anti-bullying strategies need to make sure that the bully not only faces the consequences of what he or she has done, but they then need to be rewarded for when they exhibit good behavior (Feldman, 2004). It is also very important to avoid humiliation for the bully (Feldman, 2004), so that the bully does not retaliate.

The victim is not helpless, however, and can sometimes take measures to reduce the severity of bullying. For instance, victims who project an air of self-confidence are less likely to be bullied. They can look the bully in the eye, so that the bully can see more clearly who he or she might be abusing. The victim can also speak up and let the bully know that this behavior is unacceptable. Even just standing up straight can convey the message that the potential victim will not put up with bullying. Other strategies might include walking away so that the bully has no one to bother. Simply telling the bully to stop can also be surprisingly affective. And, it is often a good idea to approach a teacher or another responsible adult so that they too can play an active role in curtailing bullying. Children might enjoy role playing to understand better and to practice as well as how to see how it feels. By role playing, children can learn about empathy, the pain that the victim feels as well as the cruelty of the bully. The anti-bullying program also needs to be able to address the bystanders (Feldman, 2004).

Bystanders play a very critical role when it comes to bullying. It is important to show that when bystanders say or do nothing, they are providing an audience and

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encouragement for the bully (Feldman, 2004). Also, when bystanders do not intervene, they must assume some responsibility when someone is being harmed, that is no time to remain neutral (Feldman, 2004). The best way to prevent bullying is to maintain good discipline and an orderly learning environment (Feldman, 2004). It is important to ensure that the students feel secure and enjoy learning and attending school every day (Feldman, 2004). One of the best ways to make it more likely for bullies to respond is when teachers teach lessons on the negative consequences. Teachers are able to teach this in their lessons, as all students will benefit by learning to treat one another with respect (Feldman, 2004).

The victim is not the only one that is affected by behaviors of the bully, the bully in fact is also affected (Fidler, 2004). Bullies are also lacking in social, emotional, and academic progress when bullying others (Fidler, 2004). If bullies continue to go down the wrong path, they can end up becoming affiliated with drug and gang cultures, and can eventually wind up in prison (Fidler, 2004).

The teachers' role is very important when it comes to bullying, however, it is most effective when implementation is done at district, school and classroom settings (Shore, 2009). Research has shown that if a comprehensive school wide prevention program is in place, schools can cut back on bullying by as much as 50% (Shore, 2009).

Right from day one there are little steps that teachers can make in his or her classroom to help bully-proof the learning environment. Teachers should avoid sarcasm, incorporate lessons pinpointing how everyone is different, remind students that we must work together to succeed, comforting students when they get upset, have a box where at the end of the day children can place compliments to peers secretly, and pay attention to

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children doing random acts of kindness and display those acts in the classroom (Shore, 2009) and so much more.

Often times, bullying is not reported to teachers because students hesitate to report it in fear of what could come next (Fidler, 2004) or that they could become a possible victim of retaliation (Shore, 2009). Another reason why bullying is not always reported is because students feel that administration might not take the situation seriously (Shore, 2009). Reasons such as this is why bullying often goes undetected and under-reported (Shore, 2009). It is important that the teacher makes all students feel comfortable upon their entry into the classroom. If children feel comfortable then that can lead to the students opening up, reporting a problem, or talking about an issue.

Due to all of the changes and the fast paced society in which we live today, times are changing, and it is not always for the better. Children of all ages used to be able to hide from bullying in the comfort of their home (Keith & Martin, 2005). However, now, as the Internet is becoming more accessible, home is no longer a haven (Keith & Martin, 2005, 225). These different means of technology allow people to spread rumors, make threats, and make someone's life absolutely miserable (Keith & Martin, 2005).

Cyber-bullying, although not as prevalent in an early childhood environment, is still a tremendous issue when dealing with bullying. Cyber-bullying can be defined as communication through different forms of technology, which include a pager, text messaging through the use of cell phones, e-mail, instant messaging, offensive online polling sites and derogatory personal websites, where the person's intent is to harm others (Keith & Martin, 2005). The primary intent of cyber-bullying is to hurt others by means of control and power. Even though children at an Early Childhood level might not be

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partaking in cyber-bullying, as times are changing, technology is becoming more and more accessible to children at a younger age. Cyber-bullying allows for the bully to easily access information about their victim and even locate them (Keith & Martin, 2005). It has been estimated that 91% of kids aged 12 to 15 have access to the Internet (Keith & Martin, 2005).

If teachers see that cyber-bullying is taking place in his or her classroom, teachers can use this as a good teaching point to help turn the tables. Teachers can try to guide children to use technology positively in ways that promote respect (Keith & Martin, 2005). Teachers can also teach children that they are responsible for their actions (Keith & Martin, 2005) even though it is on the Internet and cannot necessarily be linked back to them immediately. Some of these strategies could help to lessen the impact of cyber-bullying within the class, at home, (Keith & Martin, 2005) or in the future.

When dealing with cyber-bullying, many parents are in denial that their child would be apart of this type of bullying, and that their child is not capable of being so mean (Keith & Martin, 2005). Parents always think that their child is perfect and can do no wrong. However, behind closed doors, a lot can occur especially when influenced and peer pressured by peers.

Girls have now turned to the Internet to get their anger out on to others and use their relationships as “weapons,” (Keith & Martin, 2005) towards others, which is a form of relational aggression (Keith & Martin, 2005). Face to face confrontation for girls is much more difficult, and they tend to resort to using the Internet or text messaging (Keith & Martin, 2005). Girls typically do not like face to face confrontation, so they tend to find it easier to lash out onto others via the Internet.

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Boys however, might make online threats but will then act upon them (Keith & Martin, 2005). Boys tend to try to hide their identity on the Internet so that they can get their frustration out but not necessarily deal with the consequences (Keith & Martin, 2005). Many may see this as a cowardly approach to dealing with a situation. But the special appeal of the Internet is that it allows boys in particular to express hostility without assuming accountability for their behavior.

Because cyber-bullying is on the rise, there are different measures that parents can take in order to help prevent their child from being either the bully or the victim. Rather than having a computer in the child's room, parents or guardians should consider having a computer in a central location so that everyone has access to it. By doing so, parents or guardians can monitor what kind of work or leisurely activities are being done on the computer. By having a computer in the child's room, parental supervision is limited and it is hard to distinguish what the child is doing behind closed doors. A good location for the computer might be in the kitchen or living room.

Some parents can be at fault for some of the bullying that takes place among children. Parents often provide cell phones to their children in order to keep in touch with their child and know where they are and that they are safe (Keith & Martin, 2005). With good intent from the parent, comes bad intent from the child. Children are now using cell phones as a weapon as well to harass others (Keith & Martin, 2005) through prank calls and text messaging.

Websites are also being created by students to taunt others behind closed doors. These websites can be used to torment, harass and mock peers (Keith & Martin, 2005). Voting booths can be created where people can leave comments about others and post

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pictures to make fun of someone (Keith & Martin, 2005), without that person even knowing.

Cyber-bullying has affected as many as 29% of youth using the Internet, and of that 29%, 9% of those have experienced online harassment (Slovak & Singer, 2011). Cyber-bullying can happen at any time without regard to geographical barriers (Slovak & Singer, 2011). Cyber-bullies tend to be older than traditional bullies (Slovak & Singer, 2011).

All school staff members, including social workers, have the responsibility to preserve a secure, protected and healthy learning atmosphere for children, while at the same time keeping laws and regulations that, although designed to watch over children, have the unintentional consequences of restricting faculty members' capability to shield against cyber-bullying (Slovak & Singer, 2011). Schools are often confused about how to handle cyber-bullying when it occurs. School officials are not sure when it is appropriate to intervene as well as when it is required to follow the law. Staff should know that anything that looks or sounds like bullying that is taking place on the campus or school location must be reported (Slovak & Singer, 2011). When instances of bullying occur elsewhere, staff should be notified and take precautions to try to eliminate it (Slovak & Singer, 2011). If it is a violation under the First Amendment, then it must be reported (Slovak & Singer, 2011). It is the school's duty to restrict any bullying from taking place on school grounds (Slovak & Singer, 2011). Typically the call is made by social workers on how to address these situations.

The confusion on when to restrict bullying is always going to be an issue for staff members. According to a student report, parents and schools provide "little to no

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support” when it comes to bullying (Crockett, 2004). In the 2003 Committee for Children survey it has been reported that within the past month 78% of children have been bullied (Crockett, 2004). It was also found that in a classroom of twenty children, there are most likely an average of three children that have taken the role of bully or victim (Crockett, 2004).

Another ongoing concern of bullying involves the tendency to victimize the child with disabilities. Children with disabilities tend to experience more frequent bullying than those children that do not have a disability (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). In a study performed in the UK with 26 children, it was found that out of those 26 children, half of them had been bullied by someone in the school (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). Those with a hearing impairment are often bullied due to the quality of their speech production (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). Those with a visual impairment find it difficult to develop social skills (Bourke & Burgman, 2010) that are up to par with their peers, and as a result are bullied (Bourke & Burgman, 2010).

But it is not just students with disabilities who are being affected by bullying. Gifted children are also a target for bullies because they seem to be “too bossy” or “too smart” according to their peers (Hargrove, 2010). These children tend to be harmed more because they are hypersensitive (Hargrove, 2010). These children might be hypersensitive due to the vast amount of stress they are put under to perform at their absolute best. Many of these children take criticism to heart, and this is where bullying can be misinterpreted. It was reported that by the end of eighth grade, 60% of the children who were labeled as “gifted” were bullied at some point (Hargrove, 2010).

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A child who has a close tie or bond with a dependable grown-up often is able to conquer unbelievable odds (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). It is striking how people can make a difference in certain situations if they have the right attitude (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). Research has shown that 12-18% of youth are bullied on a daily basis, but never tell anyone about it (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). It is this percentage of children that educators need to worry about because these are the children who are at risk (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). Those children who do not speak out about bullying have a high rate of dropping out of school, bringing weapons to school and possibly using them, and eventually committing suicide (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). Research has shown that those children who were once bullied as a child are still facing problems with their social life well into their thirties (Defresne & Dorn, 2005).

Finding solutions to deal with bullying takes trial and error. Teachers or administration need to think carefully before they act in certain situations, because many attempts have been counter-productive when trying to address different situations (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). Peer mediation is rarely appropriate when trying to resolve bullying because it is not a conflict; it is victimization (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). While peer mediation might work for some, it is not a resolution for all. One cannot expect a child who was just beat up by a bully to shake hands and forgive and forget that person for what they did to them. Each case of bullying is different, and needs to be handled very carefully as not to make matters worse.

When teachers or administration are notified of a student being bullied, it is important that they follow up and investigate more into the problem (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). Typically students might not tell you everything all at once, and instead might

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just hint at it (Defresne & Dorn, 2005). Teachers can try and ask the student more questions so that before taking an approach, teachers can help to back it up (Defresne & Dorn, 2005).

Bullying is not a trivial phenomenon in its worst and most uncontrolled state. Young teens are sometimes taken to the breaking point and even resort in the most extreme circumstances to taking their own lives. Despite efforts to fund an anti-bullying programs at the federal level, terrible damage is still being done. Many people recognize the tragic damage and its effects can be less drastic when parents and administration step in. It still remains a challenging issue for all and the only way that adults might succeed in preventing bullying from occurring is to practice by intervening more and to take part in professional development exercises. Even with all of this research bullying often cannot be prevented, but its effects can be alleviated.

Suicide has been all over the media and it is often preceded by an act of bullying at schools (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). There are scientific studies that have made a connection between being a bullied victim and suicide ideation (the thought of harming, inflicting pain or committing suicide) (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). It was also found that if the victim had parents with internalizing disorders, they had higher levels of suicide rates as opposed to those who were not a victim of bullying (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). Victims of bullying who felt as if they were rejected at home also reported to have more thoughts about suicide (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008).

When dealing with suicide, females have a greater risk of suicide ideation, as opposed to males (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). However, there are many factors that weigh into the idea of suicide (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). These factors can be the

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personality of the victim, the relationships with their peers, and the victim's family lifestyle and upbringing (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008).

Research has also concluded that victims and bully-victims have high rates of familial psychopathology (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). Bully-victims seem to also be coming from homes where they are rejected and the family is hostile (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). While suicide is more common, it is still found that it occurs more often among older children and adolescents as opposed to younger children (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008). Teachers and administration should be on the watch for student behavior. Teachers should also take into consideration the influence of family factors such as the home environment prior to creating severe consequences for the bully (Herba & Ferdinand et. al, 2008).

With all of this research there is still no right or wrong way to handle bullying. People need to be aware of some signs that a child might be getting bullied. These include: spending a long amount of time on the computer, showing signs of depression or crying easily, being anti-social, having nightmares, experiencing mood swings, and falling behind in school or homework assignments (Keith & Martin, 2005). If teachers notice some of these signs, it is important to notify parents and even other administrators.

In a study that was performed in Australia with school-aged children, 92% had been a witness to verbal bullying, and 60% have witnessed physical bullying (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). No one should have to be a part of bullying, whether they are the bully, the victim, or the bully-victim. As bullying is becoming a hot topic in the media, it is important that people are made aware of all of the effects of bullying. It is not just at that

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very moment that someone is bullied where they feel inferior, that same person, from that one experience might feel inferior for the rest of their lives.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of 12 Teachers and 1 Principal/Director of Early Childhood, with a total of 13 participants. Of these participants there were no male Elementary School Principals, and there was one female Elementary School Principal. There was one male Elementary School Teachers and 11 female Elementary School Teachers. The participants were all employed and working for schools in the United States. Participants came from schools in New York, California, New Jersey and Florida. Participants were selected based on connections made in schools or friends or family friends that work in schools.

Settings

The setting for this study has taken place in several different locations, all within the United States. Two participants were from the Wagner College Early Childhood Center, located in Staten Island New York. This school allows students to register starting at age two years and up to six years of age. The Early Childhood Center has classrooms for preschool and kindergarten children. This school is predominantly Caucasian.

Another setting for this study took place in Merrick, Long Island at a school called St. John's Lutheran Church Early Childhood Center. This school allows for children to enter at age two and stay until age five. This school is predominantly Caucasian.

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The Rosenberg Early Childhood Center of the JCCSF is located in San Francisco California. Children at this school are between the ages of two and five years old. This school is predominantly of Jewish descent.

Birch Elementary School was another school that participated in this study, and had three participants. Birch Elementary school is located in South Merrick, New York. This school ranged from Kindergarten up to the sixth grade. This school is predominantly Caucasian. There are no children attending this school that qualify for free lunch.

Ridge Elementary School, located in Ridgewood New Jersey was another school willing to participate in this study. This school has children from Kindergarten up to the fifth grade. This school is predominantly Caucasian and has children from ages Kindergarten up to the sixth grade. Only a few children in the school qualify for free lunch.

Public School 39 was another school to participate in the study. This school is located in Staten Island, New York. This school has children from preschool to fourth grade. This school is predominantly Caucasian. Just under half of the student population qualifies for a free lunch.

Public School 4 - Duke Ellington, located in New York, New York was another school that participated in this study. This school serves children from preschool up to the fifth grade. This school is predominantly Hispanic and Latino and almost every student qualifies for a free lunch.

Explorer K-8 School is located in Spring Hill, Florida was another school that participated in this study. This school is predominately Caucasian.

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The research for the current study was conducted in the school principal's office or the teacher's classroom. Both rooms were available for the researcher and participant to conduct the study. Both locations had a fairly quiet environment to hold the study. Those participants who were unable to meet face to face with the researcher due to meetings, a busy schedule or being out of state, were e-mailed or mailed the survey and questionnaire and it was later sent back completed to the researcher.

Instrumentation

Principal/Teacher Consent Cover Letter

In order to gain permission to participate in the study, a cover letter was given to the potential participants prior to the study occurring. The Principal/Teacher Consent Cover Letter explained that the study was being conducted to obtain research for a thesis study in order for the researcher to obtain a masters degree. The Principal/Teacher Consent Cover Letter also provided detailed information of the study being completed and the potential significance of the outcome results (See Appendix B).

Informed Consent Form

An Informed Consent Form was provided to all principals and teachers prior to the beginning of the study. This Informed Consent Form described the procedure of the study and what the participants should expect to occur during this time. Portions of the Informed Consent Form also reiterated information previously provided in the Principal/Teacher Consent Cover Letter to ensure that all participants were aware of their rights and understood all of the procedures for completing this study. After reading the Informed Consent Form, if the participants still wished to participate in the study, they returned one copy of the consent form with their name printed along with their signature

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to the researcher indicating that they give permission to participate in the study (See Appendix C).

Thank-You Letter - Principal

After the participant completed all parts of the study, all principals received a thank-you letter to show appreciation for the participant's permission in the study. The Thank-You Letter included appreciation for the participation and for cooperating throughout the entire course of the study (See Appendix D).

Thank-You Letter - Teacher

After the participant completed all parts of the study, all teachers received a thank-you letter to show appreciation for the participant's permission in the study. The Thank-You Letter included appreciation for the participation and for cooperating throughout the entire course of the study (See Appendix E).

Survey

A survey was administered first to the participants involved in the study. For the survey, there were no right or wrong answers, all answers were opinion based. An identical survey was administered to all of the participants by the researcher. There were several different types of questions that were asked. Some questions were geared towards the bullies in the classroom or school, while some questions were geared towards the victims in the classroom or school. Some questions were very general, while others were more specific. A sample question from the survey was: "How many children in your class have disabilities?" To view more questions, for the survey, please see Appendix.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered second to all of the participants involved in the study. For the questionnaire, there were no right or wrong answers, all answers were opinion based. An identical questionnaire was administered to all of the participants by the researcher. There were several different types of questions that were asked. Some questions were geared towards bullies in the school and classroom; while some questions were geared towards the victims in classrooms and schools. Some questions were very general, while others were more specific. A sample question from the questionnaire was: "How are parents involved when bullying affects their child?" To view more questions, for the questionnaire, please see Appendix.

Interview

An interview was administered last to some of the participants involved in the study. For the interview, there were no right or wrong answers, all answers were opinion based. An identical interview was administered to all of the participants by the researcher. There were several different types of questions that were asked. Some questions were geared towards bullying in classrooms and schools; while some questions were geared towards the victim. Some questions were very general, while others were more specific. A sample question from the interview was: "To what extent do bullies have an effect on their victims?" To view more questions for the interview, please see Appendix.

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Procedure

A Principal/Teacher Consent Cover Letter and an Informed Consent Form (See Appendix) were given to potential participants asked to participate in the current study. The study's intent was to measure the effects of bullying on children in an early childhood setting.

The survey given to both the teachers and principals were administered first. The survey has questions that the participant was able to answer in just a few minutes. All of the questions were short and were able to be answered in one to two words. The survey took the participants approximately three minutes to complete.

The questionnaire was administered second to both the principals and the teachers. The questionnaire had questions that required longer answers than the survey therefore taking longer than the survey to complete. This questionnaire took the participants approximately seven minutes to complete.

Last, the interview was completed with some of the principals and some of the teachers. This interview was given so that participants could expand on their answers and elaborate on their thoughts or ideas in regard to bullying. This interview took approximately twenty minutes for the participants to complete.

The survey, questionnaire and interview were all conducted individually by the researcher in either a classroom or office setting. For those that were unable to meet face to face with the researcher, e-mails or copies of the survey, questionnaire and interview were sent in the mail to the participants. The survey, questionnaire and interview took between twenty-five and thirty minutes to complete. The participants all generally

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seemed to be relaxed when participating in the study. There were some distractions, due to students, phone calls, etc. All participants were able to quickly think of different incidents that had occurred in his or her classroom or school. All surveys, questionnaires, and interviews were completed by the participant and collected by the researcher.

Results

Participant A is a teacher at Wagner College's Early Childhood Center and has anywhere from ten to sixteen children in her classes. None of the children that Participant A works with has disabilities. There are also no unsafe areas that Participant A has in her classroom. Participant A sees anywhere from zero to ten bullying incidents per day. However, when asked about bullying incidents in a week, month and on a yearly basis, it varies. Participant A continued in her survey to say that all students at some point in time are affected by bullying. Participant A also stated that depending on the class she is teaching, some males are more affected by bullies, while in other classes, females are especially affected by bullying. When it comes to intervening if an incident takes place, Participant A says that a child will step in and show acts of kindness while other children might tell the teacher. The most common bullying issues that Participant A deals with is sharing, students not wanting to play with other children, leaving one another out, unkind words and tattling on each other.

According to Participant A's questionnaire, she sees bullying among children as early as two to three years old. Participant A says that she does not think that bullying decreases with age, but she finds that it increases with age. Participant A mentioned that parents get involved when their child comes home and speaks about an incident. When this happens, parents are willing to work out problems children may be having. It is

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usually when children are older that parental denial sets in. Participant A notices that sometimes victim's friends are quiet and do not step in while others try to stand up for their friend when they are being bullied. Participant A thinks it is very important that all children are made to feel comfortable in the classroom. All issues are dealt with in conversation and explaining what is the right thing to do. Participant A believes that acts of bullying should be brought to administration's attention, and that the administration's involvement should occur when it reaches outside the teacher's ability to handle it. Participant A notices that since the children are at such a young age that they typically approach the teacher or their parents when being bullied. From observation, Participant A sees that bullying takes place where there are many children playing together; for example, the sandbox, the clean up area and the kitchen area.

Participant B is a teacher at St. John's Lutheran Church's Early Childhood Center. Participant B defines bullying as making someone feel mistreated or threatened and is seen as part of our everyday life. Bullying is noticed around the age of two years old and does not decrease as children get older says Participant B. Participant B sees pushing, shoving, and leaving one another out when in the classroom or on the playground as acts of bullying. Parents are mostly involved when their child tells them about an incident that took place. Participant B notices that the victims are typically the smaller and quieter ones in the classroom. Participant B says that both males and females are equally affected by bullying, and both sexes are quick to tattletale on one another. However, males tend to be more physical with their victims than the females. There are no children in class with disabilities at the present time.

When bullying occurs, teachers intervene by speaking to the students about the issue. At such a young age, bullying does not really escalate to anything serious where other professionals need to become involved. However, if it does persist the victims can feel threatened and terrified of the bully. Victims also portray a sense of low self-esteem and tend to be nervous and always on edge. However, when bullying does occur, children are usually quick to run to tell the teacher to report the problem. When the teacher is made aware of the situation, depending on the incident, communication is made and sometimes a two to three minute time out is also given to the child. However, bullies at this age do not understand the effects of their actions, but do associate a time out with a behavior that should not be demonstrated or repeated again. Victims are very much affected by bullies and are easily distracted from the school work and what is going on in the classroom.

Participant C is a teacher at Rosenberg Early Childhood Center of the JCCSF in San Francisco California. This preschool has children ages two to five years old and already bullying is being seen, and does not decrease, as children get older. Bullying can range from children pushing a friend or a child biting a friend. Parents in general are very involved at this school, and when it comes to bullying, parents are even more so involved. Parents ask about their children on a daily basis and want to know what it is that their child has done, or what has been done to their child. Even though parents are involved, administration keeps parents up to date about what goes on at school. Most bullying situations take place outside when teachers fail to monitor the children. It is when no one is looking that the bullies tend to attack their victims.

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Bullying takes place on an everyday basis among all children regardless of their sex says Participant C. Children at this stage are still learning how to share, are repeating words they hear elders say to their peers, and are often showing aggressive behaviors. When things like this occur, not many children get involved, they sit back and watch what is going on.

Participant D works at Birch Elementary School located in South Merrick, New York. Participant D is in a special education classroom setting, working with children grades two through six with just seven children, all of which are male students. Birch Elementary School is a predominantly Caucasian school. This participant was interesting due to her being in a classroom particularly with only seven children, all of which have disabilities. Participant D is with a wider age range of children who are functioning on a much lower level. Participant D defines bullying as anything that is hurtful to another.

Participant D has seen bullying occur in her school as early as Kindergarten. At this age, most bullying comes in the form of hurtful words, leaving children out of games or play dates, and name-calling. If this continues, it can have a huge effect on the victim over a long period of time. However, the targets of bullies tend to be those that are less popular, special needs children, children who do not dress like everyone else, or those that might be overweight. Bullies, although they may appear to be strong and confident, on the outside, more often than not they are just the opposite.

Participant D believes that sometimes parents are the roots of some of the bullying that occurs among children. Children see and hear their parents or elders talking about their friends, and then they end up following in their footsteps. Parents tend to do all of the things that children do, just at a different level.

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Friends of bullies sometimes feel confused about what is going on says

Participant D. However, because of this confusion, friends end up siding with the bullies as a way to feel safe. Some friends of bullies think that if they can remain friends with the bully, they themselves will not become a potential target. Friends of victims are seen as being torn when this situation arises. They are sometimes frightened to get involved in fear of what could then happen to them. If the victim does not have a strong or large group of friends, it makes it that much easier for the bully to target that one particular person.

When bullying occurs in the school says Participant D, some teachers will get involved immediately. In her school it is typically the social worker and the psychologist who get a phone call in order to intervene if the situation gets out of control. When a problem occurs the principal is also notified. Children will either inform their parents or the teachers first when being bullied. Participant D sees the most problems occur at recess and during physical education classes among victims and bullies.

In Participant D's class of seven there is only one student who is really being affected by bullying. Of the six other children in her classroom, peers do not typically intervene once it has started. On a daily basis, children are being left out of things and no one really does anything to try and include them. Specifically in physical education, some children are not chosen when they need to pick partners for an activity, which almost always leads to people being by themselves.

Participant E also works at Birch Elementary School in South Merrick, New York, and is a gym teacher who instructs children from Kindergarten through sixth grade. This participant was particularly appealing since his time spent with students is not in a

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typical classroom setting. Children tend to branch out and let loose when outside of the classroom. Another reason this particular participant was interesting was due to the wide range of children he sees throughout the day.

Participant E defines bullying as showing no regard for the feelings of others with a goal to establish power in an effort to make others feel bad. Participant E sees that victims are those that have trouble speaking up for themselves, they might look different, dress different and do not necessarily fit in with others. Girls are often manipulative and sneaky and gets worse over time where as boys tend to be more physical. Unfortunately Participant E does not see bullying ending, but sees it continue even in the work place. Bullies are looking for power and control and show aggression while intimidating others.

Participant E sees bullying taking place as early as first grade. When children are playing in gym class, they look up to a leader. Those leaders are the ones that appear to have more power and by having this power they are able to allow or turn children away and they become a bully. In gym class children are often left out of small groups and there is a lot of teasing and name calling as children start to become competitive with one another.

After acts of bullying occur, Participant E says that parents are notified right away. Depending on the severity of the issue, parents will meet with the school staff and speak about what happened with the child. Friends of bullies are reluctant to say or do something and often do not realize the effect that it has on the victim.

Participant F is also a teacher at Birch Elementary School located in South Merrick, New York. Participant F is a second grade teacher who instructs nineteen children, none of which have any disabilities. Even though Participant F does not

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typically see bullying in her classroom, she does notice that most bullying occurs in the upper grades, especially fourth through sixth grade. Participant F believes that bullying only gets worse as the children get older.

Participant F sees parents getting involved if their child goes home and reports an issue to them. From there, parents are in contact with the teacher, the school and eventually the social worker. Sometimes the teacher is unaware of the bullying that is occurring because it takes place in the lunchroom or after school, so occasionally it is the parents who bring up a bullying situation to a teacher.

Friends of the bully often do not know what to do in situations when bullying occurs says Participant F. Whereas friends of the victim have been labeled as a bystander because they do not know how to react or defuse the situation. Bullies often attack others who are quiet and different from the norm. Boys tend to be more physical, whereas girls are more verbally destructive towards their victim. Bullies have an aura of unhappiness, they have a lot of anger, often have low self esteem, and can sometimes negatively effect the victims academic work.

When Participant F sees an incident arise, she will address the issue, and will then contact the principal and the social worker. Overall, teachers need to be good, positive role models for all the students so that they know that bullying will not be taken lightly. When discussing the issue of bullying in her school, Participant F does not see bullying as a serious issue in her school due to the quick approach that teachers and administration use to tackle any problems.

There are different ways to prevent and minimize the effects of bullying and Participant F thinks it is best to have good role models, read books, role-play and have

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different programs in place. The upper grades have speakers that come in to the school to speak about bullying. The classroom's general approach to bullying is to address the issue, talk to children, and make the school aware of the situations that arise. The school's general approach to bullying is handled differently in each situation. When an issue really escalates, all parties are involved: the classroom teacher, the principal and the social worker.

Participant G works at Ridge Elementary School in Ridgewood New Jersey in a first grade inclusive classroom. In her classroom there are children with autism, children with learning disabilities, and children who have language and speech difficulties.

Participant G defines bullying as an excessive amount of teasing with intentions to hurt an individual physically and/or emotionally. Participant G was a victim of bullying in high school where girls were spreading rumors about her. Participant G was also bullied as an adult by a manager in her workplace who would say she was incompetent at her job and also spoke down to her in front of her co-workers. After confronting her manager, this bullying diminished.

Participant G first sees bullying in children between ages six and seven years old and it only increases from there. However, she also notices that there are fewer cases of children being bullied because there is less socialization among different groups of friends. Typically, Participant G sees verbal bullying with most of the elementary school children. The younger children tend to be more physical in more of a playful, unintentional way; for example, pulling hair, stepping on toes and fingers, poking, spitting, etc. Bullies are hurtful and can also be fearful to others because peers will not want to interact with them. Bullies are often loud and disruptive in the classroom.

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Sometimes bullies have difficulty socializing with peers and seem to be detached from social groups as a whole. The victim is definitely affected by the bully. The most common effect that teachers see is that victims' academic work goes into decline.

Personally, when Participant G sees bullying, she does not tolerate it. She will intervene, give positive examples of how to act in the specific situation and will express consequences for the situation. Parent involvement is frequent when dealing with bullying, says Participant G. Parents have called and e-mailed about different incidents that have occurred with their children.

Ridge Elementary School has a bullying policy that is in effect district wide. This policy requires all bully accusations or reports to be documented and that the papers become part of the child's academic file. The social worker then has teacher and parent meetings with all of the children who are involved. These meetings are done separately between the bully and the victim and their families. From here, the parents are active and are able to participate in a behavior-type plan which is decided at the meeting with the social worker who also puts into place a new behavior plan that is practiced in the classroom between the teacher and the student. Even though there is a new plan of action, not all parents are very eager to try out some of the suggestions made. Behavior plans are also put into place to help motivate the student to behave well and work hard in all subject areas. When the student accomplishes the required goal that was set, they receive a reward which is decided between their teacher, the student and the social worker.

Ridge Elementary School also has an assembly each month which is designed to revolve around bullying in the school and how to prevent bullying from taking place.

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Each grade is given their own presentation and all students are personally involved in the problem solving process. The grades participate in open circles as part of the curriculum where they discuss bullying with the social worker.

It has been difficult to hold bullies accountable for all of their actions because often times it is not witnessed by authority figures. An action might also have just been observed once, and not over an extended period of time. Bullies are also good liars and are excellent at denying their actions when questioned. After an accusation has been made, the teacher usually takes more time to observe the student's behavior to see if the accusations are true.

In the first grade, the bullies typically do not have many friends says Participant G. Bullies are noted to be friends with one another and tend to negatively influence one another towards classmates and peers. Bullies are likely to attack the majority of their victims while on the rug, during physical education, and during lunch in the cafeteria. Participant G does not see what occurs in the cafeteria, however, she does hear about it from the monitors who watch the children during their lunch break.

Friends of victims, says Participant G, are apt to stay away from the bully and do not socialize with that individual. Friends of victims are usually worried to be around the bully because they do not know what kind of a reaction they will get. In some particular cases, it has created a fear of socializing and communicating with the bully. Typically all cases of bullying go straight to the classroom teacher.

Classroom teachers try to intervene when bullying occurs among students. They try to negotiate and speak with the individual that is causing trouble. Sometimes the student will get escorted to the principal's office or the social workers office depending

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on the severity of the incident. According to Participant G, administration in the school is very involved. The social worker specifically has attended bully prevention workshops and specializes in the bully report.

In a class of twenty-three students, Participant G has noticed that about 75% of females in the class are bullied and about 25% of the males in her class are bullied. Many cases are seen during the day especially when bullies are not focused or feel as if they are being left out on the playground or during group activities. Typically Participant G notices that if someone is being bullied they end up standing up for themselves. On occasion, their best friends might help out verbally, but for the most part it ends up with the teacher intervening. Participant G feels as if the only unsafe area in the school would be the older children's bathroom since adults do not monitor it.

Participant H is a teacher at Public School 4 Duke Ellington. He teaches preschool for children with a wide range of disabilities and almost all of them are non-verbal. The children at this age and ability are completely unaware of the meaning of bullying. This teacher found it difficult to complete many of the questions because he typically does not see any bullying occur in his classroom at all. The students in this classroom are at a young age where their disability is controlling them. Their disabilities have taken over some of their bodily functions and they end up hitting a peer, however it is unintentional. One can notice by the child's reaction that it was unintentional or a child might not even notice that someone is there standing right next to them when it happens. Since these children all have disabilities it is unfair to label any of it as bullying, especially depending on the disability that they have. While children with disabilities should be held accountable for their actions, there is also a fine line of

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determining what is an act of unkindness and what is an act as a result of the child's disability.

Participant I is a teacher at Public School 39 in Staten Island, New York.

Participant I is a third grade special education teacher with only six children in her classroom. Her children are not functioning on grade level and almost all of the children have Autism. Participant I defines bullying as intentionally teasing or making fun of another person.

Participant I sees bullying at all ages and does not see it decreasing as children get older. Participant I specifically witnesses verbal bullying in her classroom, however, the most common location for bullying to occur in the school is in the cafeteria or on the playground. Many children find that the best time for them to attack is when time is unstructured. Children who are targeted are usually shy, not popular and come often from a low-income family.

When it comes to the parents, when they are informed that their child is bullying another student, they are often in denial. Typically when this happens, the parent will blame the victim that they must have done something to provoke this sort of behavior. However, once the parent or guardian is called and notified of the situation, the bully tends to back off.

Participant I sees friends of bullies following the bully. The friends of the victim become afraid too, wondering if they will be attacked next. When a child becomes a victim of bullying, the victim will usually go to trusted adults or friends to talk to about the situation.

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Participant I has no tolerance for bullying in her classroom and it is a priority for her to stop it immediately. If the bullying gets out of hand it can result in suspension. Participant I sees one female child specifically dealing with being the victim of bullying in her classroom. When this child is being bullied, no other children get drawn in; they choose to stay out of it. Unfortunately this school has no specific programs in place to prevent or stop bullying from occurring among the children.

Participant J is a first grade teacher at Explorer K-8 School in Spring Hill, Florida. She has eighteen children in her class and sees specifically three males and four females as victims of bullying. Of these eighteen children, none of them have disabilities. Participant J sees bullying beginning in Kindergarten, however these small instances are children learning to get along. Participant J believes that bullying increases in middle school and then decreases after that. The types of bullying Participant J sees is mostly avoidance; children not wanting to play with a specific person, name calling or hitting can also occur. Participant J does not see parents as involved as they should be, but sometimes do call to enquire about the situation.

Participant J sees that friends of bullies are sometimes affected. While they do know that bullying is wrong, some of them do try and help the victim. The friends of victims are often the ones to tell on the bullies or sometimes fight back.

When Participant J sees bullying, she knows that all situations need consequences or a call home in order to correct the behavior. Participant J believes that it is the teacher's responsibility to teach what bullying is and the right skills for how to handle it. While Participant J does see bullying occur, she has not personally experienced a case where administration had to become involved.

Most of the bullying that Participant J sees in Explorer K-8 takes place on the playground, in the bathroom, or before school begins in the cafeteria. The most unsafe place that Participant J is aware of is the bathroom because they are large and there are too many unsupervised groups that hang out in there.

Participant K is a Kindergarten teacher at Explorer K-8 in Spring Hill, Florida. Participant K's class consists of thirty-six children with two teachers. Of those thirty-six children, between seven and ten of them are affected by bullying; seven of which are males and four of which are females. There are zero children with disabilities in her Kindergarten class.

Participant K believes that bullying only increases as children enter middle school. The bullying that Participant K sees is name calling, not wanting to be someone's friend, excluding children on the playground and pushing. A lot of bullying in Participant K's school takes place in the bathrooms, which are known as the "gang bathrooms." However, since she teaches kindergarten, her children are not using that bathroom.

Parents in Participant K's class will typically call or send a note in about an incident that took place at school when bullying happens to their child. Friends of bullies sometimes join in with the bully, but most of the time they will tell on the bully. The friends of victims are found telling on the bullies and sticking up for the victims. When Participant K sees an incident in her classroom, she will talk to the students and make sure that there is a consequence for their actions. The teachers also spend a lot of time problem solving with the students while enforcing social skills. While Participant K's

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district has bullying guidelines, she personally has not had to send any of her students to higher administration for an incident.

Participant L is the Director of the Early Childhood Center at Wagner College in Staten Island, New York. Participant L sees almost every child being bullied in some way, however, it is at this age, many children are bullied based on their personalities. These children who are being bullied are usually shy and more reserved. Those who have strong personalities and are outgoing are able to let it go. It is those who can just walk away from being bullied. A vulnerable child is also a victim's weakness for a target to attack. Family structure also plays a big role. If you have a large family and are one of ten siblings, you will learn how to survive based on what Participant K sees when it comes to family structure.

Participant L sees boys "sucking it up" when it comes to bullying where as females will go on about it for days and never seem to forget what happened. Boys will verbally let it out, and girls will hold a grudge even at such a young age. Bullying can start as a young child who now has a new sibling to compete with. That child can become jealous of the new baby and all of the attention they are receiving. It might not be perceived as bullying but it is a form of bullying at a young age. Bullying can even become an academic issue, by a child telling a peer that they did better on a test than they did. By doing so, it lowers the victims self esteem and even makes them self-conscious about how they are performing. A simple act like this puts a child down and makes them upset about how they performed on the given task.

Participant L sees victims being affected emotionally, however it is more age related. A lot of bullying has to do with jealousy among groups of children. When there

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is one child who is jealous of another child, it is easy to make that child feel down rather than praising them for what they do.

Participant L notices parents being in denial saying “that’s not my child,” or “my child would not do that.” All parents want their child to be perfect. Children start to censor at age six, meaning that they start to hide things from their parents, so parents cannot believe everything that they hear from their child.

Participant L sees bullies as being aggressive and introverted. Victims tend to lose their academic focus when they are being bullied. Communication is the number one way to deal with bullying. Letting children know that it is okay to let someone know when they are being bullied is a start. Children also need to reflect and think about when they have done something wrong because at such a young age they might not understand that what they did was wrong. If a child still does not understand that they have done something wrong, being firmer with the tone of your voice can also send the message to the bully.

Participant L says being on the same level as parents is important too. Parents might tell their children that it is okay to hit someone back when a peer has hit them themselves. That kind of behavior is not acceptable at school, but the parents might approve of it so it occurs at home. All parties need to know that it is okay to defend oneself, however when defending oneself it needs to be in an appropriate manner. There is a right and a wrong way to approach all situations when dealing with bullying; however it may take a lot of trial and error for each child. For an incident where a young child leaves another out of a game, a conversation should be had with both parties to let them know that it is not nice to leave people out. For an incident where a young child is

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being physical with another child, a time out, a phone call home or a trip to the principal's office would be more appropriate.

Participant L believes that as parents are even busier today than ever before, they tend to brush little things under the rug. Children are deprived of their independence because parents are often rush children out the door to get to work on time even though that child does not know how to put their shoes on or how to be an appropriate eater. As a result, that child is relying on others to help them. This little daily occurrence has children now relying on others to solve problems for them or to put the blame onto someone else. For example; I am going to blame you because my life is bad. These little issues tend to be the bigger issues that escalate into something larger, which is often the beginning of bullying.

Participant L finds that the bullies who can hide it the best are the ones who do the most damage. They have more of an effect because they are doing it without a purpose. There is an intent to hurt that involves the inner rage going on. At this age, there is usually not an intent to hurt someone, it is more of an unkindness and learning about how to treat others the way you want to be treated. If a child is angry with a peer over being pushed while waiting in line earlier in the day, and the victim retaliates, then there is intent. That is why play is so important at such a young age. The children learn how to share, how to include others, etc. Children are also learning how to express themselves verbally by playing. They are learning to explain and how to handle different situations, they are expressing how they feel and expressing what is bothering them.

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Recurring Themes

It is important for families to keep in touch with the teachers. Parents need to notify teachers if a pet ran away, someone is coming to visit, or it is someone's birthday, etc. By doing so, it prepares teachers to handle situations and know why a child might be acting a certain way. If a child's pet dies then they might be upset or angry and lash out at another child.

Bullying comes in many forms, shapes and sizes and depending on how the victim handles the situation it can have lasting effects. Bullies at an early childhood level do not always understand what it is that they are doing that is causing pain, stress or anxiety to another.

Simple actions like leaving a peer out, pulling one's hair, and calling someone a name at a young age are not typically seen as acts of bullying. These acts are seen as acts of developing and learning about oneself. At such a young age it is difficult to hold a child accountable for their actions especially when they are unaware of the severity of their actions. Reasons like this is why it is important to implement anti-bullying programs into elementary schools at a young age. By doing so, it helps to inform children of their actions and what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior. When children are aware of the actions that may be inappropriate, the chances of them repeating that action should decrease, especially if linked to a consequence.

By having these anti-bullying programs in elementary schools, it allows for children to learn and understand the different roles that are involved when it comes to bullying. When introducing bullying to children, it is necessary to discuss the bully, the victim and the bystander's roles. Informing the children of these three parties allows for

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them to distinguish whom they compare most to. From here, children are able to see how they can change or improve upon their actions towards others. Stressing the importance of a bystander is critical, and letting children know how important it is to speak out when bullying takes place is crucial.

It is extremely important that principals and teachers have the same approaches to tackle bullying in the schools and classrooms. From speaking with principals and teachers throughout the course of the study, it was disappointing to see how the neither parties were on the same page. Many teachers were unaware of the different ways to handle bullying or were unsure of what appropriate steps to take when addressing an issue. This is unacceptable! Everyone in the entire school should know what to do and who to go to when a situation arises. There should be different scenarios played out so that teachers know how to handle each and every situation that can strike. Teachers are told to expect the unexpected, but with a topic as aggressive and on the rise as bullying, it is important for teachers to expect and react.

Having teacher and principals as well as the rest of the administration and staff on the same page on what to do when acts of bullying occur, can prevent many accidents from taking place. Bullying is a part of human nature, but if the right procedures are taken, an end can be put to bullying.

Chapter IV

Discussion

Limitations of Study

Throughout the course of this study, there were a variety of limitations that needed to be addressed. Most of these limitations were due to the busy schedules of principals and teachers and coordinating time to meet. The researcher planned around the classroom teachers and principal's schedules in order complete all parts of the study and to receive as much information as possible.

A.) Number of Participants

While there was a decent amount of participants for this study, it would have been interesting to compare the results of more participants. The researcher would have been interested in pursuing participants from more states and other places around the world. It could have allowed information to come from different economic and social backgrounds and those two factors alone can have a huge impact on the effects of bullying. This would have provided the researcher with more information about bullying, how it affects children, and how different places around the world are addressing bullying based on different environmental factors.

B.) Time Scheduling

Timing was extremely difficult for this study. Principals in particular were especially hard to get a hold of. Principals often had

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conflicts with the researcher's schedule or had decided to back out of the study. Due to this limitation, not all principals were able to participate in this study. Teachers were more flexible with meeting and agreeing to participate in the study, however, some teachers decided to back out of participating in the study. For the purpose of this study, it would be more advantageous to have started conducting the research at a much earlier date. Many potential participants had declined participation in the survey due to lack of time and scheduling conflicts. While participants did seem willing to participate in a study, a few had declined after the researcher had presented the consent cover letter and were informed that this was a study about bullying.

C.) Distractions

When meeting with the principal there was the distraction of the telephone ringing and people walking in and out of the office. When meeting with the principal, it would have been less of a distraction if the door was closed. Several times people would walk in and out, and the commotion from the children was also heard from neighboring classrooms.

When meeting with classroom teachers, there were also many distractions. When working with the teachers, there was the constant distraction of the students (especially when they were in the room). While conducting one of the interviews, the children were in the

classroom. Even though the children were involved in their playtime, the teacher constantly had to intervene to stop children from arguing, telling them to use their inside voice, take turns, etc. There were even several children who needed to use the restroom.

D.) Survey, Questionnaire and Interview

After administering the survey, questionnaire and interview to the teachers and principals, it became obvious that some questions were too similar to one another and should have been altered as to not repeat a similar question. Specifically, in the survey where it asks how frequent bullying is seen in a day, week, month and year; a question like this is difficult to answer when children are in an early childhood setting. Teachers see small indications of what can be labeled as bullying everyday, however as the children grow, those small indicators of bullying become minute and are no longer seen as bullying.

Conclusions/Discussion

The main goal of this study was to assess how early childhood children are affected by bullying. While doing research, comparisons were made to see how the teacher and principal differ in noticing and handling different bullying situations. The results of this study indicated that all teachers and principals see bullying at an Early

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Childhood level. Many teachers and principals have different views on how to approach bullying in their school and their classroom.

Bullying takes form everywhere we turn and transforms into long lasting memories for the victim. These incidents and acts of bullying, while they may be small in the grand scheme of things, affect everyone differently.

Teachers and principals have not been on the same page when it comes to bullying and how to handle different situations. Bullying can be prevented if there are appropriate anti-bullying strategies implemented into each and every school system. These anti-bullying programs or strategies can help to minimize the amount of incidents that take place in the school or classroom. Also, by making children aware of the severity of bullying alone, can be powerful enough to prevent children from bullying their peers.

While bullying is being discussed, it is not being prevented in schools. Typically after a situation arises, teachers have a conversation with the bully and occasionally the victim. While this is important that all situations are addressed, it would be more beneficial to children if it were to be discussed prior to an outbreak occurring in the first place. By addressing bullying early on in preschool and kindergarten, it will keep children in the know about what bullying is, how it can be prevented and what some of the effects can be.

Role-playing with children is a great approach to get children to learn about the severity of what can result from bullying. Children will also learn what it feels like to be a bully, a victim and a bystander. Educating children of these three parties can help them prevent incidents from escalating or even occurring in the first place. Role-playing

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allows for children to be put into uncomfortable situations and then be able to reflect upon what happened, how they felt, and what they might do in the situation they were in. By having these discussions, it opens up new ideas and discussions that some children might not have thought about handling the situation.

It is vital for schools to be properly staffed as to ensure that there are no unsafe areas in the building. A large quantity of bullying occurs when the teacher is not around specifically in the playground, cafeteria and bathroom. By increasing the amount of adult supervision in these three areas, many of the bullying incidents that occur can be eliminated. While it might not be realistic to have administration inside of the bathroom, there can be hall monitors that happen to sit outside of the bathrooms so that they can see who is entering and exiting the bathroom and will be able to hear if anything suspicious is occurring.

Overall there are not enough anti-bullying strategies being put into practice in schools and as a result, the effect of bullying on children is becoming increasingly serious. Implementing anti-bullying strategies and having more supervision within the schools creates a safe, comfortable learning experience for all children that are there for an education.

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Appendix A

Human Experimentation Review Board (HERB) Approval

January 7, 2012

Dear Ms. Krawciw & Dr. Preskill:

I am pleased to inform you that your research proposal submitted to the Human Experimentation Review Board (HERB) on November 14, 2011) entitled "Effects of bullying on early childhood education students" (#F11-19) was considered under the expedited review procedure (as defined in the HERB Policies & Procedures) and approved contingent on the following requirement.

Please re-submit Part A of the HERB application complete with the signatures of the student applicant and faculty supervisor. The copy provided is unsigned.

As described, the project complies with all of the requirements of HERB for the protection of human participants in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after the approval date.

1. A project status report (available on the HERB website as Part C of application packet) must be returned to HERB within one year.
2. Any significant change in the experimental procedure must be reported to HERB immediately prior to altering the project.
3. Any injury to a participant because of the research procedure must be reported to HERB immediately.
4. The investigator must keep all signed consent forms on file for 3 years past completion of the project.
5. HERB must be informed of the addition of new investigators not named in the original application.

Please inform HERB when the study has been completed. All future correspondence regarding this project should display the HERB identifying number.

Best wishes,

Laurence Nolan
Chair, Human Experimentation Review Board.

Appendix B

Principal/Teacher Consent Cover Letter

Lisa Krawciw
(516)-455-8311
Lisa.Krawciw@wagner.edu

Date:

Dear Principal/Teacher,

I wanted to take the time to introduce myself. My name is Lisa Krawciw and I am in the process of obtaining my Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Wagner College.

As part of my college's curriculum, I will be conducting research that will help me with my master's thesis. My thesis proposal is: The Effects of Bullying on Early Childhood Education Students. This topic along with the procedure that I am following has been approved by Wagner College's Human Experimentation Review Board (HERB). HERB is in place to ensure the safety of all participants in the study.

I am requesting your permission to work with you in this study. Enclosed are two copies of the consent form. Please sign one and keep one for your personal records. The information that is obtained through this study will not be connected to your name. When my thesis is complete, I will be more than happy to share the findings with you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at: lisa.krawciw@wagner.edu or by phone at: 516-455-8311.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Lisa Krawciw

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

The Department of Education at Wagner College supports the practice of protection of human participants in research. The following will provide you with information about the study that will help you in deciding whether or not you wish to participate. If you agree to participate, please be aware that you are free to withdraw at any point throughout the duration of the study.

In this study we will ask you to take part in a brief interview and complete a survey based on your experiences with bullying in your school or classroom. All information you provide will remain confidential and will not be associated with your name. Your participation in this study will require approximately 30 minutes. If you experience any discomfort, you are free to withdraw your participation at any time. When this study is complete, you will be provided with the results of the study at your request and you will be free to ask any questions. If you have any further questions concerning this study, please feel free to contact us through phone or email: Lisa Krawciw at lisa.krawciw@wagner.edu (516-455-8311) or Dr. Preskill at stephen.preskill@wagner.edu (718-420-4070). Please indicate with your signature on the space below that you understand your rights and agree to participate in the study. Your participation is solicited, yet strictly voluntary. All information will be kept confidential and your name will not be associated with any research findings.

Signature of Participant

Lisa Krawciw, Investigator

Print Name

Appendix D

Thank You Letter – Principal

Dear _____,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation with my thesis study. I really appreciate your agreeing to allow your classroom teachers to participate in the research study for my thesis as well. Your cooperation and participation of both you and the classroom teacher were extremely valuable.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like me to share my results with you.

e-mail: lisa.krawciw@wagner.edu

phone: (516) 455 – 8311

Again, I thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Lisa Krawciw

Appendix E

Thank You Letter – Teacher

Dear _____,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation and allowing for me to conduct my thesis study with you. Your cooperation and participation were extremely valuable.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like me to share my results with you.

e-mail: lisa.krawciw@wagner.edu

phone: (516) 455 – 8311

Again, I thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Lisa Krawciw

Appendix G

Principal & Teacher Survey:

1. How many causes of bullying take place in one day:

2. How many causes of bullying take place in one week:

3. How many causes of bullying take place in one month:

4. How many causes of bullying take place during the year:

5. How many of your students are affected by bullying:

6. How many of your students affected by bullying are males:

7. How many of your students affected by bullying are females:

8. Do you find your students intervening if bullying takes place; what do they say?

9. How many children are in your class?

10. How many children in your class have disabilities?

11. List any areas in the school that you think might be unsafe:

12. What kind of incidents have you seen with the students?

Appendix H

Principal & Teacher Questionnaire:

1. At what age do you see bullying begin?

2. Does bullying decrease as children get older?

3. What forms of bullying do you see?

4. How are parents involved when bullying occurs to their child?

a. What do parents do?

5. How are friends of bullies affected?

6. How are friends of victims affected?

7. How do classroom teacher respond when bullying occurs? What responsibilities do teachers have when bullying occurs??

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8. How do administration respond when bullying occurs? What responsibilities do administration have when bullying occurs?

9. Who are children going to when being bullied?

10. What location in the school is bullying most likely to take place?

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Appendix I

Principal & Teacher Interview:

1. How do you define bullying?
2. Have you personally been bullied before?
 - a. Explain:
3. To what extent do bullies have an effect on their victims?
4. Which children are targeted most when it comes to bullying?
5. What makes a victim a potential target to a bully?
6. How does bullying differ in boys and girls?
7. What age does bullying start and when does it begin to taper off?
8. How would you describe the effects bullies have on victims?
9. What behaviors do bullies demonstrate?
10. Is there an effect on the victim's academic work?
11. What consequences seem to work best to decrease bullying behaviors?
12. Why does it seem to be so difficult to hold bullies accountable for their actions?
13. To what extent are bullies successful at hiding the specifics of their bullying?
14. How do you view bullying in your school/classroom?
15. How serious is the problem of bullying in your school?
16. What is the impact of bullying on the victims?
17. What is being done to prevent and minimize the effects of bullying?
18. What is being done in your school to prevent bullying from occurring?
 - a. What specific programs are in place?
19. How is bullying handled in the classroom/school?

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Signed Lisa Krawciw Date June 1st, 2012