

SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

Child Abuse Prevention Services Survey Finds Students Report Drop in Bullying in Long Island Middle Schools

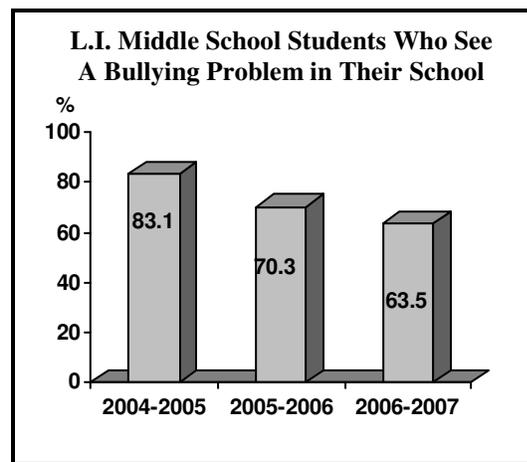
Pro-active, pro-social interventions by students who witness bullying incidents increased, suggesting strategies to empower bystanders—the “silent majority” – are working.

LONG ISLAND, NY: Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS), Long Island's leading non profit dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect through no-cost education, found bullying incidents down for the second year in a row, after polling 3,024 6th and 7th grade, public and private school students for its 2006-2007 Long Island Middle School Bullying Survey, released today.

“We are encouraged that we continue to observe a reduction in bullying,” said Alane Fagin, Executive Director of CAPS, “but still concerned that bullying is very much a part of the fabric of students’ everyday life. Unfortunately, we have found that girls now are catching up to boys in terms of the escalation of physical violence. In fact, almost one in three girls admitted to ‘hitting’ someone as a form of bullying. We need to consider how we are going to reverse this emerging trend. Clearly, there is still a great deal of work to be done.”

Among the key findings of the survey results:

- Older students, i.e. 7th graders, were more likely than 6th graders, 74% vs. 54%, to indicate that bullying is a problem in their school.
- 78% of students would reach out for help, to an adult in the school, if they had a problem with bullying.
- 30.5% of students responded that the presence of gangs in school bother them, with greater concern among older students: 38.5% of 7th graders vs. 24% of 6th graders.



Source: CAPS' Survey 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007

“Bystanders take a stand...”

“Contrary to the findings from last year’s survey, there was an increase in the number of pro-active, pro-social interventions when students witnessed bullying incidents.” Fagin said. “These results suggest that strategies to empower bystanders, the “silent majority” of students who witness bullying, are working.” According to the Survey:

- 23.5% of students responded that they “do/did nothing” when they saw other kids get bullied, compared to last year
- 39.6% said they did “nothing” the last time they saw someone being bullied in school. This is a 68% decrease in the number of students who did nothing when observing bullying.

“Educators, parents, and all concerned members of the community, must continue working first to prevent bullying incidents from occurring and, second, to encourage children to safely intervene when they do see bullying incidents taking place. A failure to invest in such efforts is nothing less than a breach of the trust Long Island’s children place in those who claim to care about them,” said Fagan.

Cyber-Bullying Also a Problem on Long Island

The Survey also queried students about the extent of cyber-bullying: mean, harassing emails, IMs and text messaging. According to the CAPS Survey:

- 30.2% of students admitted that cyber-bullying in school bothered them
- 22% said they had been cyber-bullied
- 10.6%—more than one in 10—admitted they had used the Internet or wireless communications devices such as cellular phones to bully someone else.

“Once children could find a safe haven at home, but bullies today can pursue their victims anyplace the Internet, or other electronic communications devices, can reach. This is something adults must take into account, when working to help keep kids safe from bullies,” added Fagin.

CAPS offers bully prevention and Internet safety programs to Long Island schools free of charge. Last year, CAPS volunteers presented such programs in more than 1,250 Nassau and Suffolk county classrooms, to 30,000 school age children. If you would like a copy of the 2006-2007 Long Island Middle School Bullying/Cyber-Bullying Survey, contact mediaatcaps@optonline.net

Founded in 1982, the Roslyn-based Child Abuse Prevention Services is Long Island’s comprehensive resource center for the prevention of child abuse, bullying and peer harassment. It is a non-profit organization underwritten by private donations, grants and legislative appropriations. Information about programs, educational materials and volunteer opportunities can be obtained by visiting the Child Abuse Prevention Services web site at www.capsli.org, or by calling 516-621-0552.