



Children's Health Education Center provides tools to help schools tackle bullying

Chances are, either you or someone you know has been a victim of school bullying. School bullying is one of the most troubling issues our schools face. It's something that affects nearly all of our children, whether as a victim, bully or bystander. Studies show that among children 17 and younger, about 1 in 5 report being physically bullied, and about 3 in 10 report being teased or emotionally bullied in their lifetime.

Did you know:

- Bullied youth are 5 times more likely to become adult criminals as non-bullied youth?
- Targets of bullying are more likely to be depressed as adults?
- Preventing bullying lowers the rate of vandalism, fighting, theft and truancy?



[Children's Health Education Center](#), an affiliate of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, works closely with schools to improve the overall health of their students through education. Schools came to Children's Health Education Center asking for bullying prevention programs.

The center partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, community supporters, teachers and students to create two e-learning bullying prevention programs. The programs are not designed to be the complete solution to bullying in the schools or in the community, but they are designed to aid students in building the skills to prevent and intervene appropriately in bullying situations. "We offer programming to schools in a way that meets the needs of teachers and students," said Bridget Clementi, executive director, Children's Health Education Center. "We offer critical health information to help kids make good decisions."

[BullyFree Basics](#) targets students in grades 4 and 5. This interactive, e-learning, game-based program teaches students about different types of bullying, what to do when they witness bullying and how to create a bully-free classroom. It builds on what students learn in younger grades about social skills and creating a caring climate in their classroom and school.

[Act Now!](#), launched in October 2010, targets students in grades 6, 7 and 8 and addresses physical, verbal, emotional and cyber bullying, as well as sexual harassment. Education is provided through a series of engaging e-learning lessons in 6th grade, and supportive reinforcement lessons in 7th and 8th grades that feature interactive role-playing, video segments and fun educational games. The program teaches students how to distinguish bullying, ways to help victims of bullying and tools to demonstrate advocacy.

Both BullyFree Basics and ActNow! feature comprehensive teacher's guides that prepare teachers to use the e-learning solutions in their classrooms along with an optional online staff development and training program for school and

community that provides a step-by-step process for creating a bully-free school. These e-learning programs represent just two of the 14 programs offered to schools through BlueKids.org.

Students and teachers have provided consistent, positive feedback regarding the changes they are seeing in their classrooms as a result of the programs. Kolleen Nesheim of Oregon School District (Oregon, Wis.) states, “The biggest change has been from the staff in the fact that the program has opened some eyes and has made several staff members realize that they can no longer turn their heads and ignore the situation. It is a serious problem in our schools that has to be addressed.”

Another Wisconsin school that preferred to remain anonymous, yet wanted to share how the program has made a difference at their school, offered this feedback, “I just had a group of 6th grade girls report that someone had plans of ruining another 6th grader’s reputation online with a very embarrassing rumor. I am very thankful that they came to me before the damage and hurt took place. In addition, I just had two girls tell me they have created their own g-mail account with the intention of stopping rude comments, teasing and swearing on the g-mail buzz. I am so thankful for this interactive program. It’s very pertinent content shared in a way that really engages our students!”

Children’s Health Education Center invests substantial annual costs to deliver the [e-learning programs](#) it offers to schools. The small, affordable fee for schools to enroll in BullyFree Basics and the other [BlueKids.org](#) programs does not cover the cost of developing and offering the programs. While generous donors have covered some of the costs, the remaining costs are covered by the health system.

- Nearly 50,000 students benefitted from CHEC’s e-learning programs during the 2010/2011 school year. Each student participated in a minimum of six lessons each, which included online and classroom discussions and activities.
- Programs, aligned with national health standards, are offered to children from grades K5 – 8 in a variety of topics, including alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, obesity prevention, safety and emotional health.
- With support from our health system and generous donors, programs are offered to school districts throughout Wisconsin for free or at a reduced fee.

