

# Bullying and Youth with Special Needs

## How to Recognize Bullying

### Bullying

- Is a form of abusive behavior intended to cause harm.
- Usually happens over and over.
- Can be both direct and indirect.
- A bully and the target do not have equal power.

### Forms of Bullying

- **Physical** (hitting, kicking, shoving)
- **Verbal** (offensive remarks, name calling, threats)
- **Relational** (group of attackers, spreading rumors, gossiping, excluding or being left out)
- **Cyber** (harm caused through social media, cell phones and emails)

### Additional Forms of Bullying Faced by Individuals with Special Needs

- **Manipulative bullying** (being talked into something and controlled by another person)
- **Conditional bullying** (mistaken friendship)
- **Exploitive bullying** (using the person's challenges as part of bullying)

There is a law called The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) that supports schools in creating an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

Bullying of any kind is a form of violence that should not be allowed. Parents and Educators together should address bullying and social skill development within the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

## What Can You Do About Bullying?

### What Parents should do

- Be your child's advocate by being aware and seeking help.
- Connect with DASA Coordinator in your school district.
- Keep the focus on your child.
- Support your child (do not blame your child or ignore the problem).
- Encourage your child to talk about what happened.
- Carefully watch how your child is doing (safety, emotional health and school performance).

### What Educators should do

- Create a welcoming and safe environment for all students.
- Use opportunities in the classroom to:
  - Teach about the forms of bullying.
  - Discuss how to get help.
  - Promote positive communication.
  - Teach about disabilities and abilities.
- Provide education or instruction, and resources that value diversity, including disabilities.
- Modify anti-bullying programs to include youth with special needs.
- Create school and classroom school's anti-bullying policies.

## Did You Know?

- Over 3.2 million students are victims of bullying each year.
- Bullying is often a reason children skip school or drop out.
- A DASA coordinator is available in every school district.
- Youth who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, lonely, and/or anxious.

References and information provided by:

-gse.buffalo.edu/albertcenter

-dosomething.org

-pacer.org