

# Bullying and Harassment of Students with Disabilities:

Top 10 facts parents, educators, and students need to know

## 1. The statistics – Students with disabilities are much more likely to be bullied than their nondisabled peers.

Although only 10 U.S. studies have been conducted on the connection between bullying and developmental disabilities, all of these studies found that children **with disabilities were two to three times more likely to be bullied than their nondisabled peers.** (*Disabilities: Insights from Across Fields and Around the World; Marshall, Kendall, Banks & Gover (Eds.), 2009*). One study shows that 60 percent of students with disabilities report being bullied regularly compared with 25 percent of all students. (Source: British Journal of Learning Support, 2008)

For more information, visit “[Bullying Statistics](#).”

## 2. The impact – Bullying affects a student’s ability to learn.

Many students with disabilities are already addressing challenges in the academic environment. When they are bullied, it can directly impact their education. Bullying is not a harmless rite of childhood that everyone experiences. Research shows that bullying can negatively impact a child’s access to education and lead to:

- school avoidance and higher rates of absenteeism
- decrease in grades
- inability to concentrate
- loss of interest in academic achievement
- increase in dropout rates

For more information read PACER’s “[Common Views About Bullying](#).”

## 3. The definition – Bullying based on a student’s disability may be considered harassment.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have stated that bullying may also be **considered harassment** when it is based on a student’s race, color, national origin, sex, **disability**, or religion. Harassing behaviors may include:

- unwelcome conduct such as verbal abuse, name calling, epithets, or slurs
- graphic or written statements
- threats
- physical assault
- other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating

Read the online blog article from the U.S. Department of Education titled “[Keeping Students with Disabilities Safe from Bullying](#).”

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