2009-07-02

Confronting Bullying: Searching for Strategies in Children's Literature

Emily Ellen Moulton
Brigham Young University - Provo

CONFRONTING BULLYING: SEARCHING FOR STRATEGIES

IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by

Emily Moulton

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Educational Specialist

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Brigham Young University

August 2010

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Emily Moulton

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority

vote has been found to be satisfactory.

_____   _____
Date   Melissa Allen Heath, Chair

_____   _____
Date   Tina Dyches

_____   _____
Date   Mary Anne Prater

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Emily Moulton in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

_____   _____
Date   Melissa Allen Heath, Chair

Accepted for the Department

_____   _____
Date   Ellie L. Young
                                         Graduate Coordinator

Accepted for the College

_____   _____
Date   Barbara Culatta
                                         Associate Dean, McKay School of Education

Abstract

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IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Emily Moulton

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Educational Specialist in School Psychology

Literature is a great resource for teaching valuable principles to children, including how to cope with bullying. However, no analyses exist regarding the appropriateness of these books. Children's books were identified as potential stories for bibliotherapy with elementary school children who face bullying. Information presented in selected books was compared to the current research literature on bullying. Each book's content was analyzed according to important variables, including the type of bullying behavior, gender of the perpetrator and target, presence of bystanders, adult involvement, and resolution of the problem. Verbal bullying was most commonly observed, followed closely by physical bullying. The majority of bullies were male, though targets were equally likely to be male or female. Many stories included bystanders and adults, who responded most often by supporting the target. Of the multiple types of resolution, the most commonly observed were for the target to receive support from others or to develop self confidence or other personal coping skills. While much of the information presented was in accordance with the current research literature on bullying, some was not. For example, the books were accurate in portraying the majority of bullies as male, but less accurate with regard to the gender of targets—in reality, the majority of targets are also male. The books were also

correct in showing that verbal bullying is more commonly observed than physical or relational bullying. The sample included bullying occurring frequently on the playground, which is in line with the research, but also very often in the classroom, which is not supported by the research to date. Overall, the portrayals of bullying situations in the sample were generally in accordance with what has been reported in the bullying research. All of the collected information was consolidated into three charts to help practitioners select bullying-themed books to read with children who struggle with this common problem.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Melissa Allen Heath for helping me come up with the original ideas for this project and then continuing to provide resources and support all along the way. To the other members of my committee, Mary Anne Prater and Tina Dyches, thanks for your helpful input and feedback. I would also like to express gratitude to the CPSE department, especially my professors and fellow students for their support. Thanks especially to Mary Lane Newman for serving as the second rater and to several other cohort members for reading prior drafts and offering feedback. I would also like to thank my family and friends who have been there throughout my preparation for graduate school as well as my time in the School Psychology program.

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Introduction

Dudley was very fat and hated exercise—unless of course it involved punching somebody. Dudley's favorite punching bag was Harry, but he couldn't often catch him. Harry… wore round glasses held together with a lot of Scotch tape because of all the times Dudley had punched him on the nose….

At school, Harry had no one. Everybody knew that Dudley's gang hated that odd Harry Potter in his baggy old clothes and broken glasses, and nobody liked to disagree with Dudley's gang….

Piers, Dennis, Malcolm, and Gordon were all big and stupid, but as Dudley was the biggest and stupidest of the lot, he was the leader. The rest of them were all quite happy to join in Dudley's favorite sport: Harry Hunting.

This was why Harry spent as much time as possible out of the house, wandering around and thinking about the end of the holidays, where he could see a tiny ray of hope. When September came he would be going off to secondary school and, for the first time in his life, he wouldn't be with Dudley. Dudley had been accepted at Uncle Vernon's old private school, Smeltings…. Harry, on the other hand, was going to Stonewall High, the local public school. Dudley thought this was very funny.

"They stuff people's heads down the toilet the first day at Stonewall," he told Harry. "Want to come upstairs and practice?" (Rowling, 1997, pp. 20, 30–32)

These passages display an example of bullying from the hugely popular *Harry Potter* series. Harry is bullied incessantly by his cousin Dudley Dursley. Though Dudley's bullying behavior drastically decreases after finding out that Harry can perform

magic, Harry has to endure ten years of intimidation and derision from Dudley. Harry later encounters Draco Malfoy, another bully who torments him at Hogwarts (Rowling, 1997). Many of Rowling's millions of readers, both children and adults, relate to Harry because they have similarly been targeted by bullies.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a serious issue in schools, gathering increasing attention in the research literature. This problem is more than simple teasing or just "kids being kids." Bullying occurs when a person is subjected, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions from another person or a group. The bully or group of bullies also possesses more physical or social power than the targeted person (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 1993). Bullying can take many forms. Some researchers differentiate between direct and indirect bullying (e.g., Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephens, 2006) while others classify bullying behaviors as physical, verbal, or relational (e.g., Olweus). Often a perpetrator uses multiple forms of bullying.

Prevalence

Studies on the prevalence of bullying indicate that a large number of students are affected by bullying, though the reported rates vary widely. Included in bullying rates are bullies and victims (often called targets), as well as those who both perpetrate and are victimized by bullying, referred to as bully-victims. It is generally reported that 15 – 30% of school children are directly involved (e.g., DeVoe & Kaffenberger, 2005; Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluja, & Ruan, 2004; Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001); however, other studies estimate the prevalence rate to be as high as to 80% (American Association of University Women, 2001). Studies on the prevalence of

the emerging phenomenon of *cyberbullying* (using technology such as email, websites, or cell phones to bully others) estimate that 20 to 40% of students are affected by this unique type of bullying (Stover, 2006). Thus the reported rate of bullying involvement tends to vary significantly, making it difficult to determine the actual extent of this problem.

Traits of Bullies and Targets

Certain traits increase the likelihood of a particular student bullying others or being victimized by bullies. For both bullies and targets, gender and age tend to be strong predictors. Males are more likely than females to be involved in bullying, in each of the three roles of bully, victim, and bully-victim (Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005; Nansel et al., 2001). Though it is still a problem at younger and older ages, bullying peaks during the middle school years (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Nansel et al.). Other individual-level and family-level factors are associated with becoming involved in bullying. Some examples of individual risk factors for both bullies and targets include anxiety, depression, being easily angered, and poor social skills. Family factors such as lack of supervision, violence in the home, and poor role modeling of parents and siblings also tend to increase a child's chance of bullying involvement (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Factors such as socioeconomic status (SES) and academic performance show little to no relation to involvement in bullying (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Oldehinkel, De Winter, Verhulst, & Ormel, 2005).

Risk Factors

Some risk factors are unique to perpetrators and targets. Bullies tend to have few positive adult role models (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000) and receive less

emotional support from their home environment (Zimmerman, Glew, Christakis, & Katon, 2005). Boys are more likely to be victimized when they are physically weaker. Both boys and girls who are shy, withdrawn, less assertive, and have low self-esteem are more likely to be targeted by bullies (Olweus, 1993).

Setting

While some bullying occurs in places such as the home or neighborhood, most happens at school. Incidents tend to occur most frequently in locations and situations where adult supervision is limited, such as on the playground, in the hallways, in the lunchroom, or in bathrooms (Fleming & Towey, 2002; Olweus, 1993). Nevertheless, bullying also takes place in classrooms with teachers present and in other situations where more supervision is provided (Parault, Davis, & Pelligrini, 2007; Rivers & Smith, 1994). As technology has advanced and become more readily available, cyberbullying has become an increasingly frequent problem among school-aged children. Cyberbullying seems to affect a slightly higher percentage of students than "regular" bullying (Li, 2006; Stover, 2006).

Consequences

The consequences of bullying for both perpetrators and targets are serious and severe. In the short term, both bullies and targets tend to experience problems in such areas as physical health, emotional adjustment, alcohol use, school adjustment, and peer relationships (Nansel et al., 2001; Nansel et al., 2004). Other research shows a strong link between bullying involvement and violent behaviors (Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan, & Scheidt, 2003) as well as decreased academic performance (Glew et al., 2005). Some long-term consequences for bullies include underachievement in school and employment,

increased involvement in criminal activity as adults, and increased aggression toward their spouses and children. Targets also tend to experience low academic achievement, as well as higher rates of depression, low self-esteem, and more interpersonal problems in adulthood (Olweus & Limber, 1999; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

While those who are directly involved as bullies or targets tend to be most severely affected, there are also negative consequences for others. Children who witness bullying often react by either joining in or becoming fearful of being victimized themselves. This creates an increasingly intimidating and unwelcoming school climate (Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephens, 2006). The effects of bullying on school climate negatively impact students who are not directly involved.

Addressing Bullying

Parents and schools can offset the negative consequences experienced by those who become involved in bullying. Research shows that social support from caring adults is extremely important for children who are victimized by bullies (Davidson & Demaray, 2007). For bullies, providing positive role modeling is crucial (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). For all children, open communication with parents is helpful in identifying and overcoming bullying problems (Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephens, 2006). Schools can also play a major role in decreasing bullying and its negative consequences. While some school-wide anti-bullying programs have demonstrated effectiveness (e.g., Frey, Hirschstein, & Snell, 2005; Olweus, 1993; Orpinas, Home, & Staniszewski, 2003), meta-analyses indicate that this type of approach does not result in a significant reduction in bullying behaviors (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004; Vreeman, & Carroll, 2007). More research is needed in order to improve such programs. Some commonly

advocated interventions for schools and individual classrooms include increasing awareness of the problem, establishing clear rules and consequences, providing support to all students, providing adequate supervision, encouraging cooperation among students, and rewarding positive behaviors (Olweus, 1993; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005; York & Cowan, 2004).

Bibliotherapy

One approach that shows promise for offsetting the negative effects of bullying is bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is a counseling technique that uses books to help people solve problems (Forgan, 2002). Bibliotherapy is often utilized by school- and community-based mental health professionals, but it also can be used by parents and teachers. The basic process involves reading a book together or independently, then completing the following steps: identifying with the characters or story; releasing emotions; and applying the insights gained to the person's own life and situation (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984). Bibliotherapy has demonstrated effectiveness for many issues, such as attitude and behavior change (Schrank & Engels, 1981), social and developmental problems in children (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1997); and developing emotional intelligence (Sullivan & Strang, 2002). The technique also can be particularly helpful in talking about sensitive or difficult topics like death, sexuality, prejudice, and violence (Christenbury & Beale, 1996).

Statement of Problem

Research indicates that bibliotherapy can be effective for children who experience problems with bullying. For example, bibliotherapy has helped reduce aggressive behavior in children (Shechtman, 1999, 2000, 2006). Researchers studying bullying often

recommend the use of books to address this problem (e.g., McNamara & McNamara, 1997; Olweus, 1993; Ross, 1996). School psychologists, librarians, teachers, and other similar professionals also recommend that literature be used to combat bullying problems (e.g., Beane, 2005; Henkin, 2005; Kriedler, 1996). However, no known studies have systematically investigated the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in reducing bullying behavior or the negative consequences that result from bullying or victimization. Ideally, bullying-themed bibliotherapy could be used in an experiment in order to measure its efficacy. If the amount of bullying incidents or the negative effects of bullying decreased following exposure to bibliotherapy, this would be evidence that this technique is useful for children who are involved in bullying.

In order to be able to conduct an experiment using bibliotherapy for bullying problems, the researchers would need to know which books to use. This need reveals another gap in the bullying and bibliotherapy research to date. There are literally hundreds of children's books that have a bullying theme. Both parents and practitioners would understandably be overwhelmed by the vast number of available choices. Before examples of children's literature can be used in a bibliotherapy experiment or recommended to people wishing to utilize this technique, bullying-themed books need to be identified that are potentially useful.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research study was to carefully select and analyze a sample of bullying-themed children's literature in order to identify books that can be used in bibliotherapy. A sample of books was identified that are not only accessible but also recommended by experts in the field of children's literature. These books were then

analyzed in order to determine what messages are being sent and whether or not the books accurately represent the current research findings regarding bullying. Since each child is unique, along with his or her bullying situation, the books were also analyzed according to important variables such as the gender of both the bully and the target, the type of bullying, bystander involvement, adult intervention, location of the bullying incident(s), and how the problem was resolved. The collected data were then compiled in order to make it possible for one or more specific books to be selected in order to meet the precise needs of an individual child. These data can be used in future research in order to assess whether or not the identified books could be used to successfully decrease bullying and/or its negative consequences. The process used in this study can be used by practitioners to increase sensitivity in selecting bullying-themed books, targeting desired behaviors and modeling positive behaviors.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What information is presented in recent (2004–2007) children's picture books on the topic of bullying?

2. Does the information presented in recent children's literature align with the current research on bullying, including such variables as gender differences, the type of bullying, where the bullying occurs, and how the bullying problem is resolved?

Review of Literature

As demonstrated with the example from the *Harry Potter* series, bullying is a frequent theme in movies, TV shows, books, and other media. As a result, people have a general idea of what bullying is. However, in the past there has been some debate in the literature concerning the definition, especially when the scholastic definition is compared to how the term is defined in the popular media and in the legal world (Arora, 1996). Defining the concept is also difficult when attempting to conduct cross-national research, mainly due to simple language differences. For example, when Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, and Liefooghe (2002) compared the concept of bullying in fourteen different countries, they found that there were several distinct understandings of the word. Other studies within the U.S. (e.g., Mishna, 2004) also point to common difficulties experienced when trying to define and conceptualize bullying.

Bullying

Dan Olweus (1993), a prominent international scholar on the topic, defined *bullying* as follows:

> A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students…. In order to use the term bullying, there should be an imbalance in strength (an asymmetric power relationship): The student who is exposed to the negative actions has difficulty defending him/herself and is somewhat helpless against the student or students who harass. (pp. 9–10)

The essential components of Olweus' description are generally accepted, including an imbalance of power and a repetition over time of the negative behavior. Espelage and Swearer (2003) summarized the consensus of scholars by stating that:

> Most definitions of bullying include the notion that bullying includes both physical and verbal aggression, which is a systematic, ongoing set of behavior instigated by an individual or a group of individuals who are attempting to gain power, prestige, or goods. (p. 368)

Even though this definition of bullying is generally acknowledged, related terms such as *teasing* (e.g., Ross, 1996), *peer aggression* (e.g., Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988), and *peer abuse* (e.g., Olweus, 1995) are sometimes used as synonyms.

Bullying can take many different forms, often classified as direct vs. indirect. In the Bullying Fact Sheet Series, created by the National School Safety Center (Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephens, 2006), the authors list examples of direct bullying: (a) hitting, tripping, shoving, pinching, excessive tickling; (b) verbal threats, name calling, racial slurs, insults; (c) demanding money, property, service; and (d) stabbing, choking, burning, and shooting. Indirect (or relational) bullying can take the form of (a) rejecting, excluding, isolating; (b) ranking or rating; humiliating; (c) manipulating friends and relationships; (d) writing hurtful or threatening e-mails and postings on web sites; and (e) blackmailing, terrorizing, and proposing dangerous dares. Clearly a multitude of negative behaviors constitute bullying, both direct and indirect. Other researchers generally categorize bullying as physical, verbal, or relational (e.g., Olweus, 1993). While all types of bullying occur frequently, verbal seems to be much more common than physical or relational (American Association of University Women, 2001). Physical bullying occurs

quite often as well, and is probably the easiest for parents, teachers, and others to recognize (Olweus). Relational bullying (often called *relational aggression*) includes behaviors that aim to damage relationships or exclude others from the peer group. Because of the typically covert nature of such behavior, it is difficult to determine the frequency of relational bullying. Still, it is apparent that relational bullying occurs quite often among school children of both genders (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006).

With the widespread use of computers, cell phones, and other technological devices, a new category of bullying has recently emerged. *Cyberbullying* is defined as "the act of using technologies such as emails, cell phones, or text messaging with the intent of causing harm to others" (Chibarro, 2007, p. 65). This type of bullying can be particularly problematic because cyberbullying is frequently done anonymously, perpetrators can bully others twenty-four hours a day, and harassing information can be accessed by a much larger audience. Some examples of cyberbullying include harassment (targets receive constant hurtful messages), exclusion (the target is rejected and left out of a group that uses technology to interact), and denigration (the target is ridiculed and the bully attempts to damage his or her reputation) (Chibarro, 2007). A specific example with which some educators may be unaware is the use of online trash polling sites where students identify people with unflattering characteristics (e.g., the most obese, the boy most likely to be gay, and the girl who has slept with the most boys). Other students implant computer worms or viruses in order to cause damage to the computer network of the school or another student (Strom & Strom, 2005). Cyberbullying can clearly take many forms. Educators should be aware of this issue, and especially of the fact that it is quite prevalent.

How Prevalent Is Bullying?

Several large-scale, national and international studies have found that bullying is a serious problem throughout the world. However, the reported prevalence rates tend to vary significantly. In a study by Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001), with a sample of over 15,000 U.S. junior high and high school students, almost a third (29.9%) of the students surveyed reported moderate to frequent involvement in bullying. This included those who are bullies (13.0%), victims (10.6%), and children who sometimes are bullies and other times are bullied, often referred to as "bully-victims" (6.3%). The 2001 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey found that about 14% of 12- to 18-year-olds reported being the targets of bullying during the six months prior to the survey. This included both direct and indirect bullying, with about equal numbers of students experiencing each type or a combination of the two (DeVoe & Kaffenberger, 2005). In contrast, a survey by the American Association of University Women (2001) found that nearly 80% of students reported involvement in bullying. With regard to cyberbullying, one estimate is that 20 – 40% of students are victimized by a cyberbully (Stover, 2006). In another study, about one-fourth of junior high school students reported being targeted with this type of bullying (Li, 2006). Because of such a large range of reported prevalence rates, it is difficult to know the true extent of this problem.

With regard to bullying in other nations, one study surveyed over 113,000 children (ages 11 to 15) in 25 countries (Nansel et al., 2004). The researchers found that the self-reported involvement in bullying varied widely by nation, ranging from 9 – 54%. Averaging across these 25 nations, 11% of respondents could be classified as victims,

10% as bullies, and 6% as bully-victims. Thus, 27% of students in this large sample were involved in bullying. Olweus (1993) notes that large studies in Norway and Sweden revealed that about 15% were involved in bullying problems "now and then" or more frequently. Though the numbers tend to vary, research studies indicate that bullying is a problem for a significant portion of the world's children and youth.

Who Is Typically Involved in Bullying?

Virtually every child can potentially be a bully or a target of bullying; however, there are certain risk factors to consider. Gender is one of the strongest predictors. Males are more likely than females to be involved in bullying, both as targets and perpetrators (Glew, et al., 2005; Nansel et al., 2001). In addition to gender, age is also strongly linked with bullying and victimization. Bullying behaviors escalate and peak during the middle school years and puberty (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001).

In addition to gender and age, there are some other risk factors for involvement in bullying. Espelage and Swearer (2003) found that there are some traits that are common in both bullies and targets. Some examples of individual factors include anger, depression, anxiety, beliefs about bullying, and poor social skills. Another individual-level risk factor for bullying involvement is being overweight. Janssen, Craig, Boyce, and Pickett (2004) reported that, in a sample of over 5,700 Canadian youth, those who were overweight and obese were significantly more likely to be both bullies and targets of bullying than their normal-weight peers. In addition to individual-level risk factors, identified family-level factors include lack of family cohesion, inadequate parental supervision, family violence, hostile discipline, poor modeling of problem-solving skills, family member drug use or incarceration, and sibling bullying (Espelage & Swearer,

2003). A study of children in the Netherlands indicated that individual characteristics such as aggressiveness, isolation, dislikability, and gender were stronger predictors of bullying involvement than higher-level factors such as socioeconomic status (SES) or familial vulnerability to disorders. This study found little or no effect for parenting characteristics, pro-social behavior, and academic performance (Veenstra et al., 2005). Thus there are several individual and family-level characteristics that increase the likelihood that a certain child will be involved in bullying as a bully, a target, or both.

Bullies. Much of the research on bullying involvement finds common traits and risk factors for becoming both bullies and targets, but there are also studies that find factors unique to bullies. One researcher found that regardless of sex, masculine traits predicted active involvement in bullying behaviors (Gini, 2006). Academic performance may also play a role in bullying. Woods and Wolke (2004) examined the relationship between academic achievement and bullying for a sample of second- and fourth-graders. The only significant correlation was found for the older age group: High achievers were more likely than low achievers to engage in relational bullying (e.g. withdrawing friendship, spreading rumors). Thus achievement in school may play a role in some contexts.

Olweus (1993) reported that the likelihood of a child becoming a bully is strongly linked with the home environment. There seem to be some rearing conditions that are more likely to produce aggression in children. These include lack of parental warmth and involvement, permissive parenting style (few limits or consequences for misbehavior), authoritarian parenting style (physical punishment and violent emotional outbursts), and parental discord. SES does not seem to be related. Similarly, another study showed that

bullying behavior was positively correlated with physical discipline by parents, time spent without supervision, negative peer influences, and worries about neighborhood safety. The best predictor of a child not displaying bullying behavior was having positive adult role models (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). In addition, some research has indicated that the more children receive cognitive stimulation and emotional support from their parents and the less time they spend in front of the television, they are less likely to bully others (Zimmerman et al., 2005). As research continues, more characteristics and precursors of bullying behavior will probably be discovered.

Targets. Research suggests typical characteristics of the children who are targets of bullying. Boys who are perceived as weaker and less physically competent are more likely to be victimized by bullies. This correlation does not apply to girls. Some possible indicators of targets of both genders include (a) being cautious, sensitive, quiet, withdrawn, passive, or shy; (b) having low self-esteem; and (c) having difficulty asserting oneself in the peer group (Olweus, 1993). Social competence can clearly play a significant role. Fox and Boulton (2005) found that targets were more likely to be perceived by themselves, their peers, and their teachers to have poor social skills. Similarly, two studies found that students who had greater peer acceptance and less peer rejection are less likely to be victimized. Generally speaking, the more a child is liked by peers, the less likely he or she is to be a target of bullying (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988). Certain personality characteristics, particularly social competence, play an important role in influencing whether or not a young person becomes a target of bullying. In addition, some research indicates that students with disabilities are more likely to be victimized by bullies than students without disabilities

(Whitney, Smith, & Thompson, 1994). Flynt and Morton (2005) note that this can include children that receive special education services for such disabilities as mental retardation (also referred to as intellectual disability), specific learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, and physical impairments. Thus, special attention should be paid to children with physical and mental disabilities with regard to bullying victimization.

Bystanders. While research on bullying tends to focus on bullies and targets, there are often others involved in bullying situations. Students who witness bullying behavior are often referred to as *bystanders*. Such observers can play several different roles; the effect a bystander's presence depends upon the role they take in the bullying situation.

In a study with over 500 Finnish sixth-grade participants, Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, and Kaukialnen (1996) identified several bystander roles, including *reinforcer of the bully*, *assistant to the bully*, *defender of the victim*, and *outsider*. These researchers found that children are at least somewhat aware of the roles they take on when witnessing bullying, though they tend to emphasize their function as defenders and downplay how often they reinforce or assist the bully.

Other research concerning bystanders indicates that these children generally have positive feelings towards targets and do not blame them for being targeted by a bully (Baldry, 2004). Similarly, Menesini, et al. (1997) found that most participants in a large sample of English and Italian children demonstrated sympathetic feelings and behaviors towards bullying targets.

However, despite these generally positive findings concerning the attitudes of children who witness bullying, Quiroz, Arnette, and Stephens (2006) warn that widespread bullying in a particular school can lead to more bystanders joining in the bully's behavior. They may see bullying as acceptable because it is not punished by teachers or administrators. Conversely, bystanders may assist the bully or at least refrain from intervening because they fear becoming the victim. Others may rashly risk their own safety to protect a targeted friend.

Bystander roles appear to be affected by gender. In the Salmivalli study (1996), boys were more likely to be reinforcers and assistants to the bully, while girls were more likely to take the roles of outsider or defender of the victim. Menesini and colleagues (1997) found that girls expressed more empathy for targets than boys (though the girls were not any more likely to intervene). Baldry (2004) observed that children tended to place greater blame on targets of the opposite gender. In other words, girls attributed more blame to male targets and boys were more likely to blame female targets. In addition to gender, another observation regarding bystanders is that active intervention or defending the target tends to decrease with age. Oliver and Candappa (2007) found that British children in grade 8 were less likely to report bullying to teachers and parents than children in grade 5. Menesini et al. (1997) observed that the secondary school students were less likely to intervene than the primary school students in their sample. This trend is particularly problematic because bullying behavior peaks in middle/junior high school (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001). Intervention efforts involving those both directly and indirectly involved in bullying clearly need to consider the roles of bystanders, including the gender and age of these observers.

Where Does Bullying Occur?

Most bullying happens on school grounds. In a report by the American Medical Association (Fleming & Towey, 2002), the authors summarized research that indicates that more bullying occurs at school than in other places. At school, bullying behavior occurs most often on the playground or other outside areas, in the classroom (both with and without the teacher present), in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. Bullying is most likely to occur in places with the least amount of supervision, including those places mentioned as well as in and around school bathrooms (Olweus, 1993). Rivers and Smith (1994) found that at the elementary school level, bullying occurs most often on the playground. At the secondary school level, students responded with similar frequency when asked if bullying happens in the corridor, in outside areas, in the classroom, or in another place. The type of bullying (physical, verbal, or indirect) did not vary according to these locations, except that indirect bullying was the most frequent in the classroom. Another study conducted in a middle school (Parault, Davis, & Pelligrini, 2007) compared the amounts of bullying in three situations. Their results showed that bullying and aggressive behaviors occur most often in the school cafeteria, second most often in school hallways, and least often at school dances.

When Does Bullying Occur?

As mentioned, bullying occurs most frequently during the middle school years. However, bullying also occurs at other ages. With regard to elementary school, Glew et al. (2005) noted that 22% of third- to fifth-graders in their sample were involved as a bully, target, or both. In a nationally representative sample of five- to seven-year-olds, about 20% of these students were already involved in bullying at these young ages

(Arseneault, Walsh, Trzesniewski, Newcombe, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2006). Thus bullying is a significant problem in the primary grades. Nevertheless, extensive research indicates that bullying peaks during junior high school, especially during the transition period from the elementary grades (e.g., Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 1993). Comparing data from children in grades six through twelve, DeVoe and Kaffenberger (2005) found that bullying is highest in sixth grade (24%) and decreases with age. Nansel et al. (2001) similarly observed a higher rate of bullying in grades six through eight when compared to grades nine and ten. Cyberbullying also appears to be a more significant problem during the middle school years than at other times (Chibarro, 2007).

While bullying does seem to peak in junior high, it does not completely diminish in high school. One study found that high school girls were more likely than their middle school counterparts to experience bullying and sexual harassment (Gruber & Fineran, 2007). In this case, however, the impact of the victimization was lessened for the older age group. This was probably because of the improved social support systems and coping mechanisms of high school students, as well as the developmental changes of middle school students. The study by DeVoe and Kaffenberger (2005), while showing a gradual decrease as children get older, still indicated that 7% of high school seniors are targets of bullying. Though it is still an issue for some, fewer of these older students have to deal with bullies regularly. These researchers hypothesized that this decrease is likely due to the fact that dominance hierarchies are more solidly defined by mid to late high school. Also, bullies tend to victimize students who are younger than themselves; thus, the pool of potential bullies decreases as the student population gets older. For these and possibly

other reasons, bullying occurs throughout elementary, middle, and high school but is observed most frequently in the middle school grades.

What Are the Consequences of Bullying?

   Short-term consequences for bullies and targets. To many people, including a significant portion of parents, bullying is often viewed simply as a rite of passage of childhood, something that children just need to deal with and endure. Evidence of the consequences of bullying indicates that this type of attitude makes light of the seriousness of bullying. It should be noted that most research on the effects of bullying is correlational and thus conclusions cannot be made regarding cause-and-effect relationships.

   In two large studies, being a target or perpetrator of bullying was related to poorer psychosocial outcomes, as measured on variables such as physical health, emotional adjustment, alcohol use, school adjustment, and relationships with classmates. Those who both perpetrate and are victimized by bullying (bully-victims) tend to put themselves at particular risk for problems in these areas (Nansel et al., 2001; Nansel et al., 2004). Other research corroborates these findings that bullies and their targets experience both internalizing and externalizing problems (Arseneault et al., 2006), poor health outcomes (Gruber & Fineran, 2007), other violence-related behaviors (Nansel et al., 2003), and lower academic achievement (Glew et al., 2005). Glew and associates (2005) also found that those involved in bullying had an increased likelihood of feeling unsafe at school, like they don't belong at school, and sad most days. The negative consequences for targets of cyberbullying are quite similar to other forms of bullying, including social withdrawal, missing school, declining grades, illness, depression, and suicidal ideation

(Chibarro, 2007; Stover, 2006). At the extreme, some school violence is linked to bullying. In a joint report by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education, a survey of the families, friends, and neighbors of 41 school shooters involved in incidents between 1974 and 2000 revealed that 71% had been a target of a bully (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002). While most targets of bullying will never harm themselves or others, evidence strongly indicates that they are likely to suffer negative consequences as a result. This also applies to bullies, who are not exempt from potential difficulties stemming from their bullying behavior.

Long-term consequences for bullies and targets. While much attention is paid to the immediate consequences of bullying, there are also long-term negative effects for children who bully others. Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) listed several of these longitudinal consequences. Bullies are likely to experience antisocial development in adulthood, underachieve in school and in later employment, be convicted of more criminal and traffic violations by age 30 than their less-aggressive peers, display aggression toward their spouses and children, and have children who are bullies. Olweus and Limber (1999) listed similar long-term consequences for bullies, including a higher likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior in the teenage years and adulthood. They found that bullies are particularly likely to be prosecuted for such crimes as vandalism, shoplifting, truancy, and frequent drug use. These students are convicted of crimes in adulthood at a much higher rate than non-bullies.

Children who are repeatedly targeted by bullies also experience serious long-term negative effects. Targets tend to have lower achievement in school (often linked to missing many school days), poor self-esteem as young adults, and problems with

interpersonal relationships in adulthood. Adults who were targeted by bullies in their youth may overprotect their own children, inhibiting their conflict resolution skills and creating another generation of bullying targets (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Other research also indicates that targets have higher rates of depression and lower self-esteem in early adulthood than their non-victimized peers (Olweus & Limber, 1999).

Consequences for bystanders and others. Because of the widespread nature of the problem, most children and teens are likely to witness bullying by other students and thus can be classified as bystanders. Being a bystander to bullying may lead some children to become bullies themselves, especially when they see that the behavior is not punished by adults. Bystanders may imitate bullying actions when they see that these are rewarded with tangible compensation (e.g., money, possessions) or with social power. Thus bullying that is not addressed may lead to bullying by other students. Other bystanders will fear that they will become the next target of the bully, especially if they share certain traits with the victim (Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephens, 2006). This sense of fear will clearly have a negative impact on the overall school climate. Schools that do little to combat bullying "may develop a reputation for being non-caring, irresponsible and persistently dangerous" (Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephens, 2006; p. 2).

All members of the school community are negatively affected when persistent bully problems lead to a hostile school environment. In addition, the longitudinal consequences of bullying not only affect the children who are directly involved; they also have the potential to negatively impact society as a whole in such areas as criminal activity, lost productivity in the workplace, and high demands on the mental health

services sector. Clearly, bullying is a significant problem that should be addressed by parents, schools, and others as soon as it is apparent.

What Can Parents and Schools Do to Decrease Bullying?

Adult roles. Adults are often indirectly involved in bullying. Teachers are probably the most likely to witness bullying situations while both teachers and parents often hear about incidents after they occur. Even with the high prevalence of bullying in today's schools, Olweus (1993) notes that both teachers and parents are typically unaware of the extent of this problem and do not talk about it with children. Teachers may not even recognize who the bullies and targets are within their own classrooms. In a study by Leff, Kupersmidt, and Patterson (1999), teachers identified bullies and targets less than half of the time when compared to peer reports. This trend was more apparent at the middle school level (again, where bullying tends to peak) when compared to the elementary school level. Other research indicates that in schools with a higher bullying incidence rate, teachers are better able to recognize bullying (Siann, Callaghan, Lockhart, & Rawson, 1993). This is evidence that teachers should receive more training on how to detect bullying before the problem gets so severe.

Children are often hesitant to turn to teachers or parents for help regarding bullying. Fekkes, Pijpers, and Verloove-Vanhorick (2005) found that less than half of students who were bullied reported it to a teacher. The children expressed that when they did report bullying, the problem either stayed the same or got worse. It was noted that most parents and teachers do not talk to the bully about his or her behavior following an incident. The researchers in this study emphasized the need for better communication between students, teachers, and parents regarding bullying, as well as for teachers to learn

better ways to handle the problem. Other researchers have found similar evidence for the fact that many children do not confide in adults regarding bullying behavior (e.g., Oliver & Candappa, 2007; Olweus, 1995). One study interestingly noted that reporting is more likely to occur when bullying is direct rather than indirect. Also, gender can play a role: Boys in this study were more likely to tell an adult about direct physical bullying; girls were more likely to report when they were bullied indirectly; and direct verbal bullying was reported at about the same rate for both boys and girls (Rivers & Smith, 1994). In a study focusing specifically on cyberbullying, girls were again more likely than boys to report to an adult that they were being targeted (Li, 2006). Adults should be aware of the potential for differential reporting of bullying incidents, depending on certain variables such as the type of bullying and the gender of the target.

Parent strategies. Parents can do much to combat bullying and to counteract the potential negative outcomes for children targeted by bullies. One of the most important approaches that parents can take to help a victimized child is to offer social support. Davidson and Demaray (2007) surveyed several hundred middle school students in a small Midwestern town using self-report measures for perceived social support, bully status, and internalizing-externalizing distress. These researchers defined *social support* as anything that tells a child that they are cared for and thought about. This can be provided with praise, needed materials, and strategies on how to solve certain problems (e.g., how to avoid bullies). Results from this study indicate that such support can play a significant role in moderating the negative effects of being a target of bullying. When students who were bullied perceived that they had sufficient social support from trusted adults and peers, they were less likely to develop symptoms of anxiety and depression.

The types of support that played the biggest role varied by gender: Girls with more support from parents experienced fewer negative symptoms while boys avoided these internalizing problems with increased support from peers, teachers, and school. This suggests that parents should focus on increasing the social support their children receive, both from the home environment as well as at school. Quiroz, Arnette, and Stephens (2006) offered other suggestions for parents of bullied children, particularly focusing on open communication about their child's problems. Parents can also model positive social behaviors, providing a template for the child's problem-solving and social skills.

According to Espelage, Bosworth, and Simon (2000), one of the most important things parents can do to decrease their children's bullying behavior is to engage in positive social interactions themselves. When children have positive adult role models (particularly parents, but this can include others such as teachers), they are less likely to be involved as bullies. These researchers also found that physical discipline by parents, time spent without adult supervision, negative peer influences, and neighborhood safety concerns were each positively correlated with bullying behavior. Thus, parents should avoid physical punishment, decrease the time their children spend unsupervised, help foster friendships with pro-social peers, and do what is possible to ensure safety in their neighborhood. In addition, some research has indicated that the more children receive cognitive stimulation and emotional support from their parents and the less time they spend in front of the television, their likelihood of later bullying is significantly reduced (Zimmerman et al, 2005). Many of the same principles that apply to parents of targets also apply to parents of bullies-communication and modeling can help children avoid the potential negative consequences of bullying (see Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephens, 2006).

School strategies. It is clear that there is much that schools can do to reduce the bullying that occurs there. Many advocate for whole-school, comprehensive prevention and intervention plans. While some programs have demonstrated success (e.g., Frey, Hirschstein, & Snell, 2005; Olweus, 1993; Orpinas, Home, & Staniszewski, 2003), meta-analyses of such interventions have indicated less than promising results. Smith et al. (2004) examined reports of fourteen programs and found little to no effect on reducing bullying. Another meta-analysis of ten studies similarly found inconsistency and little support for any particular approach (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Nevertheless, there are several potential problems with such comparisons of programs. Instituting a program may increase awareness of bullying, possibly inflating the response rate following the intervention. In addition, bullying affects a relatively small portion of the school population and thus positive effects may simply be difficult to measure. At this point, no particular approach has demonstrated sufficient efficacy; more research is needed.

When providing advice for schools aiming to decrease bullying, most experts agree that one of the most important approaches is to simply increase the amount of adult supervision in places where the problem typically occurs (e.g., Davidson & Demaray, 2005; Olweus, 1993). In the *2001 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey* (DeVoe & Kaffenberger, 2005), schools with increased supervision in the form of security personnel, assigned police officers, and more staff stationed in school hallways experienced slightly lower rates of bullying. Nevertheless, this report warns that multiple variables were connected in this particular survey and thus causal inferences cannot be made.

Along the same lines, Parault, Davis, and Pelligrini (2007) noted that while supervision is important, the number of adults present in a particular situation cannot completely account for the difference in the rate of bullying. In their study, the greatest number of adults was present in the hallways (where bullying rates were in the middle of the observed range) while the amount of adult supervision was approximately equal in the cafeteria and at the school dances (where they observed the greatest and least amount of bullying, respectively). Apparently, simply increasing the number of adults present in a particular area is unlikely to decrease the number of bullying incidents. Garbarino and deLara (2003) suggest that each school devise their own supervision plan. It is especially important for students to be consulted regarding their perceptions of problem areas in the school and feedback on how well the supervision strategies are working. With continual input from all members of the school community, supervision is likely to be more effective in reducing the amount of bullying that occurs.

With time, it is likely that certain methods and strategies will be shown to be effective and can be successfully implemented by schools in order to decrease bullying. Olweus (1993) suggests some general principles to follow. Schools should aim to increase awareness about the problem, actively involve teachers and parents, develop clear rules against bullying, and provide support for targeted children. Similarly, York and Cowan (2004) offer the following advice to schools looking to implement an anti-bullying program: (a) establish clear, consistent consequences for bullying behavior that all children understand; (b) institute school-wide discipline plans that address behavior and its underlying causes; (c) train all school personnel to prevent and intervene; (d)

maintain a focus on supervision; (e) teach children to work together; (f) distinguish between "tattling" and "reporting;" and (g) be visible and vigilant.

Other researchers note that in order to combat bullying, schools can implement some of the same principles found in youth violence prevention programs. Schools should focus not only on decreasing aggression and other bullying behaviors, but also should strive to create a positive social climate and a context inconsistent with such behaviors. Some additional keys include offering support to targets, setting and enforcing clear rules and consequences for violations, increasing communication among all students regarding the problem, and encouraging parents and other community members to participate in the anti-bullying efforts of the school (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). While no specific "program" currently exists that can be used by all schools, each school should take steps to increase awareness and motivate all members of the school community to do what is in their power to stop bullying behavior.

Primary prevention programs should be used as the initial step toward improving school climate and making it clear that bullying is not acceptable. However, schools should develop a three-tiered model to ensure that additional support is offered to students at risk for becoming involved in bullying (secondary prevention) and to those already experiencing problems in this area (tertiary prevention). Those in the third tier include perpetual bullies and targets, as well as students who have threatened violence against other students or members of the faculty. Typically, students who fall into the second and third tier can be offered skills training, counseling, or other services on a one-on-one basis or in small groups (Davidson & Demaray, 2005). Applicable to both of these levels, Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) noted several strategies for school

psychologists, counselors, and social workers. Some useful tools for use with bullies include behavioral contracts, social skills training, and individual counseling. Especially important is consistency in enforcing the consequences when bullies violate school rules. Targets can also be offered counseling and social skills exercises, but the authors note that these children are often ashamed and thus unlikely to seek help. Those qualified to provide services should seek these children out, offer counseling, and especially encourage friendship skills. Big brother/sister or buddy programs can be particularly helpful for children who are targeted by bullies.

Kriedler (1996) offered some strategies for teachers to use when they witness bullying in their classrooms. Some things that classroom teachers can do include: (a) encourage children to report bullying incidents; (b) keep records of these reports; (c) teach assertiveness skills to targets; (d) confront children who bully others; and (e) discuss the problem with the parents of both bullies and targets. In general, themes of respect and caring should be fostered in each classroom. Teachers are essentially the first line of defense against bullying and thus can do a great deal to combat this problem. In addition, members of the school community should do everything they can to offer support to all children affected by bullying.

Bibliotherapy

One potential resource that can be used by both parents and school professionals to address bullying with children is bibliotherapy.

What Is Bibliotherapy?

Basically, *bibliotherapy* is using books to help solve problems (Forgan, 2002).

Pardeck and Pardeck (1984) discuss the wide applied value of this method:

Bibliotherapy… is viewed as an approach useful not only for dealing with

severe emotional problems and minor adjustment problems, but also as a

tool for meeting developmental needs of individuals. By recognizing

bibliotherapy as a useful helping tool for treating a variety of problems, its

usefulness extends to not only trained counselors and therapists, but also

to those not necessarily trained as professional helpers. (p. 11)

This technique can be utilized by parents and teachers.   Prater, Dyches, and Johnstun

(2006) suggest that teachers can practice bibliotherapy with their students in order to deal

with sensitive topics and teach social skills. It can be incorporated easily into the

curriculum, and offers the chance to not only provide applicable lessons from books, but

also continue to teach reading skills.

What Are the Steps of Bibliotherapy?

The essential steps of bibliotherapy are *identification* (relating to the character and

applying meaning to the reader's own life), *abreaction/catharsis* (emotional release,

directed by the therapist or guide) and *integration* (the reader gains and applies new

insights gained from the story to his or her own life). The main goals of this therapy are

to help the person gain insight into his or her problems and to provide an opportunity to

discuss emotions in a safe context (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984). The usefulness of

bibliotherapy has been demonstrated in a variety of areas. Examples include attitude

change, self-development, assertiveness, changing certain behaviors (Schrank & Engels,

1981); self-perception (Calhoun, 1987); social and developmental problems in children (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1997); and helping children to develop emotional intelligence (Sullivan & Strang, 2002). Bibliotherapy is seen as particularly useful with children and adolescents, especially to discuss sensitive topics (Christenbury & Beale, 1996). One of the few meta-analyses of the topic found moderate effect sizes for bibliotherapy and no significant differences between bibliotherapy and other therapist-administered treatments. Bibliotherapy did appear more effective for certain problem types such as assertion training, anxiety, and sexual dysfunction when compared to other problems including weight loss, impulse control, and studying problems (Marrs, 1995). Though sparse, research continues on this interesting topic, consistently revealing new issues that can be addressed and confronted using books.

What Is Bibliotherapy Used to Address?

Bibliotherapy is used by many school psychologists in response to a variety of issues and problems faced by children and teens. In a national survey of 344 participants, Seadler (1999) found that a significant proportion of respondents reported using this technique as part of interventions with students going through the grief process. Of 209 school psychologists who reported using death-related crisis intervention activities, 33.0% ($n = 69$) said that this included bibliotherapy. For those using grief counseling activities ($N = 147$), 50.3% ($n = 74$) indicated that bibliotherapy was one of these activities. Of the 44 school psychologists who used death education activities, bibliotherapy was used by 36.4% ($n = 16$). The surveyed school psychologists reported that bibliotherapy was an effective practice for grieving students. These practitioners likely would also use bibliotherapy for other problems as well.

Another survey of nearly 50 Utah school psychologists showed that 82% of those surveyed used bibliotherapy in their practice (Olsen, 2007). Of those reporting using this method, most used it at least monthly. Some of the most commonly addressed topics were self-esteem, bullying, anxiety, and divorce (Olsen). Clearly, many school psychologists use bibliotherapy on a regular basis to help address a number of issues among their students.

In school settings, bibliotherapy may be used in individual and group counseling conducted by school counselors and school psychologists. Additionally, classroom teachers often use children's literature not only to provide an enjoyable class activity and to help children strengthen reading skills; they also use children's books as a simple form of bibliotherapy. Forgan (2002) lists several reasons that teachers use this technique: (a) to show the reader that they are not the first person to face the same problem; (b) to demonstrate that there is more than one solution to a specific problem; (c) to discuss the issue more freely and openly; (d) to help the child come up with a plan to solve the problem; (e) to develop the child's self-concept; (f) to relieve emotional stress; and (g) to help the reader better understand human nature and motivations. Bibliotherapy can be used with individual children, small groups, or with an entire class. Thus the general principles of bibliotherapy can be applied by teachers and other school personnel in order to help their students discuss emotionally-charged issues and to generate solutions to the problems they face.

Can Bibliotherapy Be Used to Address Bullying?

Effectiveness. No empirical studies that examined the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in addressing bullying were located. Nevertheless, examples of the

technique being used successfully to combat related problems have been published. For example, the work of Zipora Shechtman, a researcher from Israel, indicates that bibliotherapy can be used to decrease aggressive behavior in children. In one of these studies, bibliotherapy was used as part of group counseling to five boys who struggled with aggression. Over the course of treatment, the aggressive behavior of the participants decreased significantly compared to controls. Constructive, pro-social behavior increased as well (Shechtman, 1999). Shechtman later replicated these results with larger groups of children, first with 70 students who received special education services for their behavior problems (2000), then with sixty-one 8- to 16-year-old boys (2006). In the 2006 study, integrative counseling with bibliotherapy produced positive effects similar to counseling alone; however, when bibliotherapy was included, the researchers noted greater gains in empathy, increased therapist satisfaction, and greater therapeutic change.

The connection between bibliotherapy and reducing aggression was also demonstrated by Jones (1991). A curriculum including bibliotherapy and creative drama was used to successfully decrease the aggressive behavior of two difficult four-year-olds. The teacher and parents of these children noted increased empathy, increased use of pro-social skills, and improved ability to communicate following the institution of the bibliotherapy program. Aggression and bullying are not necessarily synonymous terms. Nevertheless, the use of bibliotherapy to decrease aggressive behavior is strong evidence that similar results could be observed if it were to be used specifically for bullying behavior.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that bibliotherapy techniques are being used in schools to address bullying with increasing frequency. Hillsberg and Spak (2006) used

short stories with bullying themes in conjunction with other efforts to reduce bullying in a middle school. Reading the stories as a class, along with pre- and post-reading activities aimed to help the targets find comfort and to identify coping strategies. The authors hoped that the bullies would gain empathy for those they targeted. While this article provided no quantitative data on the program's effectiveness, the authors expressed confidence that it was well-accepted and helpful to the students who participated. Similarly, a clinical summer reading program, as reported by Quinn, Barone, Kearns, Stackhouse, and Zimmerman (2003), included the critical reading of a book with a bullying theme. Various pre-, during-, and post-reading activities were used in order to engage the group of middle school youth in a discussion about bullying. Again, a case-study-like design was used and thus no pre- and post-test data were gathered. However, the authors felt that the reading group was successful in creating unity among a group of diverse students. A positive environment fostered the exchange of ideas and motivation to decrease bullying. These are two examples of efforts to use bibliotherapy principles to combat bullying among youth.

In further support of bibliotherapy, experts on bullying often recommend literature as a tool for dealing with bullying. Olweus (1993) suggests that books be used by classroom teachers as part of an overarching anti-bullying program. In his book, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do,* Olweus states: "The goal in reading aloud from the literature should be to increase the students' empathy with victims of bullying and to demonstrate some of the mechanisms involved, without teaching new ways of bullying" (p. 82).

A resource book published by the American Counseling Association includes an annotated bibliography of over 40 bullying-related books that students and their parents can use (Ross, 1996). McNamara and McNamara's *Keys to Dealing with Bullies* (1997) similarly includes a list of potentially useful fiction and nonfiction bullying books. These authors recommend to parents that books be used to start a discussion with their children about bullying. Roxanne Henkin, an educator with nearly 20 years of experience, outlines a comprehensive program that uses literature to tackle bullying and teach social skills. Her book, *Confronting Bullying: Literacy as a Tool for Character Education* (2005) includes useful strategies and tips for school professionals and an extensive list of children's books that can be used in bibliotherapy.

Even anti-bullying groups advocate the use of books in the coping process. *The Anti-Bullying Alliance* website (2007) provides the author, publication info, a brief summary, commentary, and suggested age range for over 50 bullying-themed books. Clearly, bullying experts recognize the value of literature in helping children cope with this pervasive problem. It should be noted, however, that none of these resources include any evaluations regarding the therapeutic value of the recommended books. Books that have a bullying theme are listed and endorsed, but not specifically reviewed in any way.

In addition to the recommendations from experts on bullying issues, many sources specifically aimed toward teachers and school librarians advocate for the use of literature to confront bullying. In a resource book for K – 8 teachers, Beane (2005) includes using books as one of 100 tips for creating a bully-free classroom. The author recommends that teachers have children read books on bullying, friendship, conflict, acceptance or similar

themes, either individually or as a class. Then they can discuss or write about the topics. Beane gives an example of how such a discussion can be initiated after reading a story:

> How would these characters handle a fight on the playground? A shoving match in the hall? Teasing? Rejection? Hurt feelings? What else? Invite your students to come up with their own suggestions for situations they'd like to portray. Reading and writing are reasonably non-threatening ways to explore issues of friendship, rejection, prejudice, acceptance, conflict, bullying, and other topics. (p. 57).

Beane's book includes a list of over 50 children's books that could potentially be used in such exercises.

Education journals and other publications also frequently recommend that teachers use children's books to deal with bullying problems in their classrooms. Rowan (2007) suggests using literature as one of several "practical suggestions for educators" (p. 182) who witness bullying behavior. Kriedler (1996) similarly recommended the practice as a "smart way to handle kids who pick on others" (p. 70). Other articles focus specifically on one or two books that teachers can use, offering specific questions to ask and activities to try (e.g., Duimstra, 2003; Freer, 2004; Ohanian, 1993). Similar articles are aimed at other school-based practitioners, such as librarians (Rovenger, 2004; Zingher, 2006) and school nurses (Gregory & Vessey, 2004). Using books to confront school bullying is a common suggestion in the education literature.

Books to use. The research on the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in reducing aggressive behavior, the growing practice of using literature as part of anti-bullying initiatives, and the recommendations from both bullying experts and educators to use books to confront bullying all indicate that bibliotherapy has potential for helping

children who struggle with this problem. However, if parents, teachers, school psychologists, and others want to use this method, they are left with the problem of selecting appropriate books to utilize. Literally hundreds of books address bullying as a major theme.

Professionals and parents who intend to use bibliotherapy as part of an anti-bullying strategy must be familiar with the book before using it. Minimally, they should read it before sharing it with a child or group of children. Some children's books include flawed strategies for handling bullies, such as physically fighting, retaliating, or otherwise bullying the bully. McNamara and McNamara (1997) warn:

> One of the major resources for children [is] books that portray incidents of bullying and effective ways to resolve the conflict. Despite the number of good books on the topic, it is surprising to find that quite a few employ ineffective techniques. There are some that continue to advocate physical aggression. Others have unrealistic expectations for change, and others provide no help whatsoever. A word of caution: Review the books before reading them with your child (a good idea for any book) and make sure that they follow the basic guidelines for dealing with this issue. (p. 132)

Henkin (2005) similarly warns that many bullying books are overly simplistic and thus not very useful. She states that, as an alternative, "Rich literature that includes bullying as one among the many other complicated issues of living offers more to think about and discuss" (p. 15). While it is admirable to attempt to identify books that meet these criteria, it may not always be feasible. It is clearly advisable to be familiar with each book that is shared with a child in order to ensure that the bullying situation is

resolved in a pro-social yet realistic manner. This can be time-consuming and overwhelming, given the sheer number of potential choices. Thus one challenge for those who want to use bibliotherapy is the need to identify useful books from among the large sample available.

In addition to narrowing down the large number of potential books to use, a second problem for those who wish to use bibliotherapy for bullying is selecting a book that meets the specific needs of the child who will read it. Each book should be carefully chosen so as to best match the characteristics of the child and his or her situation. Bibliotherapy practitioners should be aware of the traits and situation of the characters in the story they present to the child. In order to be applicable to each individual child, books should be selected according to multiple important variables, such as the gender of the involved characters, the type(s) of bullying, the role in the bullying (i.e., bullies, targets, bystanders), the role of adults in the situation, the coping strategies used, and so forth. One of the most important steps in bibliotherapy is to help the reader relate to the character and situation which makes it more likely that the child will relate to the story and apply the lessons taught (Gregory & Vessey, 2004).

Though limited, some research exists that provides useful information regarding the available bullying-themed books. Oliver and Young (1994) analyzed 22 books aimed towards preadolescents (ages 9–12) according to their use of violence as a solution to bullying, as well as the major coping and problem-solving methods and strategies that were used by the main characters. Information presented in their appendices could be useful to practitioners who want to use the specific books examined by these researchers. However, this particular study was limited to a narrow age group and was published over

a decade ago. Thus the information presented does not represent the children's books that are the most current and accessible.

A more recent article analyzed 25 books written for children in kindergarten through third grade (Entenmen, Murnen, & Hendricks, 2005). The books were published between 1995 and 2003 and would, therefore, be more available to parents and practitioners today. In this study, several important variables relating to the bullying situation were analyzed. The researchers found that verbal bullying was the most commonly portrayed, followed in frequency by physical bullying. Bullies were more likely to be portrayed as males. Meanwhile, targets were equally likely to be male or female. The characters were slightly more likely to be animals than children in the picture books examined. The most common place where bullying occurred was at school, followed by home. The majority of their sample (22 of the 25) included a bystander, though their responses to the bullying varied somewhat, from trying to help the target to joining in with the bully. About half of the books included an adult offering some sort of help or intervention. The problem resolution varied widely, but in most, the bullies had to face the consequences of their behaviors, at least to a certain degree. This analysis could be useful to people searching for more information about bullying-themed children's books.

Entenmen, Murnen, and Hendricks (2005) provide a useful resource, aimed particularly at teachers but also applicable to parents, school psychologists, and others interested in using literature to combat bullying. If this content analysis could be completed for books published more recently (2004 and on), additional books could be identified to use as part of bibliotherapy for bullying problems. Further information could

also be gathered with regard to additional variables that these researchers did not

examine. This analysis could go beyond description and comparison to the research. The

ultimate goal would be to identify specific books that could be used for individual

children according to their unique needs and situation. Because so many new children's

books are published each year, practitioners could benefit from criteria they could apply

to select appropriate bullying-themed books from the vast array currently available to

them.

Methods

Book Sample Selection Criteria

A sample of children's literature was selected for further analysis. Several factors were considered in order to ensure that the sample was useful, yet of a manageable size. These factors include type (fiction v. nonfiction), language, subject, age level, publication year, and recommendations from children's literature experts. First, the books selected were fiction. Second, they were written in English, though translations from other languages were also acceptable. Thirdly, the books had the word "bullying" (or other word variants) as one of their main subjects, themes, or keywords in a database or catalog search.

A fourth criterion was age level. Only picture books were used in this study because they are aimed at the age group of interest-early elementary school. This age group was selected because of the potential to help the youngest age group to identify strategies for dealing with bullying before the problem worsens. Picture books can be used with older children as well. In addition, using this type of book is efficient; picture books can be read more quickly and easily, thus allowing for more time to analyze the content.

A fifth qualifier for the sample was publication year. The selected books were ones that others can easily obtain. Because children's books go out of print relatively quickly, only recently published books were used. Thus, the sample included only books published between 2004 and 2007. Also, this range of years was used because the analysis by Entenmen, Murnen, and Hendricks (2005) covered books published up to the year 2003.

This study's final criterion for inclusion in the book sample was recommendations from experts in the field of children's literature. The Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD) was used in order to gather relevant book reviews for the initial selection of books. Using this helpful resource, the initial sample of available books was examined to assess the book reviewers' opinions for each title.

The reviews of *The Horn Book Guide* were used and the books selected for the sample had a *Horn Book* review listed. This was done for several reasons. First, *Horn Book* reviews are included in the CLCD for the largest proportion of books. Second, it is presumed that the *Horn Book* reviews only books that are the most widely available. Third, this reviewing group provides a useful numerical rank for each book. Other reviews may be potentially helpful but do not include any sort of quantitative rating system. In each review from *The Horn Book,* the book is given a rank, ranging from 1 to 6. A rank of 1 denotes that the book is "Outstanding, noteworthy in style, content, and/or illustration", while 6 means "Unacceptable in style, content, and/or illustration" (see Table 1). Books with a *Horn Book* ranking of 1 to 4 were included in the study because these were recommended by the reviewers; those with a rating of 5 ("Marginal, seriously flawed, but with some redeeming quality") and 6 ("Unacceptable") were excluded from the sample to be used. Thus the initial sample of books was narrowed down according to whether or not a *Horn Book* review was available in the CLCD and, if so, whether the ranking was a 4 or higher.

Table 1

The Horn Book Guide Ranking System

Numerical Ranking	Description
1	Outstanding, noteworthy in style, content, and/or illustration
2	Superior, well above average
3	Recommended, satisfactory in style, content, and/or illustration
4	Recommended, with minor flaws
5	Marginal, seriously flawed, but with some redeeming quality
6	Unacceptable in style, content, and/or illustration

Each book in the sample that was analyzed for this study thus met the following criteria: (a) it was a piece of children's fiction; (b) it was written in or translated into English; (c) it had "bullying" or a word variant as one of its major themes and/or keywords; (d) it was a picture book aimed at children who are in early elementary school; (e) it was published between 2004 and 2007; (f) it was reviewed by the *Horn Book Guide*; and (g) it received a ranking of 1 – 4 on the *Horn Book*'s 1 – 6 rating scale.

Book Identification Procedures

In order to identify all of the picture books with a bullying theme published since 2004, web-based book databases were searched, including the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD) and World Cat. The CLCD is a subscription service often used by librarians, elementary and secondary schools, universities, and booksellers. It includes records of over 1.8 million books, with publication information, summaries, awards won, and book reviews from various sources such as *Booklist* from the American

Library Association (ALA), *The ALAN Review*, *Kirkus*, and *The Horn Book Guide* (CLCD, 2008). Another database that was utilized is the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) Online Union Catalog, known as World Cat. World Cat is managed by the OCLC, a nonprofit organization that libraries can join. The goal of the OCLC is to compile library records and holdings in one place. The database is updated daily and has over 95 million bibliographic records from over 60,000 libraries (Online Computer Library Center, Inc., 2008). In addition to these databases, the website www.amazon.com was also searched because of its widespread use and popularity. These three resources (the CLCD, World Cat, and Amazon.com) were used in order to identify books that could be included in the sample.

Eighty-five potential books that met the initial criteria of book type, language, theme, age range, and date of publication were identified through these databases. Unfortunately, 45 of these books were not reviewed by *The Horn Book* and thus were eliminated from the sample. The *Horn Book* rating was then noted for each of the remaining 40 books in order to eliminate the books that did not receive a 1 – 4 ranking. Eleven books received a ranking of 5or 6. Thus, 29 books met all of the criteria and thus were included in the study sample. After the final sample was identified, the books were obtained through the local university library, the local city library, and the inter-library loan service.

Measures

The sample of books was analyzed according to multiple variables in order to create a chart that can be used to select a specific book for a child's unique bullying situation. This resource can be used by parents and practitioners to meet the needs of

individual children. All of this information was compiled into three useful charts (see Appendix C). The created chart also includes basic information about each book, including each book's author and illustrator, publication information, ISBN, brief summary, ranking in the *Horn Book Guide*, as well as any significant awards or honors won by the book.

The variables that were examined can be divided into two categories: (a) demographics and characteristics; and (b) the bullying situation. Demographic variables include (a) whether the characters are humans or animals; (b) the gender of both the bully and the target; (c) the race/ethnicity of both the bully and the target (when applicable); (d) whether the bully is older than the target; and (e) any additional traits that seem to make the victim a target (e.g., physical appearance, behavior, disability, personality, being the new kid, a unique interest or hobby, academic performance, or family characteristics). Variables related to the bullying situation that were examined include (a) the type of bullying (physical, verbal, relational, or a combination); (b) the setting where the bullying takes place; (c) whether the bullying is perpetrated by an individual or a group; (d) whether bystanders are involved and what role they take on in the situation; (e) whether or any adults are involved and what sort of help or intervention they provide; and (f) the type of resolution to the bullying situation in the story (e.g., developing self-confidence, being friendly to the bully, ignoring or avoiding the bully, gaining empathy for the bully, using humor, being protected and/or supported by others, and getting revenge on the bully). Table 2 provides a list of all of the variables that were examined for each book in the sample. Appendix B is the coding instrument that was used to analyze each book and includes each of these variables.

Table 2

Variables Presented for Each Book in the Sample

Category	Variable	Description
Book information	Basic book information	Book title, author, year of publication, publisher name, place of publication, ISBN
	Horn Book ranking	1 – 4 (see Table 1)
	Awards	Any significant awards or honors won by the book
Demographics and Characteristics	Character portrayal	Humans or animals?
	Gender	Of both the bully and the target
	Race/ethnicity	Of both the bully and the target, if applicable
	Age	Is the bully older than the target?
	Other traits that make the victim a target	Physical appearance, behavior, disability, personality, being the new kid, interest/hobby, academic performance, family characteristics, etc.
Bullying Situation	Type of bullying	Physical, verbal, relational, or a combination?
	Setting	Where does the bullying take place (school, home, neighborhood, etc.)?
	Bully group	Is the bullying is done by one perpetrator or a group?
	Bystander role	Are one or more bystanders involved? If so, what is the role of each bystander?
	Adult role	Do one or more adults get involved? If so, what is the role of each adult?
	Resolution	How is the bullying problem resolved?

Each of the books were read independently by two reviewers and analyzed for each of the variables of interest. The second reviewer, who was working on a related project and was thus familiar with the research, was adequately trained to use the created coding instrument. She was given a copy of the coding instrument and instructions on how to complete it for each book. After the she read and coded a few books, the first reviewer discussed questions she had and clarified some of the aspects that were unclear. In order to achieve consensus on all items, any disagreements between the two reviewers were evaluated and resolved by a third rater, also familiar and trained in the coding procedure.

Research Design

This study involved an exploratory content analysis of selected children's literature, specifically on the topic of bullying. The analysis involved coding content based on a predetermined set of categories reflecting the professional literature and basic information of interest to parents, teachers, and school-based mental health professionals. After coding the sample of selected books, descriptive statistics of frequencies were calculated. Information from the frequency count was then summarized to provide an overall view of each book's contents. Additionally, content analysis for the total sample of books was summarized in frequency counts.

Data Analysis

After the data were collected, descriptive statistics were used to illustrate what types of messages were conveyed in the chosen sample. This was done in order to answer the first research question: *What information is presented in the sample on the topic of bullying?* All of the variables of interest that were analyzed in the books were examined.

Particular attention was paid to the messages conveyed regarding gender, type of bullying, where the bullying occurred, and how the problem was resolved. In order to answer the second research question (*Does the information presented in recent children's literature align with the current research on bullying?*), the information related to these variables was assessed in order to determine its accuracy compared to current research literature. With the assistance of summarized information, bibliotherapy practitioners can select specific books that are recommended by children's literature experts, represent accurate information about bullying, and can be used to meet the specific needs of individual children involved in various types of bullying situations.

Results

Research Question #1: Messages in the Books

What information is presented in recent (2004–2007) children's picture books on the topic of bullying? Analysis of the books ($N = 29$) provided an indication of the messages generally sent in bullying-themed children's literature. The analyzed variables were divided into two categories: (a) variables describing demographics and characteristics of the book's characters; and (b) variables describing the bullying situation.

Demographic Variables

Character portrayal. In over half of the 29 books (51.7%; $n = 15$), the characters were animals. Humans constituted 41.4% ($n = 12$) of the sample. In two books (6.9%), the characters were coded as "other." In one of these books, the characters were ghosts and thus could not be classified into one of these two categories. In the second book, the characters were mixed: Most of the characters were children but the title character was a dinosaur. See Figure 1.
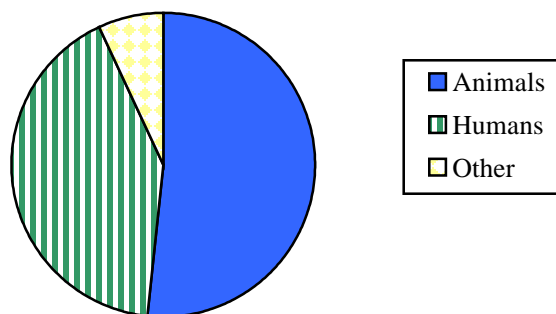

Figure 1. Character Portrayal.

Gender. With regard to the gender of the bully or bullies, the majority were male. In 55.2% of the books ($n = 16$), the bully character was male, and in two cases the

bullying was perpetrated by a male group, bringing the total to 62.1% ($n = 18$). There was

a female bully or female bully group in 13.7% of the sample ($n = 4$). A mixed group

bullied the target in 10.3% ($n = 3$) of the books. Gender was unclear or ambiguous in the

remaining 13.8% ($n = 4$); this was not surprising because multiple books with animal

characters were included, often resulting in the gender being ambiguous. The gender of

the targets in the books was more equally distributed than the gender of the bullies. There

was a male target (or male group) in 34.5% ($n = 10$) of the books. In the same proportion

of the sample (34.5%; $n = 10$), the target was a female or female group. In 27.6% ($n = 8$)

of the stories, a mixed group (at least one male and one female) was targeted. In one

book, the gender of the target was unclear or ambiguous. See Figure 2.
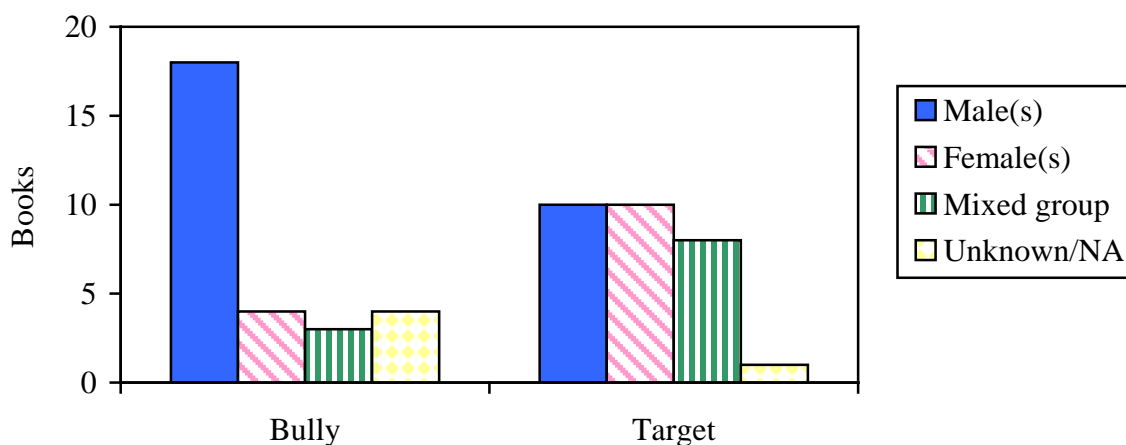
Figure 2. Gender.

Race/Ethnicity. The analysis of the race or ethnicity of the characters was

impeded somewhat by the fact that in over half of the books (55.2%; $n = 16$), this

question was not applicable. In these cases, the characters were animals or otherwise non-

human (e.g., ghosts). For the remaining 13 books, race/ethnicity was determined

primarily through the pictures, though text cues such as names were also used. Thus this

determination was somewhat subjective. The majority of the applicable stories featured a bully or bullies that were Caucasian (76.9%; $n = 10$). One was Hispanic, one was of unknown ethnicity, and one book featured a bullying group of more than one race. The breakdown of the race/ethnicity of the targets was similar to that of bullies: 53.8% ($n = 7$) were Caucasian; 15.4% ($n = 2$) were of unknown race; one (7.7%) was Asian; and 23.1% ($n = 3$) included a group of targets of more than one race. The raters did not note the specific races of the members of these mixed groups. See Figure 3.
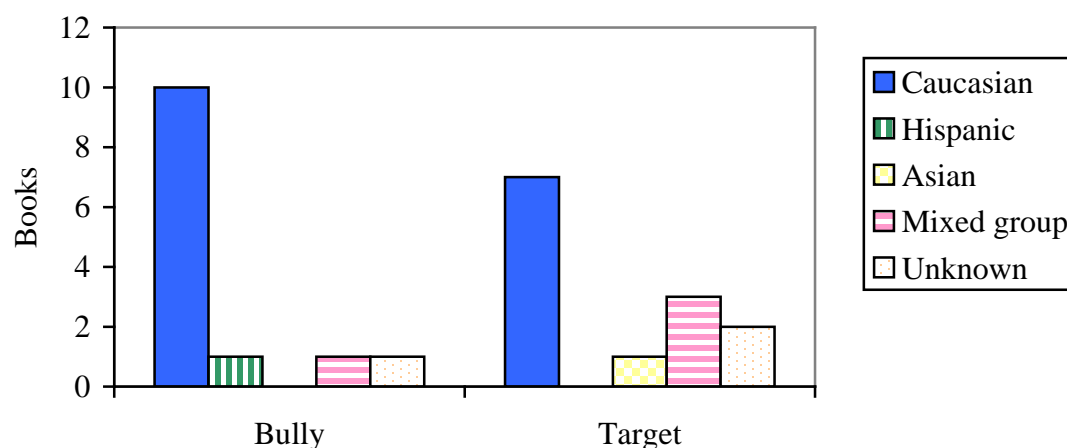
Figure 3. Race/Ethnicity.

Age. This question investigated whether or not the bully was older than the target in the stories. Both pictures and text clues were used to determine the relative ages of the characters. Often the age relationship of the characters was ambiguous and thus the determination was rather difficult in many cases. In about half of the books (51.7%; $n = 15$), this question could not be answered because the age relationship was unknown or unclear. In ten of the books (34.5%), the bully and target were of approximately the same age. In 13.8% ($n = 4$), the bully was clearly older than the target. There were no cases observed where the bully was younger than the target. See Figure 4.
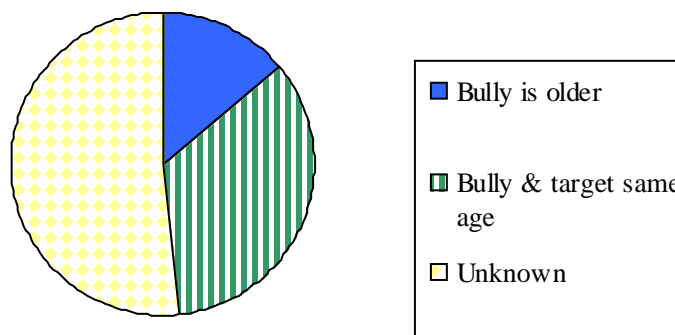
Figure 4. Age Comparison between Bully and Target.

Target traits. In addition to gender, race/ethnicity, or age, the reviewers noted

other traits that seemed to make the victim a target of bullying. Multiple traits were

identified and then classified into basic categories. One of the most common

characteristics was smaller size. In 48.3% ($n = 14$) of the books, the target was smaller in

size than the bully. Along the same lines, other aspects of physical appearance (e.g.,

being overweight, having unique physical characteristics) were observed in targets in

13.8% ($n = 4$) of the sample. In 24.1% ($n = 7$) of the books, the target was victimized

because of distinctive personality traits or behaviors (e.g., shyness, hyper-sensitivity,

being friends with a pet bird). Another common reason for being targeted was less social

power (often associated with the food chain in the animal kingdom). This was observed

in 17.2% ($n = 5$) of the books. In addition to these traits, wearing unique clothing (6.9%;

$n = 2$) and being the new kid in town (6.9%; $n = 2$) were also observed as contributing

reasons for victimization. See Figure 5.
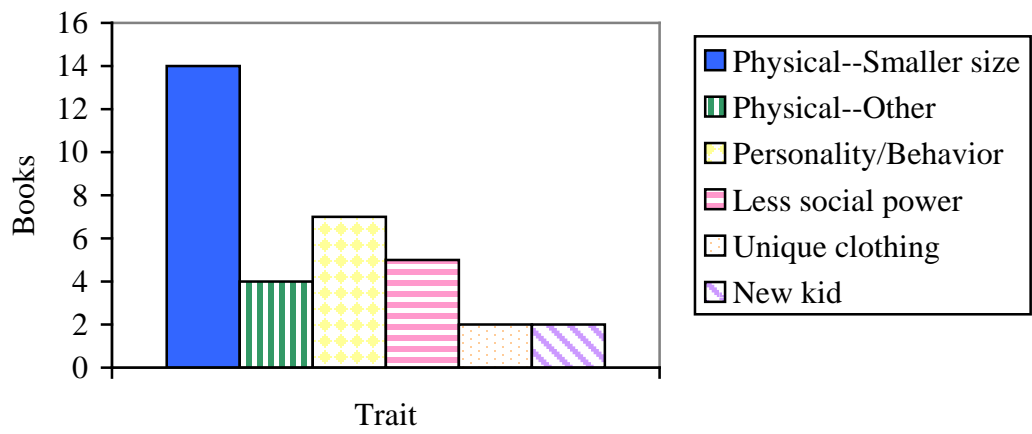
Figure 5 . Target Traits.

Bullying Situation Variables

Type of bullying. For the purpose of this analysis, bullying behaviors were classified as either physical (e.g., hitting, taking possessions), verbal (e.g., teasing, name-calling), or relational (e.g., ostracizing, gossiping). Many books included examples of more than one of these three types. The most commonly observed type of bullying was verbal (79.3%, $n = 23$). Physical bullying was present in 69.0% ($n = 20$) and relational was observed in 13.8% ($n = 4$) of the sample. See Figure 6.
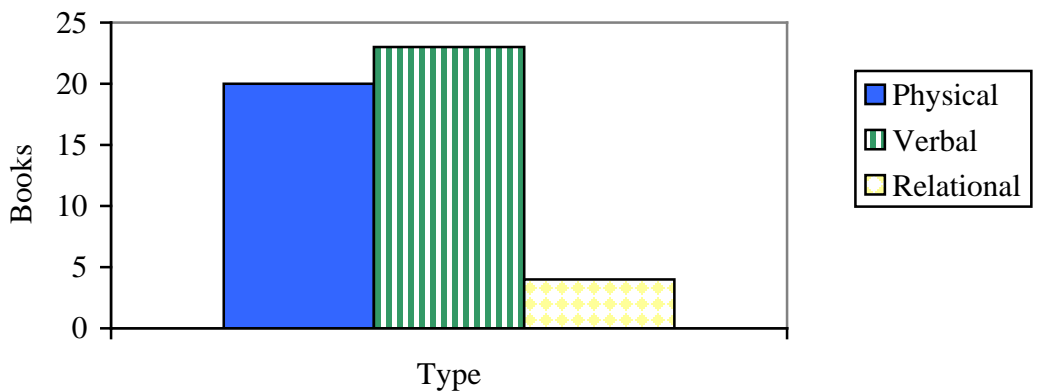
Figure 6. Type of Bullying--Overall.

Most of the books included examples of more than one of these three types. The most common observation was the inclusion of both verbal and physical bullying ($n = 12$; 41.4%). Verbal bullying only was observed in seven books (24.1%), while physical was the only type present in six books (20.7%). There were no books in which relational bullying was the only type observed, but it was present along with verbal bullying in two books (6.9%) and with both verbal and physical bullying in two books (6.9%). See Figure 7.
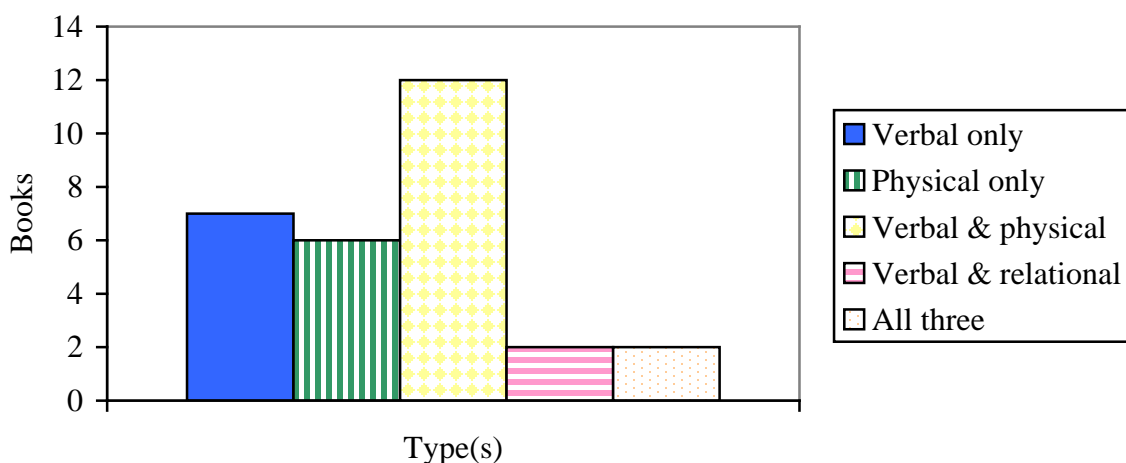
Figure 7. Type of Bullying--Combined.

Setting. For this analysis, the place in which the bullying occurred was classified in the general categories of home, school, neighborhood, and other place (most often the natural habit of the animals involved). Some books included bullying incidents in more than one of these settings. Bullying was portrayed most often in the neighborhood (37.9%; $n = 11$), followed by other place (31.0%; $n = 9$), school (27.6%, $n = 8$), and home (10.3%; $n = 3$). In two of the books (6.9%), the location was unknown or not described. See Figure 8.
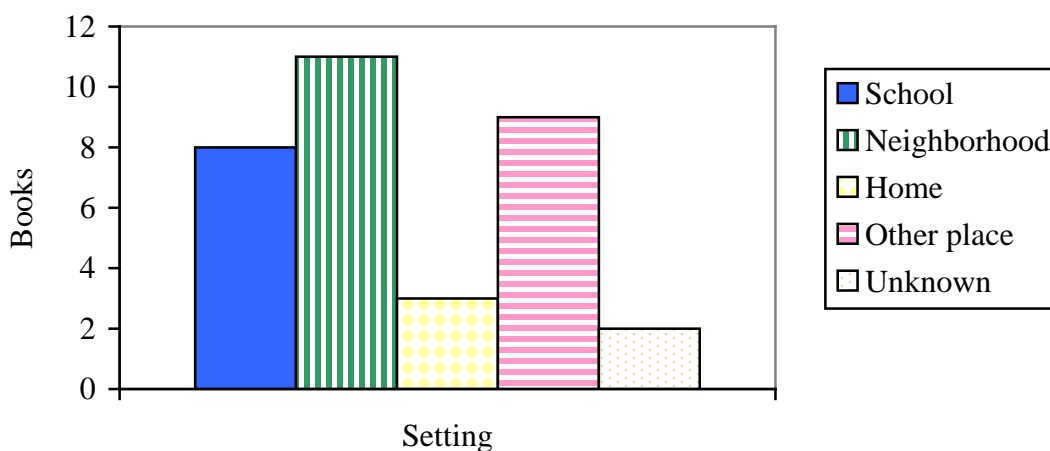
Figure 8. Bullying Location.

When one or more bullying incidents occurred in a school setting, further examination indicated where they happened within the school environment. Again, many of the books included bullying in more than one of the within-school settings. Of the eight books that included school bullying, it was most commonly observed in the classroom ($n = 6$; 75%) and on the playground/school grounds ($n = 6$; 75%). Bullying occurred in the hallway in two books (25%), in the lunchroom in one book, and on the school bus in one book. See Figure 9.
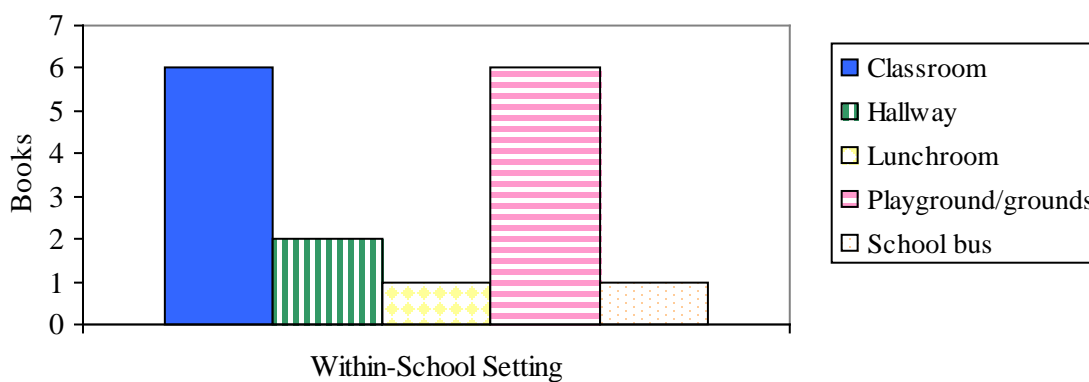
Figure 9. Bullying Location—Within School Setting.

Number of bullies. Bullying was more often perpetrated by an individual rather than by a group of bullies. In most of the books (69.0%; n = 20), the bully acted alone. In 27.6% (n = 8) of the books, bullying was done by a group of two or more characters. There was one book (3.4%) in which it was unclear whether the bullying was perpetrated by a single bully or a group (In this book, *Candy Shop*, the bully or bullies painted racist graffiti on a sidewalk outside of a shop but were never observed before, during, or after the act.). See Figure 10.
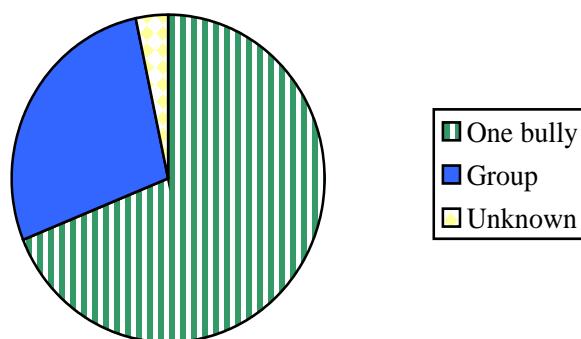
Figure 10. Number of Bullies.

Bystander roles. One or more bystanders witnessed a bullying incident in 58.6% (*n* = 17) of the sample of books. The response of the bystander was classified into seven general categories. Many books included more than one bystander and/or more than one of these responses. The most commonly observed bystander response was to offer indirect support, such as consoling, to the target. This was observed in eight of the books (47.1% of the 17 books that included a bystander). The next most common responses were found equally across books (*n* = 7; 41.2%): ignore it and do nothing; stick up for the target directly to the bully; or to also be victimized. The remaining three responses were

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to laugh or smile, join in the bullying, or to tell an adult or authority figure. These responses were each observed in two books (11.8%). See Figure 11.
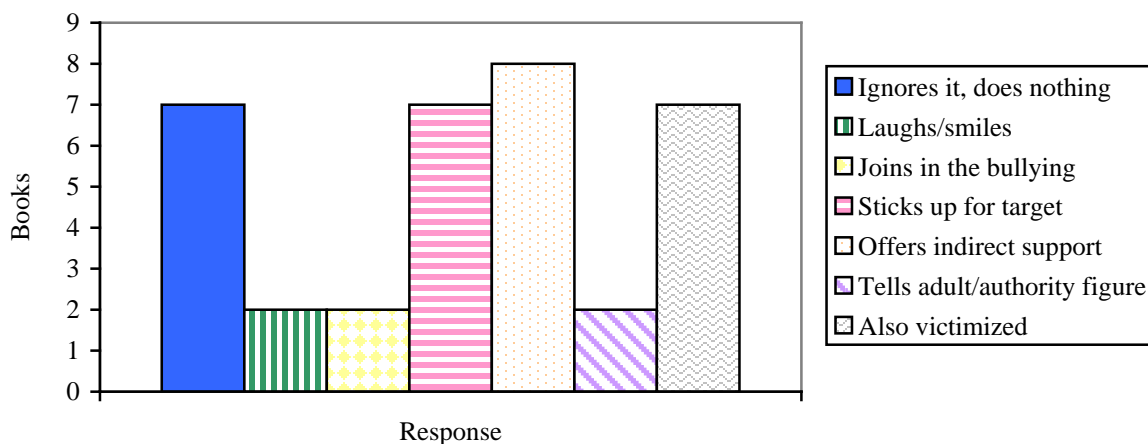
Figure 11. Response of Bystander(s).

Adult roles. It was determined that in 31.0% (*n* = 9) of the sample, adult involvement was not applicable, usually because the characters were animals in their natural habitat or adult status was otherwise unclear. Of the remaining 20 books, eight (40%) included an adult responding in some way to one or more bullying incidents. Some of the books included more than one adult. Most often, the adult to get involved was a parent (*n* = 6; 75% of those that included an adult). A teacher responded to the bullying in three of the books (37.5%) while a playground supervisor was involved in one book. In two books (25%), some other adult was involved (e.g., an aunt or other relative). See Figure 12.
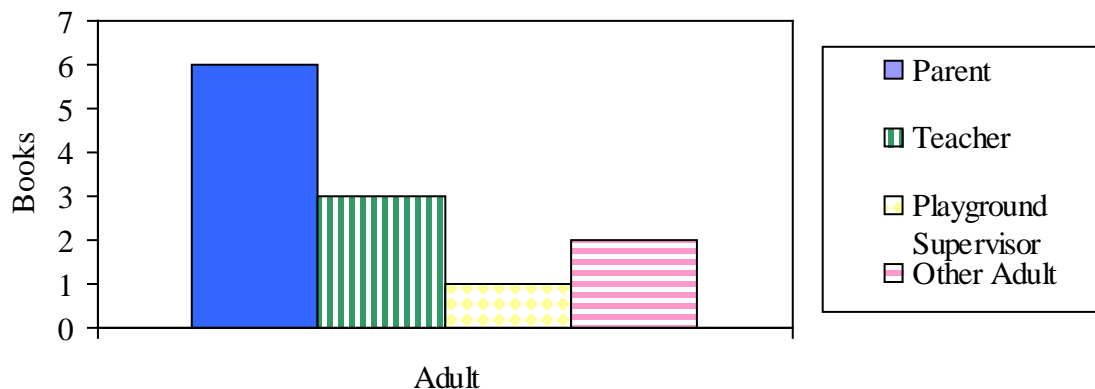
Figure 12. Adult Involved.

Similar to the analysis of bystander roles, the responses of the adults were classified into several general categories. The most commonly observed responses were to attend to and offer support to the target ($n = 6$; 75%) and to teach skills or strategies to the target ($n = 6$; 75%). Another frequent response was to encourage friendship and reconciliation between the target and bully ($n = 3$; 37.5%). In two books (25%), the adult corrected the bullying and encouraged positive behaviors from the bully. Also observed in two books (25%), the adult ignored the bullying and did nothing. In one book, the adult scolded the bully and directed him or her to stop the bullying behavior immediately. In no cases did an adult respond by laughing or smiling, joining in the bullying, talking to the bully privately after the incident, or immediately punishing/disciplining the bully. See Figure 13.
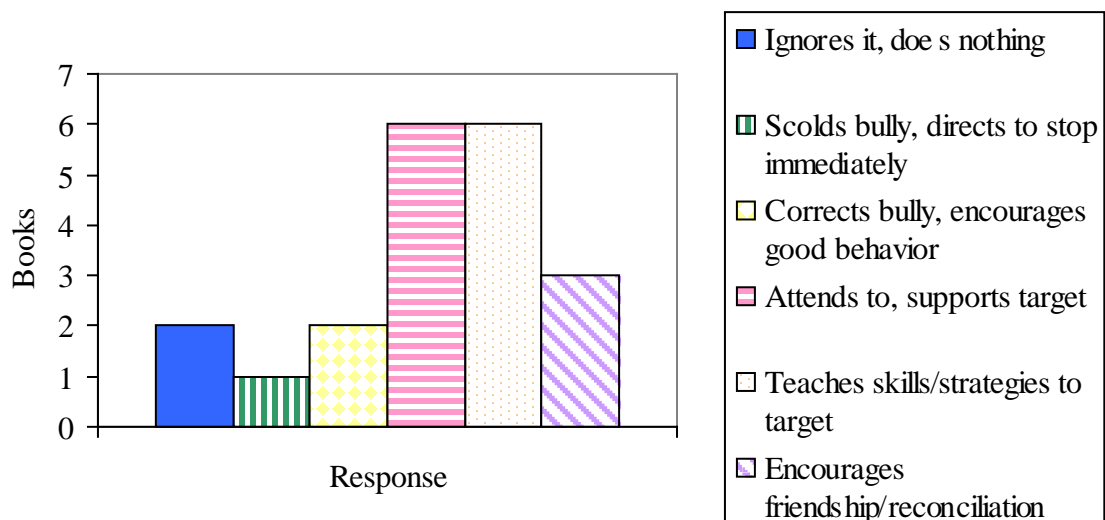
Figure 13. Adult Response.

Resolution. Before the analysis, 11 possible resolution categories were identified.

Each book's resolution was then classified into one or more of these categories. Almost

all of the books included more than one resolution category. The most common was that

the target received some sort of support (direct or indirect) from others. This was

observed in 24 (82.8%) of the books. The next most common resolution (69.0%; $n = 20$)

was that the target developed self-confidence and/or other skills; this often included the

target sticking up for him or herself directly to the bully. In 41.4% ($n = 12$) of the sample,

the target was friendly to the bully; this sometimes (but not always) resulted in the two

becoming friends. In 11 of the books (37.9%), the bully stopped his or her bullying

behavior, with a realization of the wrongfulness of his or her actions. By contrast, seven

of the books (24.1%) included a resolution in which the bully stopped his or her bullying

behavior but did not observably come to a realization of wrong-doing. Eight of the stories

(27.6%) included some sort of revenge or retaliation by the target, while two (6.9%)

included the bully being otherwise chased or scared away, not by the target or one of his

or her allies (e.g., in *Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon*, a group of wolf bullies harassed

smaller wildlife until they were scared away by a rattlesnake not involved in the conflict).

In six of the books (20.7%), the target ignored or avoided the bully and/or his or her

behavior. Some of the less frequent resolutions included the target developing empathy

for the bully (10.3%; $n = 3$) and the target using humor to defuse the situation (6.9%; $n =$

2). Finally, in three of the books (10.3%), it was determined that there really was no

resolution to the bullying situation; the bullying just continued. See Figure 14.

Figure 14. Type of Resolution.
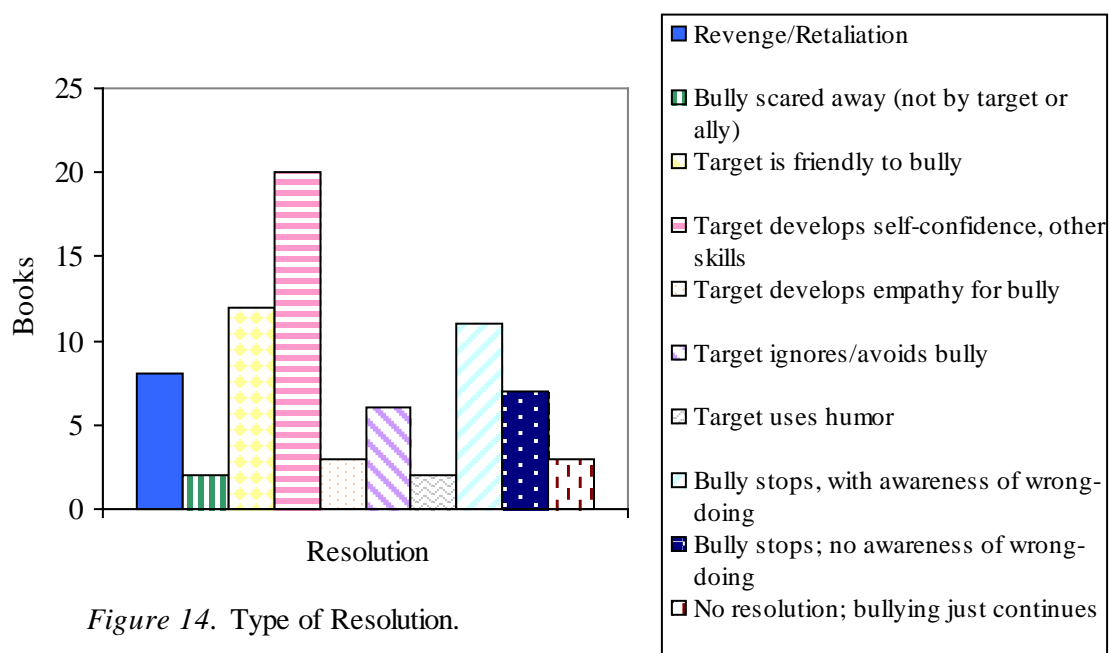
Summary

The results of the analysis are summarized in Tables 3 and 4. While the books

presented a range of information, there were some general patterns. Over half of the

books included animal characters, with the rest being humans or some other category.

The majority of the bullies were male, but the gender representation was about equal for

targets. Race/ethnicity was not applicable in a large proportion of the books, but when it

was, there was not much diversity—the majority of the bullies and targets were

Caucasian. Age was also unknown or not applicable in many cases, but when it was, the bully and target were most often the same age. Other common traits that seemed to make the victim a target included small size, unique behavior or personality traits, and limited social power.

The most frequently observed type of bullying was verbal, though physical was also much more common than relational. Bullying incidents occurred most frequently in the neighborhood or other place, with school and home less often the setting of the bullying. When bullying did take place at school, it was most often in the classroom or on the playground. Bullies were most often seen to act alone, as opposed to there being a group of perpetrators. Bystanders observed the bullying in over half of the books; their most common responses included offering support to the target, ignoring the bullying, sticking up for the target, or also becoming a victim of the bully. Adults were involved in only eight of the books and were most frequently a parent; they typically offered support or taught skills to the target. Of the multiple resolution categories, the most frequently observed were for the target to receive support from others, the target to develop self-confidence and/or other skills, and for the target to be friendly to the bully.

Table 3

Summary of Book Analysis—Demographics and Characteristics

Category	Variable	Number of Books
Character portrayal	Animals	15
	Humans	12
	Other	2

Table 3 (*Continued*)

Summary of Book Analysis—Demographics and Characteristics

Category	Variable	Number of Books
Gender of bully	Male (or male group)	18
	Female (or female group)	4
	Mixed group	3
	Unknown/NA	4
Gender of target	Male (or male group)	10
	Female (or female group)	10
	Mixed group	8
	Unknown/NA	1
Race/ethnicity of bully	Caucasian	10
	Other race	1
	Mixed group	1
	Unknown/NA	17
Race/ethnicity of target	Caucasian	7
	Other race	1
	Mixed group	3
	Unknown/NA	18
Age	Bully is older	4
	Same age	10
	Unknown/NA	15

Table 3 (*Continued*)

Summary of Book Analysis—Demographics and Characteristics

Category	Variable	Number of Books
Other traits that make the victim a target	Smaller size	14
	Other physical characteristics	4
	Behavior/personality	7
	Less social power	5
	New kid	2
	Unique clothing	2

Table 4

Summary of Book Analysis—Bullying Situation

Category	Variable	Number of Books
Type of bullying	Verbal	23
	Physical	20
	Relational	4
	School	8
Setting	Neighborhood	11
	Home	3
	Other place	9
	Unknown	2
Within-school setting	Classroom	6
	Hallway	2
	Lunchroom	1
	Playground/School grounds	6
	School bus	1

Table 4 (*Continued*)

Summary of Book Analysis—Bullying Situation

Category	Variable	Number of Books
Bully group	One bully	19
	Two or more bullies	6
	Unknown	4
Bystander involvement	Involved	17
	Not involved	12
Bystander response	Ignores, does nothing	7
	Laughs/smiles	2
	Joins in	2
	Sticks up for target	7
	Indirect support to target	8
	Tells adult	2
	Also victimized	7
Adult involvement	Involved	8
	Not involved	12
	NA	9
Adult identity	Parent	6
	Teacher	3
	Playground supervisor	1
	Other adult	2

Table 4 (*Continued*)

Summary of Book Analysis—Bullying Situation

Category	Variable	Number of Books
Adult response	Ignores, does nothing	2
	Scolds bully	1
	Corrects bully, encourages good behavior	2
	Supports target	6
	Teaches skills to target	6
	Encourages reconciliation	3
Resolution	Revenge/retaliation	8
	Bully chased away by another (not target or ally)	2
	Target friendly to bully	12
	Target develops self-confidence, other skills	20
	Target develops empathy for bully	3
	Target ignores/avoids bully	6
	Target uses humor	2
	Target receives support from others	24
	Bully stops, w/awareness of wrong-doing	11
	Bully stops, but no awareness of wrong-doing	7
	None	3

Research Question #2: Comparison to Research Literature

Does the information presented in recent children's literature align with the current research on bullying, including such variables as gender differences, the type of bullying, where the bullying occurs, and how the bullying problem is resolved? As indicated in the preceding section, books in the sample included a diverse array of information about bullying, including who the perpetrators and targets are, what bullies do, where bullying happens, and how bullying can be addressed. This information can be compared to the current research literature on this topic in order to assess its accuracy.

Gender

In the 29 books examined, the majority included a male bully or bully group. Over 60% of the books included a male perpetrator (or male group). Solo females and female groups, mixed-gender groups, and unknown-gender perpetrators were about equally likely to be the bullies in the remaining books. The increased likelihood of the bully being male is in accordance with the research on bullying. Boys are more likely than girls to bully others (Glew et al., 2005; Nansel et al., 2001). The research literature indicates that boys are also more likely to be targeted by bullies. This trend was not as readily apparent in the analyzed sample. The target was a male or male group in ten of the books; the target was a female or female group in the same number of books. The perpetrator(s) targeted a mixed-gender group in eight of the remaining books, with one book including a target of unknown gender. Thus, in the selected sample, boys and girls were essentially equally likely to be targeted. Research indicates that this is not representative of real-world observations—boys are more likely to be targeted (Nansel et

al.). Thus the sample accurately portrayed bullies as more likely to be male but was inaccurate by not showing that targets are also more likely to be male.

Type of Bullying

Verbal bullying was the most frequently observed type of bullying in the sample. Targets were teased, called names, and subjected to other forms of verbal bullying in 23 of the 29 books. Physical bullying was also common, present in 20 of the books. Relational bullying was far less frequent—it was observed in just four of the books. The high frequency of verbal bullying is in accordance with research which shows that this is the most commonly observed type (American Association of University Women, 2001). Though relational bullying seems to happen often, it is often the most difficult for observers to recognize (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006). Thus the low incidence of this type of bullying in the sample is not surprising.

Location of Bullying

In the sample, bullying occurred most often in the neighborhood (11 books), followed by other place (nine books), school (eight books), home (three books), and unknown place (two books). This is not in harmony with the research on bullying. Bullying occurs most frequently at school (Fleming & Towey, 2002). Thus the sample did not accurately represent where bullying typically occurs in the real world.

With regard to the books that did portray school bullying, the books were accurate in portraying bullying as occurring frequently on school grounds. Research indicates that the most frequent location of bullying in elementary schools is on the playground (Olweus, 1993; Rivers & Smith, 1994). In the sample, this setting was tied with the classroom for the most common location of within-school-environment bullying (six

books for each). As noted by Olweus (1993), bullying is most likely to occur in places where adult supervision is low. Thus the sample was incorrect in portraying bullying so frequently in the classroom. In addition to the classroom and playground, incidents also occurred in school hallways, in the lunchroom, and on the school bus. Thus the eight books that did portray school bullying provided a semi-accurate representation of where such incidents take place within the school environment.

Resolution

According to the most recent meta-analyses (Smith, et al., 2004; Vreeman, & Carroll, 2007), it is unclear what strategies are best for addressing bullying on a school-wide basis. However, one of the most commonly advocated resolutions is for the target to seek out support from others, both adults and peers (Davidson & Demaray, 2007; Olweus, 1993; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). In the analyzed sample of children's books, this was the most commonly observed resolution to the bullying problem. The target received direct and/or indirect support from others in 24 of the 29 books. The second most common resolution strategy observed in the sample was for the target to develop self-confidence and/or other skills. This sometimes involved the target sticking up for him or herself. When providing anti-bullying tactics to parents and educators, much of the research literature includes such a strategy. For example, in a pamphlet prepared by the Northwest Regional Educational Library (Brewster & Railsback, 2001), helping the targeted child develop assertiveness and conflict resolution skills is listed as one of the goals of bullying intervention. Because more research is needed on strategy effectiveness, the multiple resolution strategies presented in the sample of books cannot be ranked.

Discussion

Book Sample Analysis

The purpose of this analysis was to describe what messages about bullying are being sent in current children's literature, especially in the context of the research on bullying. The hope was that such information could be used to select appropriate books for bibliotherapy with children who struggle with this issue. It was not intended that the books would be evaluated for quality or effectiveness in addressing bullying, though they were all recommended by children's literature experts from *The Horn Book*. Conclusions cannot be drawn as to how well the sample of 29 books can be used as part of bibliotherapy. It is hoped, however, that parents and practitioners can use the information provided (or use a similar process to select other bullying-themed books) in order to match the needs of children who could benefit from bibliotherapy for bullying. Future research should be done in order to determine whether or not this therapeutic technique can be used to offset the negative consequences of bullying.

As presented earlier, the 29-book sample included a diverse portrayal of bullying incidents and situations. Some of the representations were more accurate than others when compared with the current research literature on bullying. Overall, the books portrayed bullying with some accuracy, laying the groundwork for readers to relate with the characters and situations. However, it should be noted that there were some patterns in the sample that are somewhat disturbing. For example, a large number of the books included some sort of revenge or retaliation by the target or an ally of the target. This was true for eight of the 29 books, with an additional two books that included the bully being scared or chased away by someone (or something) not affiliated with the target (e.g., In

Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon, the group of coyote bullies are scared away by a rattlesnake that had no relationship with either the bullies or the small animals that were targeted). Bullying being stopped by "getting even" in some way or chasing the bully away is probably not a message that parents, teachers, or others want to send to children. Such a resolution should not be advocated as part of bibliotherapy and thus practitioners should be aware of which books include such an ending.

Another aspect of the reviewed books that should be noted is that some of the stories contain elements making it more difficult for children to relate to the characters. For example, over half of the books included animal characters. While children do enjoy stories and pictures involving animals, this is an example of one way that the characters are unlike readers. This is especially the case for the stories that included the animals in their natural habitats, rather than in settings more applicable to children (e.g., home, neighborhood, school). Another way that some of the books are less relatable to children is the lack of racial diversity among the characters. The vast majority of both bully and target characters were Caucasian. As the population of the U.S. becomes increasingly diverse, fewer children will be able to relate to the main characters with regard to race/ethnicity. One of the purposes of bibliotherapy is for the reader to be able to connect with and relate to the characters. The sample demonstrated some important limitations in this area, including having a large number of animal characters as well as not including a great deal of racial diversity.

Another disconcerting element of many of the books in the sample was a lack of realism. A surprising number of books included some sort of "magical" resolution to the bullying problem. Examples include a hat inflating to the size of a parachute to gently

float the bully and target from a precarious situation to safety (*Ella, the Elegant Elephant*); the bully coughing up all the objects he had rudely eaten, making him feel better and no longer wanting to bully the local townspeople (*Ten Gallon Bart*); and the target's pet dinosaur chasing off the bully who was trying to steal Halloween candy (*Luther's Halloween*). Children who are dealing with bullying situations are unlikely to benefit from the message that the problem could be resolved by some sort of magical or otherwise unlikely outcome. Other books included equally unrealistic resolutions in which the target and bully instantly become close friends after some sort of confrontation (e.g., *Plantzilla Goes to Camp*, *Hats!* and *Jungle Bullies*). Again, it is unlikely that bibliotherapy practitioners want to send the message that instant friendship is a probable resolution to a bullying situation. The realistic nature of the resolution (or lack thereof) is thus one of the characteristics of the book that should be considered before using it as part of bibliotherapy.

Some further observations concerning the information in specific books should also be noted. First, the concept of "bullying" did not seem to mean the same thing in the entire sample. All of the books included "bully" or a word variant as a main subject or theme in one or more book databases. However, the bullying situations varied widely and did not always represent the concept in the same way. This was especially true for books involving animal characters in their natural habitats. Some examples from the sample include *Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon* and *Who's Got Game? The Lion or the Mouse?* In such cases, the "bully" was an animal higher up on the food chain, thus possessing greater social power than the other animals. When such a bully harassed the target(s), it was often related to typical animal kingdom predator and prey interactions. The way that

readers relate to such situations will probably differ from other books showing bullying occurring between two or more children. This should be taken into consideration when selecting books for use with children as part of bibliotherapy.

A few of the other books also were unique and thus may or may not apply to readers in the same way as the rest of the sample. *Candy Shop* is one example. This book involved a boy and his aunt discovering that a neighborhood shop owner was targeted by an unknown perpetrator or group of perpetrators in an act of racially-related vandalism. The boy and his aunt cleaned up the graffiti and offered consoling words to the Asian candy shop owner. In this situation, the bully (or bullies) was never actually observed. Determining whether or not the incident can be classified as "bullying" is debatable because of its lack of information. This book may not be applicable for bibliotherapy with all readers, though its unique situation may be pertinent to some children and thus could be useful.

Another unique story is "Teeny Meany," which was published as part of a collection of short stories, poems, songs, and activities in the book *Thanks and Giving All Year Long: Marlo Thomas and Friends*. This story is very short and includes little information. Also, it is one of the few in the sample that does not really have any sort of resolution to the bullying problem. Thus it is unlikely that it could be useful or applicable for bibliotherapy. Several of the books included unique situations that might not always be applicable or useful for children who are involved as bullies, targets, or both.

Limitations

Though efforts were made to select a representative, adequate sample and to conduct a sufficient analysis, there are several limitations to this study that should be

noted. Limitations noted include targeted age level of the books, book selection techniques, and elements of the book analyses.

Age Level

First, only picture books were included in the sample. The choice to examine only picture books was partly done for convenience. These books could be read and analyzed much more quickly than chapter books aimed at older age groups. While these books could be read to children in upper elementary school, they are probably not useful for children in junior high or high school. Thus the ability to generalize the results of this analysis does not extend to books read by older children and adolescents. Many of the books that were examined in this study included problem resolutions that are quite basic and often unrealistic, especially for the more complicated bullying situations that students face in middle school. Though it is hoped that the books in the sample could be used to help elementary-school-aged children to develop coping strategies that they can apply not only immediately but also in the future, it is impossible to know whether or not the lessons learned through bibliotherapy would carry over in later years. As noted, bullying peaks in junior high, and it is difficult to know whether or not bullying-focused bibliotherapy in elementary school would help to offset the potential negative effects at later ages. While restricting the sample to a particular age group may limit the generalizability, early elementary school children were the targeted audience for the present study.

Book Selection

The sample of books analyzed in this study was selected according to several criteria. This was done in order to keep the sample to a manageable size and to ensure

that the books used were the most accessible. However, using these criteria meant that a large number of books were excluded from the analysis. Using only books that were published since 2004 meant that hundreds of books published prior to that year were not included. This includes many books that are familiar to parents and teachers from their years of experience. Many of these excluded books probably can be used just as effectively for bibliotherapy. On the other hand, many more books are published each year, so the present analysis will soon be outdated.

In addition to year, other selection criteria may have eliminated additional potentially useful books from consideration. First, some books with a bullying theme may not have had "bully" (or a word variant) listed in the databases that were used. Second, though several means were used to find pertinent books, some books may not have been included simply because they were not listed in the databases and catalogs that were searched. Third, the requirement that each book in the sample be reviewed by the *Horn Book Guide* probably eliminated other useful bullying-themed books. While the *Horn Book* does review thousands of children's books each year, they do not review all that are published. It also became apparent that many of the more recent books (those published in 2007 and beyond) did not have a *Horn Book* review available on the CLCD. This may indicate that it takes time for the books either to be reviewed or at least to be posted in the database. Even for those that were reviewed, a book that was given a ranking of 5 or 6 by the *Horn Book* does not necessarily mean that it would not be useful for bibliotherapy in bullying situations. The reverse is also true—a ranking of 1 to 4 does not guarantee that the book will be effective either. Though it seemed reasonable to do so, it is also difficult to determine whether or not making the cutoff point be a ranking of 4 was appropriate. It

is interesting to note that none of the books in the sample received a ranking of 1, and only three were ranked a 2.

Book Analysis

Certain elements of the methodology and analysis also introduce limitations to this research. First, the coding instrument used to analyze each book was created by the researchers for this project and had no demonstrated reliability or validity. Secondly, many of the variables that were examined for each book were somewhat subjective in nature and thus left to the reviewers to judge. To compensate for this, two independent reviewers analyzed the books and a third reviewer was consulted on items of disagreement and consensus was reached. Nevertheless, this cannot eliminate the subjective nature of some elements of the analysis. Some of the books contained ambiguous information about the characters, bullying situation, and resolution to the bullying problem.

After conducting the book analysis, it was apparent that some things should be done slightly differently in future analyses. First, when there are multiple bullying incidents in the same book, these should all be considered separately. Many books in the current sample included more than one bullying episode; however, these were all combined when analyzed and classified. In several cases the responses of the bully, target, bystanders, and adults differed in the distinct bullying situations. Along the same lines, many of the books included more than one bystander and/or adult. When this was the case, the reviewers simply combined all of the responses of these characters instead of considering each character separately. While some of the bystanders and adults responded in pro-social ways, others did not. When there was more than one of these

characters in a single story, the responses were indistinguishable. Future analyses should consider each bullying situation, bystander, and adult separately.

Future Research

There are several potential areas for future research. First, books aimed at older age groups should undergo a similar analysis. This analysis could be divided into late elementary school (early chapter books), middle/junior high school, and high school. Because bullying is especially problematic in junior high, this is probably one particular age group for which useful books should be identified. Also, it is clear that bullying situations vary significantly by age level and thus books written for older age groups reflect this variance and increased complexity. It would also be interesting to see whether lessons learned from bibliotherapy from books in the present sample could carry over to bullying situations at later ages.

A second area of future research would be to survey people who might use bibliotherapy for bullying. Books from this or other samples could be presented to readers in order to assess their opinions and feelings. Potential participants include teachers, parents, librarians, and school psychologists. A survey could be conducted to see what these participants think about the books in the current sample and how likely they are to use them with children who struggle with bullying. A similar study could be conducted with children as well in order to assess their opinions of the books and their potential effectiveness for helping those who are involved in bullying.

A third area of future research would be to actually use the analyzed books as part of bibliotherapy. This could be done with a treatment and control group in order to assess the technique's success in offsetting the negative effects of bullying involvement or

preventing future bullying. Participants' progress could also be tracked over time in a longitudinal research design. Such a study would make it possible to determine how effective bibliotherapy can be for this particular problem.

Another possible area of research is to explore the messages about bullying that are sent to children in media other than books, such as in movies, television, on the internet, and in video games. As mentioned, bullying is a common theme in these other media types. A similar analysis of bullying-themed movies or television programs could be conducted in order to examine what types of messages are being sent to children about this problem and how it can or should be handled. Because children spend so much time watching television and movies, such an analysis could lend further insight into what information these children are receiving, both positive and negative.

Conclusion

An in-depth content analysis of 29 bullying-themed picture books was conducted to assess what messages are being sent to children regarding bullying. Several charts were compiled in order to provide this information to parents and professionals who wish to utilize bibliotherapy with children who are bullies, targets, or both. The analysis demonstrated that there is great variability in the information about bullying that is conveyed in children's books, though there were several areas in which typical themes emerged. For example, bullies tended to be male, in accordance with the research findings on gender and bullying. Bullies also were most often Caucasian and the sole perpetrators of the bullying as opposed to working in a group. Targets also tended to be Caucasian, but they were about equally likely to be male or female. This is in contrast to the findings that targets are more often male. Victims were often targeted because they

were smaller than the bully, but also because of other aspects of physical appearance, unique behavior, or certain personality characteristics.

With regard to type of bullying, verbal bullying was the most commonly observed, followed closely by physical bullying. Relational bullying was observed far less often. Bullying occurred most frequently in the neighborhood, which contrasts sharply with the overwhelming evidence that the majority of bullying incidences occur at school. When adults and/or bystanders were involved in the stories, their responses varied somewhat but were most often to offer support to the target. The manner in which the bullying situations were resolved also varied, but the most common was for the target to be supported by others, followed by the target developing self-confidence or other skills.

The results of the analysis indicate that in some areas, the books are quite in line with the research literature in their portrayal of bullying situations. In other areas, however, many of the books represented bullies, targets, and their circumstances in ways that are not in conformity with the research that has been done to date. In addition, it is difficult to determine which books would be useful for bibliotherapy and which ones would not. The current analysis did not include an evaluation process regarding which books conform with best practices for handling bullying. The information gathered, however, can be used by practitioners to identify books that include messages that they would like to convey to young readers. The compiled charts can also be used in order to match one or more books to the unique characteristics of a particular child and his or her bullying situation. This analysis can also be used in order to inform future research on bullying and bibliotherapy, with the ultimate goal of identifying particular books and/or strategies that prove effective in decreasing bullying and/or its negative consequences.

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Appendix A—Book Sample

Aliki. (2005). *A Play's the Thing*. New York: HarperCollins.
　　　Miss Brilliant's class puts on a performance of "Mary had a little lamb."

Arnosky, J. (2005). *Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
　　　Four young coyotes harass the animals in a desert canyon until they run into a
　　　rattlesnake.

Aruego, J. & Dewey, A. (2006). *The Last Laugh*. New York: Dial Books for Young
　　　Readers.
　　　A wordless tale in which a clever duck outwits a bullying snake.

Bateman, T. (2004). *The Bully Blockers Club*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.
　　　When Lottie is bothered by a bully at school, she helps start a club where
　　　everyone is welcome.

Cannon, J. (2004). *Pinduli*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
　　　Pinduli, a young striped hyena, is hurt by the unkind words of Dog, Lion, and
　　　Zebra, but her clever trick in return promotes her clan's survival and spreads
　　　harmony throughout the savannah.

Chen, C. (2004). *Guji Guji*. La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller Book Publishers.
　　　Though raised from an egg as a duckling, Guji Guji is a crocodile who must make
　　　a major decision.

Choldenko, G. (2006). *How to Make Friends with a Giant*. New York: Putnam's.
　　　The other children make fun of the new boy because he is so tall, but his short
　　　classmate Jake helps him fit in.

Crummel, S. S. (2006). *Ten-Gallon Bart*. New York: Marshall Cavendish Children.
　　　On the day he is supposed to retire as sheriff of Dog City, Ten-Gallon Bart learns
　　　that Billy the Kid—the roughest, toughest, gruffest goat in the country—is on his
　　　way into town.

D'Amico, C. & D'Amico, S. (2004). *Ella, the Elegant Elephant*. New York: Arthur A.
　　　Levine.
　　　Ella is nervous about the first day of school in her new town, but wearing her
　　　grandmother's good luck hat makes her feel better—until the other students tease
　　　her and call her names.

Gormley, G. (2006). *Rocky and the Lamb*. Hauppauge, NY: Barrons Educational Series,
　　　Inc.
　　　Rocky the wolf enjoys taking things from the other animals passing by the
　　　mountain until he meets a young lamb who has something that will show Rocky's
　　　true colors.

Kroll, S. (2006). *Jungle Bullies*. New York: Marshall Cavendish.
>   To get what they want, the larger jungle animals bully the smaller ones until
>   Mama Monkey shows them all the benefits of sharing.

Landström, L. (2005). *Four Hens and a Rooster* (J. Sandin, Trans.). New York: R & S
Books. (Original work published 2004)
>   Four hens live on a chicken farm. A little rooster lives there, too. When the
>   rooster begins to take more food for himself, the hens get less. When the hens try
>   talking to him about fairness, the rooster turns into a barnyard bully.

Lester, H. (2004). *Hurty Feelings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
>   It looks like trouble when Fragility, a hippopotamus whose feelings are easily
>   hurt, meets Rudy, a rude elephant, on the soccer field.

Luthardt, K. (2004). *Hats!* Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company.
>   When three friends meet a mean boy who insults their hats, they make a friend of
>   him.

Meister, C. (2004). *Luther's Halloween*. New York: Viking.
>   On Halloween, a boy and his pet triceratops named Luther thwart a bully dressed
>   as Dracula who has been taking candy from other trick-or-treaters.

Morrison, T. & Morrison, S. (2004). *Who's Got Game? The Lion or the Mouse?* New
York: Scribner.
>   A unique interpretation of Aesop's classic fable in which a mouse helps the lion
>   when he gets a thorn in his paw.

Moses, B. (2006). *Trouble at the Dinosaur Café*. New York: Walker & Co.
>   The vegetarian dinosaurs are enjoying their plant meals at the Dinosaur Cafe until
>   ravenous Tyrannosaurus stomps in looking for meaty dinosaur stew.

Nolen, J. (2006). *Plantzilla Goes to Camp*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for
Young Readers.
>   Through a series of letters a boy, his parents, and others discuss Camp
>   Wannaleavee, the camp bully, and Plantzilla, who has been forbidden to come but
>   misses his caretaker and arrives in time to become the camp hero.

O'Connor, G. (2005). *Ker-splash!* New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young
>   Readers.
>   Three children on the beach pretend they are superheroes—the Incredible
>   American Eagle, the Amazing Bug Lady, and Manphibian. After battling
>   Manphibian's sea serpent, the other two—needing his help defeating a bully—
>   apologize.

Pearson, T. C. (2004). *Myrtle*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

With the help of their Aunt Tizzy, Myrtle and her baby brother learn how to deal with a mean neighbor named Frances.

Pinkwater, D. (2007). *Yo-yo Man*. New York: HarperCollins.
    Third grade improves dramatically for a boy after he makes up his mind to win the upcoming yo-yo tournament.

Ross, T. (2004). *Is It Because?* London: Andersen.
    A boy wonders why a classmate constantly bullies him, coming up with some profound answers.

Roth, J. J. (2006). *Knitting Nell*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
    Everywhere Nell goes, she works on her knitting, quietly observing life around her, until one day she enters one of her creations in the county fair, and receives rewards beyond her dreams.

Schwartz, A. & Marcus, L. (2006). *Oscar: The Big Adventure of a Little Sock Monkey*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books.
    A sock monkey named Oscar saves the day for his little girl at the school pet show.

Slavin, D. (2004). Teeny Meany. In Thomas, M. & Cerf, C. (Eds.), *Thanks & Giving All Year Long: Marlo Thomas and Friends* (pp.7–9). New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.
    Can you imagine facing off with a bully who barely reaches your knees?

Valckx, C. (2005). *Lizette's Green Sock*. New York: Clarion Books.
    Lizette tries to figure out what to do with the one green sock that she finds while out walking one day.

Wahl, J. (2004). *Candy Shop*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.
    When a boy and his aunt find that a bigot has written hurtful words on the sidewalk just outside the candy shop owned by "Miz Chu", a new immigrant from Taiwan, they set out to comfort her

Winstead, R. (2006). *Ruby and Bubbles*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.
    Ruby's best friend, her pet bird Bubbles, helps her deal with two bullying girls.

Winters, K. (2004). *The Teeny Tiny Ghost and the Monster*. New York: HarperCollins.
    The teeny tiny ghost and his classmates enter a monster-making contest at their school.

Appendix B—Coding instrument

- Title:
- Author:
- Number of pages:

<u>Demographics/characteristics</u>
- Are the characters humans or animals?
    - 0 = Animals
    - 1 = Humans

- What is the gender of the bully/bullies?
    - 0 = Male
    - 1 = Female
    - 2 = Male group
    - 3 = Female group
    - 4 = Mixed group
    - 5 = Unknown/NA

- What is the gender of the target(s)?
    - 0 = Male
    - 1 = Female
    - 2 = Male group
    - 3 = Female group
    - 4 = Mixed group
    - 5 = Unknown/NA

- What is the race/ethnicity of the bully/bullies?
    - 0 = Unknown
    - 1 = White
    - 2 = Hispanic
    - 3 = Black
    - 4 = Asian
    - 5 = Native American
    - 6 = Other
    - 7 = Mixed group
    - 8 = NA

- What is the race/ethnicity of the target(s)?
    - 0 = Unknown
    - 1 = White
    - 2 = Hispanic
    - 3 = Black
    - 4 = Asian
    - 5 = Native American
    - 6 = Other

7 = Mixed group
8 = NA

- Is the bully older than the target?
    - 0 = Unknown
    - 1 = Bully is younger
    - 2 = Bully and target are the same age
    - 3 = Bully is older

- Describe any other traits of the victim (in addition to gender, race/ethnicity, and age) that make him or her a target:

Type of bullying behavior
- Describe the bullying behavior that is portrayed in the book:

- Is verbal bullying portrayed?   0 = no   1 = yes
- Is physical bullying portrayed?   0 = no   1 = yes
- Is relational bullying portrayed?   0 = no   1 = yes

Bullying location
- Where does the bullying occur?
    - 0 = Setting not described; unknown
    - 1 = Home
    - 2 = Neighborhood (off school grounds)
    - 3 = School
    - 4 = Other
- Describe the exact location of the bullying incident(s), including locations within the school (e.g., bathroom, cafeteria, etc.):

Bystander involvement
- Are there one or more bystanders involved in the story?   0 = no   1 = yes
- If yes, describe the response of the bystander(s):

- If there was a bystander involved, classify his/her response according to the following categories (indicate all that apply):
    - Ignores it, does nothing   0 = no   1 = yes
    - Laughs &/or smiles   0 = no   1 = yes

o	Joins in the bullying	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Sticks up for the target (directly to bully)	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Offers indirect support to the target	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Tells an adult or other authority figure	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Is also victimized by the bully	0 = no	1 = yes

Adult involvement

- Are there one or more adults involved in the story?   0 = no   1 = yes
                                                          2 = NA

- Identify the adult(s) involved—their relationship to the bully &/or target:
  - 0 = Unknown
  - 1 = Parent
  - 2 = Teacher
  - 3 = Bus driver
  - 4 = Custodian
  - 5 = Lunch lady
  - 6 = Playground supervisor
  - 7 = Other adult
  - 8 = NA or No adult

- If applicable, describe who the adult is and how he or she responds to the bullying incident(s):

- If there was an adult involved, classify his/her response according to the following categories (indicate all that apply):

o	Ignores it, does nothing	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Laughs &/or smiles	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Joins in the bullying	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Scolds the bully; directs him/her to stop (immediately)	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Talks to the bully privately (after incident)	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Punishes the bully; disciplines him/her	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Encourages good behavior from the bully; corrects bullying behavior	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Attends to, offers support to target	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Teaches skills/strategies to target	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Encourages friendship/reconciliation	0 = no	1 = yes

Problem resolution

- Describe how the bullying problem is resolved:

- Classify the problem resolution according to the following categories (indicate all that apply):

o	No resolution; the bullying continues	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Revenge, retaliation; fighting	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Bully is otherwise chased or scared away, but not by the target or an ally of the target	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Target is friendly to the bully (they may or may not become friends)	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Target develops self-confidence or other skills (may or may not stick up for self)	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Target develops empathy for the bully	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Target ignores &/or avoids the bullying	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Target uses humor to defuse the situation	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Target receives support (direct &/or indirect) from others	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Bully changes his/her behavior, WITH a realization of wrong-doing	0 = no	1 = yes
o	Bully changes his/her behavior, WITHOUT a realization of wrong-doing	0 = no	1 = yes

Appendix C—Book Charts

Table 5—Basic Book Information

Title	Author	Illustrator	Year	Publication Info	ISBN	Horn Book Rating	Awards
A Play's the Thing	Aliki	Aliki	2005	New York: HarperCollins	9780060743550 9780060743567	2	• Best Children's Books of the Year* • One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing; New York Public Library • School Library Journal Book Review Stars • SLJ Best Books
Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon	Arnosky, Jim	Arnosky, Jim	2005	New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons	9780399234132	4	• Best Children's Books of the Year*
The Last Laugh	Aruego, Jose & Ariane Dewey	Aruego, Jose & Ariane Dewey	2006	New York: Dial Books for Young Readers	9780803730939	4	
The Bully Blockers Club	Bateman, Teresa	Urbanovic, Jackie	2004	Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.	9780807509180	4	• Best Children's Books of the Year* • Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People
Pinduli	Cannon, Janell	Cannon, Janell	2004	Orlando: Harcourt	9780152046682	3	
Guji Guji	Chen, Chih-Yuan	Chen, Chih-Yuan	2004	La Jolla, CA: Kane/Miller Book Publishers	9781933605340 9781929132676	3	• Best Books; Washington Post Book World • Capitol Choices • The Children's Literature Choice List Notable Children's Books; American Library Association • School Library Journal Book Review Stars
How to Make Friends With a Giant	Choldenko, Gennifer	Walrod, Amy	2006	New York: Putnam's	9780399237799 9780195114775	2	
Ten-Gallon Bart	Crummel, Susan Stevens	Donohue, Dorothy	2006	New York: Marshall Cavendish Children	9780761452461	4	• Best Children's Books of the Year* • Outstanding Merit Kirkus Book Review Stars

Ella, the Elegant Elephant	D'Amico, Carmela & Steven	D'Amico, Carmela & Steven	2004	New York: Arthur A. Levine	9780439627924	4	• Best Children's Books of the Year* • Children's Crown Gallery Award Honor Book • Children's Gallery Award Nominee
Rocky and the Lamb	Gormley, Greg	Chapman, Lynne	2006	Hauppauge, NY: Barrons Educational Series, Inc.	9780764159398	3	
Jungle Bullies	Kroll, Steven	Nguyen, Vincent	2006	New York: Marshall Cavendish	9780761452973	4	
Four Hens and a Rooster	Landström, Lena Trans by Joan Sandin	Landström, Olof	2005	New York: R & S Books.	9789129663365	3	
Hurty Feelings	Lester, Helen	Munsinger, Lynn	2004	Boston: Houghton Mifflin	9780618410828	3	• Best Children's Books of the Year*
Hats!	Luthardt, Kevin	Luthardt, Kevin	2004	Morton Grove, IL : Albert Whitman & Company	9780807531716	3	
Luther's Halloween	Meister, Cari	Petrone, Valeria	2004	New York: Viking.	9780670035557	3	• Choices; Cooperative Children's Book Center • Publishers Weekly Book Review Stars
Who's Got Game? The Lion or the Mouse?	Morrison, Toni & Slade	Lemaitre, Pascal	2004	New York: Scribner	9780743222488	4	
Trouble at the Dinosaur Café	Moses, Brian	Parsons, Garry	2006	New York: Walker & Co.	9780802795991	3	• Stockport School's Book Award • Shortlist 2007 Key Stage One
Plantzilla Goes to Camp	Nolen, Jerdine	Catrow, David	2006	New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers	9780689868030	4	
Ker-splash!	O'Connor, George	O'Connor, George	2005	New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers	9780689876820	4	• Parents' Choice Award Silver

Myrtle	Pearson, Tracey Campbell	Pearson, Tracey Campbell	2004	New York: Farrar Straus Giroux	9780374351571	3	• Best Children's Books of the Year* • Publishers Weekly Book Review Stars • Parents' Choice Award Silver
Yo-yo Man	Pinkwater, Daniel	Davis, Jack E.	2007	New York: HarperCollins	9780060555023	4	
Is It Because?	Ross, Tony	Ross, Tony	2004	London: Andersen	9781842702963	3	• White Ravens Award Winner; Great Britain
Knitting Nell	Roth, Julie Jersild	Roth, Julie Jersild	2006	Boston: Houghton Mifflin	9780618540334	3	
Oscar: The Big Adventure of a Little Sock Monkey	Schwartz, Amy & Marcus, Leonard	Schwartz, Amy	2006	New York: Katherine Tegen Books	9780060726225 9780060726232	4	• Publishers Weekly Book Review Stars
"Teeny Meany." In *Thanks & Giving All Year Long*	*Slavin, D.; Thomas, Marlo & Cerf, Christopher, eds.*	*Slavin, D.*	2004	New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers	9780689877322	4	
Lizette's Green Sock	Valckx, Catharina	Valckx, Catharina	2005	New York: Clarion Books	9780618452989	2	• Best Children's Books of the Year* • Booklist Book Review Stars • Children's Choices; International Reading Association • Choices; Cooperative Children's Book Center • Editors' Choice: Books for Youth; American Library Association-Booklist • Outstanding International Books; U.S. Board on Books for Young People • School Library Journal Book Review Stars
Candy Shop	Wahl, Jan	Wong, Nicole	2004	Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge	9781570915086	4	• Best Children's Books of the Year* • Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People; National Council for the Social Studies

Ruby and Bubbles	Winstead, Rosie	Winstead, Rosie	2006	New York: Dial Books for Young Readers	9780803730243	3	
The Teeny Tiny Ghost and the Monster	Winters, Kay	Munsinger, Lynn	2004	New York: HarperCollins	9780060288853 9780060288846	4	

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Table 6—Characteristics and Demographics

Title	Humans or Animals?	Bully Gender	Target Gender	Bully Race	Target Race	Age comparison	Other traits of target
A Play's the Thing	Humans	Male	Mixed group	Hispanic	Mixed group	Same age	
Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon	Animals	Unknown/NA	Mixed group	NA	NA	Unknown	Smaller size; less social power
The Last Laugh	Animals	Unknown/NA	Unknown/NA	NA	NA	Unknown	Less social power
The Bully Blockers Club	Animals	Male	Female	NA	NA	Same age	Smaller size
Pinduli	Animals	Mixed group	Female	NA	NA	Bully is older	Unique appearance
Guji Guji	Animals	Unknown/NA	Male	NA	NA	Bully is older	Smaller size; unique behavior
How to Make Friends With a Giant	Humans	Mixed group	Male group	Mixed group	Unknown	Same age	Extra tall; new kid
Ten-Gallon Bart	Animals	Male	Male	NA	NA	Unknown	
Ella, the Elegant Elephant	Animals	Female	Female	NA	NA	Same age	Smaller size; new kid; personality; unique clothing
Rocky and the Lamb	Animals	Male	Female	NA	NA	Unknown	Smaller size
Jungle Bullies	Animals	Male group	Male group	NA	NA	Unknown	Smaller size; less social power
Four Hens and a Rooster	Animals	Male	Female group	NA	NA	Unknown	
Hurty Feelings	Animals	Male	Female	NA	NA	Unknown	Personality

Hats!	Humans	Male	Mixed group	Caucasian	Mixed group	Unknown	Unique clothing
Luther's Halloween	Both	Male	Mixed group	Caucasian	Unknown	Same age	
Who's Got Game? The Lion or the Mouse?	Animals	Male	Mixed group	NA	NA	Unknown	Less social power
Trouble at the Dinosaur Café	Animals	Male	Mixed group	NA	NA	Unknown	Smaller size; less social power
Plantzilla Goes to Camp	Humans	Male	Male	Caucasian	Caucasian	Same age	Smaller size
Ker-splash!	Humans	Male	Mixed group	Caucasian	Mixed group	Bully is older	Smaller size
Myrtle	Animals	Female	Mixed group	NA	NA	Unknown	
Yo-yo Man	Humans	Male	Male	Caucasian	Caucasian	Same age	Smaller size
Is It Because?	Humans	Male	Male	Caucasian	Caucasian	Unknown	
Knitting Nell	Humans	Male	Female	Caucasian	Caucasian	Same age	
Oscar: The Big Adventure of a Little Sock Monkey	Humans	Male	Male	Caucasian	Caucasian	Bully is older	Smaller size
"Teeny Meany." In Thanks & Giving All Year Long	Humans	Female	Male	Caucasian	Caucasian	Unknown	Size (overweight)
Lizette's Green Sock	Animals	Male group	Female	NA	NA	Unknown	Smaller size; personality
Candy Shop	Humans	Unknown/NA	Female	Unknown	Asian	Unknown	
Ruby and Bubbles	Humans	Female group	Female	Caucasian	Caucasian	Same age	Unique behavior
The Teeny Tiny Ghost and the Monster	Ghosts	Mixed group	Male	NA	NA	Same age	Smaller size; personality

Table 7—Bullying Situation Variables

Title	Type of bullying	Setting of bullying	Bystand-er(s) involved?	Bystander response	Adult(s) involved?	Who is the adult?	Adult response	Resolution(s) to bullying problem
A Play's the Thing	Verbal, Physical	School—classroom	Yes	• Sticks up for target • Indirect support • Tells adult	Yes	Teacher	• Corrects bully • Encourages friendship	• Friendly to bully • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Coyote Raid in Cactus Canyon	Physical	Other	Yes	• Ignores it • Also victimized	NA	NA	NA	• Bully chased away by another • Support from others
The Last Laugh	Verbal	Not described	No	NA	NA	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Self confidence • Support from others
The Bully Blockers Club	Verbal, Physical	School—classroom, hallway, playground, lunchroom	Yes	• Ignores it • Sticks up for target • Indirect support • Also victimized	Yes	Parent, Teacher, Playground supervisor	• Corrects bully • Supports target • Teaches target	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Ignores/avoids • Uses humor • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Pinduli	Verbal	Other	No	NA	No	NA	NA	• Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Guji Guji	Verbal, Relational	Other	No	NA	NA	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with NO realization of wrong
How to Make Friends With a Giant	Verbal, Relational	Neighborhood; School—bus, classroom, playground	Yes	• Sticks up for target • Indirect support • Also victimized	No	NA	NA	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Ignores/avoids • Support from others

Ten-Gallon Bart	Verbal, Physical	Neighborhood	Yes	• Sticks up for target • Indirect support • Also victimized	NA	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Ella, the Elegant Elephant	Verbal, Physical, Relational	School—classroom, playground	Yes	• Laughs/smiles • Joins in bullying	Yes	Parent, Teacher	• Scolds bully • Supports target • Teaches target	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Empathy for bully • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Rocky and the Lamb	Verbal, Physical	Other	No	NA	NA	NA	NA	• Bully chased away by another • Friendly to bully • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Jungle Bullies	Physical	Other	No	NA	Yes	Parent	• Supports target • Teaches target • Encourages friendship	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Four Hens and a Rooster	Verbal, Physical	Other	No	NA	NA	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with NO realization of wrong
Hurty Feelings	Verbal	Neighborhood	Yes	• Ignores it	NA	NA	NA	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Empathy for bully • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Hats!	Verbal	Neighborhood	No	NA	No	NA	NA	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Luther's Halloween	Physical	Neighborhood	Yes	• Sticks up for target • Also victimized	No	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Support from others • Bully stops, with NO realization of wrong

Title	Type	Location	Bystander	Bystander action	Adult	Adult type	Adult action	Outcome
Who's Got Game? The Lion or the Mouse?	Verbal	Neighborhood	No	NA	NA	NA	NA	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Trouble at the Dinosaur Café	Verbal, Physical	Other	Yes	• Tells adult or other authority • Also victimized	No	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with NO realization of wrong
Plantzilla Goes to Camp	Physical	Other	Yes	• Sticks up for target • Indirect support	No	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with realization of wrong
Ker-splash!	Verbal, Physical	Other	No	NA	No	NA	NA	• Revenge, retaliation • Self confidence • Support from others • Bully stops, with NO realization of wrong
Myrtle	Verbal, Physical	Home	No	NA	Yes	Parent, Other adult	• Supports target • Teaches target	• Self confidence • Ignores/avoids • Uses humor • Support from others • Bully stops, with NO realization of wrong
Yo-yo Man	Verbal, Physical	School—playground, classroom	Yes	• Ignores it	No	NA	NA	• Self confidence • Bully stops, with NO realization of wrong
Is It Because?	Physical	Not described	No	NA	No	NA	NA	• No resolution • Empathy for bully • Support from others
Knitting Nell	Verbal	School—playground	No	NA	No	NA	NA	• Friendly to bully • Self confidence • Support from others
Oscar: The Big Adventure of a Little Sock Monkey	Physical	School—hallway; grounds	Yes	• Sticks up for target • Also victimized	No	NA	NA	• Ignores/avoids • Support from others

"Teeny Meany." In Thanks & Giving All Year Long	Verbal, Physical	Neighborhood	Yes	• Ignores it	No	NA	NA	• No resolution • Friendly to bully
Lizette's Green Sock	Verbal, Physical	Neighborhood; Home	Yes	• Indirect support	Yes	Parent	• Supports target • Teaches target	• Ignores/avoids • Support from others
Candy Shop	Verbal	Neighborhood	Yes	• Indirect support	Yes	Other adult	• Supports target • Teaches target	• Support from others
Ruby and Bubbles	Verbal, Physical, Relational	Neighborhood; Home	Yes	• Laughs/smiles • Joins in bullying • Indirect support	Yes	Parent	• Ignores it • Encourages friendship	• No resolution • Self confidence • Support from others
The Teeny Tiny Ghost and the Monster	Verbal, Physical	Neighborhood; School—classroom	Yes	• Ignores it	No	NA	NA	• Self confidence • Ignores/avoids