

Los Angeles Times

Children encountering less bullying, study finds

Results from a national survey indicate to experts that anti-bullying programs are having a positive effect

Associated Press

March 4th, 2010

There's been a sharp drop in the percentage of America's children being bullied or beaten up by their peers, according to a new national survey by experts who think anti-bullying programs are having an effect.

The study, funded by the Justice Department, found that the percentage of children who reported being physically bullied over the last year had declined from nearly 22% in 2003 to less than 15% in 2008. The percentage reporting they had been assaulted by other youths, including siblings, dropped from 45% to 38.4%.

The lead author of the study, sociologist David Finkelhor, said he was "very encouraged."

"Bullying is the foundation on which a lot of subsequent aggressive behavior gets built," said Finkelhor, director of the University of New Hampshire's Crimes Against Children Research Center. "If it's going down, we will reap benefits in the future in the form of lower rates of violent crime and spousal assault."

Finkelhor noted that anti-bullying programs had proliferated and received funding boosts after the 1999 Columbine High School shootings in Colorado.

The findings by Finkelhor and his coauthors were based on two national surveys of children ages 2 to 17 conducted five years apart -- the first in 2003, involving 2,030 children, and the second in 2008, asking the same questions of 4,046 children. The findings were published this week in the [Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine](#).

The researchers said the biggest declines in the various forms of violence and bullying were among children from low-income households.