

Parent Fact & Action Sheet



Weight bias at school is often expressed as bullying or teasing a student because of his or her weight. Although students at a heavier weight are especially at risk, even those with a healthy weight (or who are underweight) can be targets.

Bias at school can include:

- Exclusion from activities
- Negative rumors spread including non-weight related
- Teasing and calling mean names
- Physical harassment like pushing or poking
- Verbal threatening

Weight bias through computers and phones is just as harmful so don't forget about cyberbullying.

There are many consequences that can have lasting effects on a child's physical, emotional, and social well-being and even their academic performance; for example:

- Unhealthy eating behaviors
- Depression or anxiety
- Poor body image
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Weight gain
- Fewer friends
- Lower grades
- Skipping school

In recent studies, educators and students reported that weight is the most problematic form of bullying in schools^{1,2}

Act! 3 things YOU can do RIGHT NOW as parent advocates.

Identify if your child is experiencing weight bias from school peers or educators.

→ See [Identifying Weight Bias](#) handout

Talk to your child about weight bias, how to address the issue and help prevent it.

→ See [Talking about Weight Bias](#), [Talking about Weight](#), and [Weight Bias Myths & Facts](#) handouts

Educate by sharing resources with other parents, kids, teachers, and even policy makers.

→ See [Weight Bias for Teachers, For Kids & Teens](#), [Web Resources for Educators](#), [Web Resources for Youth](#), and [Weight Bias Myths & Facts](#) handouts

¹Bradshaw et al. 2011. "Findings from the National Education Association's Nationwide Study of Bullying". Washington, DC: NEA

²Puhl et al. (2011). Weight-Based Victimization Toward Overweight Adolescents: Observations and Reactions of Peers. *J School Health*, 81(11), 696-703.

