

Anti-bullying, sexual harassment resources increase in US schools but gaps remain

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While violence prevention education has increased in U.S. schools, only one in 10 schools today require violence prevention discussions in class, according to research presented during the American Academy of Pediatrics [2024 National Conference & Exhibition](#) at the Orange County Convention Center.

Chloe Gao, MD/Ph.D. Candidate and lead research author on "Implementation of Educational Programming and Policies to Prevent Bullying, Sexual Harassment, and Violence in US Schools, 2008–2020," studied data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from principals and health education teachers regarding efforts their schools made to prevent bullying, [sexual harassment](#) and violence.

"Bullying, sexual harassment, and violence can create hostile [school](#) environments that negatively impact students' academic performance, health, and developmental outcomes," Gao said. "Some students drop out of school in order to avoid these situations, a choice that impacts them for the rest of their lives."

Two in three schools in the U.S. reported at least one violent incident from 2021–2022.

A total of 2,718 schools were included in the data where Gao found two out of five schools didn't provide families with information on bullying and sexual harassment. Data further showed that the availability of anti-bullying and sexual harassment [educational materials](#) remained low, ranging from 56.2% in 2008 to 61.4% in 2020.

With children spending most of their time in school, the setting provides a unique chance for anti-bullying and harassment education. Despite this, Gao said gaps linger as program quality and availability varies from state to state.

Teen girls were particularly impacted with data showing the percentage of [teen girls](#) reporting [sexual violence](#) increased from 15% in 2017 to 18% in 2021.

Gao said the need is urgent for improved anti-bullying and sexual harassment measures, stating schools should be looking into how to best

improve policies already in place and implementing them across the board.

"School is supposed to be a safe place for all. A place children can learn, grow, and play no matter what circumstance they come from," Gao said. "We need to make sure that we are engaging schools in the fight against youth bullying, sexual harassment, and violence."

More information: Abstract Title: Implementation of Educational Programming and Policies to Prevent Bullying, Sexual Harassment, and Violence in US Schools, 2008-2020

Study author Chloe Gao is scheduled to present the research, from noon to 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 29, during a session for the Council on Injury, Violence and Poison Prevention.

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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