



# NCPIE Update

A Publication of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

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## Internet Safety and Cyberbullying Statistics Highlight August NCPIE Meeting



With preparations for back-to-school at the forefront of the minds of parents across the county, the August NCPIE meeting was an opportunity for coalition members to share new organizational initiatives aimed at addressing the needs and concerns of parents and families. Special emphasis was placed on Internet safety and a rich discussion of cyberbullying and various methods of helping young people use technology responsibly ensued.

Kim Lowry, Director of the Office of Communications for the U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs provided a thorough overview of the agency's efforts to prevent Internet crime targeted towards young people. Below, please find an overview of the Office of Justice Programs and the October Crime Prevention Initiative—*Delete Cyberbullying*.

### Mission of the Office of Justice Programs

The Department of Justice Office of Justice Program's (OJP) mission is to increase public safety and improve the fair administration of justice across America through innovative leadership and programs. The agency's goal is to be the premier resource for the justice community by:

- Providing and coordinating information, research and development, statistics, training, and funding support to help the justice community build the capacity it needs to meet its public safety goals.
- Embracing local decision-making, while encouraging local innovation through national policy leadership.

Key topic and issue areas for the Office of Justice Programs include:

Crime Prevention	Law Enforcement
Juvenile Justice Improvement	Juvenile Delinquency Prevention
Keeping Kids Safe	Youth Violence Prevention'
Technology to Fight Crime	

### What OJP is Doing to Raise Awareness of Cyberbullying

Sponsored in part by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), the *Delete Cyberbullying* campaign is designed to bring awareness to the increasing number of youth being victimized online. Cyberbullying is defined as "intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices." Teens are using emailing, instant messaging, text messaging, and defamatory personal websites to threaten, embarrass, and ostracize their peers. In 2004, half of 3,000 U.S. youth surveyed stated that they or someone they knew had been victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying.

## **Cyberbullying Statistics**

- 78% of teens have used the Internet for at least three years
- 8 out of 10 used the Internet the previous day
- 43% of teens were cyberbullied in the previous year
- More than half of 15- and 16-year-old females cyberbullied within the last year

Whether the bullying takes place through direct confrontation or anonymously through the Internet, the effects on victims, perpetrators, and bystanders have been well documented and include academic, behavioral, and emotional challenges; school violence; and increased risk for criminal acts later in life. The good news is that teens can avoid being a victim of cyberbullying and make sure they don't get involved themselves.

The various charts and graphs below contain several statistics on cyberbullying shared by Lowry during the August meeting.

## **Motives of Cyberbullying**

- Think it's funny
- Don't like the person
- See the victim as a "loser"
- 58% say cyberbullies don't see it as a big deal
- Almost half believe cyberbullying carries no consequences

Everyone can help raise awareness about cyberbullying and take preventive action against this ever-growing problem. According to the NCPC, there are many things that communities and families can do to help prevent cyberbullying and promote safe and responsible Internet use. Community leaders can:

- Organize a cybersafety forum or community discussion that involves students, parents, educators, local law enforcement officers, city and school officials, and local technology companies
- Sponsor an Internet safety awareness day for kids to learn about safe Internet use
- Provide information to parents, educators, and law enforcement officers about how teens use the Internet, what websites teens frequent, how to contact site moderators and ISPs if teens are cyberbullied, and when to contact law enforcement regarding a cyberbullying situation
- Work with school technology departments to make sure that teens are being cybersafe

### **Where the Bullies Are:**

Chat rooms—56%      Text Messages—49%      E-Mail—28%

### **Wireless Bullies:**

72% of teens have wireless devices (cell phones, PDAs, WiFis)

Even more difficult to monitor

### **Effects of Cyberbullying:**

Anger, Embarrassment, Hurt Feelings, Fear, Drop in grades, Loss of self-esteem, Retaliation, Self-inflicted violence, including suicide

### **Code of Silence:**

Over 40% of victims didn't tell anyone

Only 14% told their parents, teachers, or other adults

Teens believe parents should be more concerned with what they see and hear on line

**Practical Advice for Parents and Caregivers: What Can You Do??**

Talk to teens about risks—share examples

Learn what they are doing online

Keep computers in highly trafficked area

Visit popular Web sites

Explain consequences

Tell them never to give out personal information online or arrange face-to-face meetings

Show them how to block messages

Explain how to report bullying

Keep records

Urge them to tell you

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