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Preschool Bullying: Does It Exist, What Does
It Look Like, and What Can Be Done?

by

Laura Humphrey, B.S.

MSW Clinical Research Paper

Presented to the Faculty of the
School of Social Work
St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, Minnesota
In Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Social Work

Committee Members
Kendra Garrett, PhD, LICSW (Chair)
Jessica Johnson, LGSW
Chris Kocinski, LISW

The Clinical Research Project is a graduation requirement for MSW students at St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas School of Social Work in St. Paul, Minnesota and is conducted within a nine-month time frame to demonstrate facility with social research methods. Students must independently conceptualize a research problem, formulate a research design that is approved by a research committee and the university Institutional Review Board, implement the project, and publicly present their findings. This project is neither a Master's thesis nor a dissertation.

Abstract

Bullying is a nationwide problem happening in our schools, homes, and workplaces. There have been numerous studies conducted to find out causes of bullying, prevention methods, and effects of bullying in children and adults. All of these studies have looked at children in kindergarten or older. This qualitative study had the goal of determining if bullying was happening in the preschool-age group, and if so, what was currently being done about it. In-person interviews and focus groups were done with seven preschool teachers. Through these interviews it was determined that bullying does happen as early as preschool and that there is no curriculum or consistency in how it is handled from center to center or even teacher to teacher. Implications of this research show a need for both bullying-prevention and language-development curriculum in preschools. Another implication is that teachers stated they specifically need social workers involvement in preventions and interventions. Finally, this research found the need for nation-wide policies and language surrounding bullying starting in preschool.

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Preschool Bullying: Does It Exist, What Does It Look Like, and What Can Be Done?

During the 2008-2009 school year over 7 million children between the ages of 12 and 18 years, or 28% of all children in this age range, reported being victims of bullying (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Bullying is a nationwide problem that is seen in all populations, races, socioeconomic classes, neighborhoods, and age ranges. It is making news around the country ranging from stories of how school districts are preventing it to the extreme cases of school shootings by bullied students.

Nickelodeon, a children's television station, along with Talking with Kids, a program through the Kaiser foundation (2001), conducted a study that found 55% of 8-11 years olds and 68% of 12-18 years olds self-report bullying as "big problems" in their world; 74% and 86% respectively have been teased or bullied personally. Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, Hamby and Kracke (2009) found in a national survey that children between the ages of two and five years-old experience more physical bullying (20.4% experienced physical bullying at some point in their lifetime) than emotional bullying (14.6%) as reported by the children's parents.

Bullying has negative effects for everyone involved. Children who are victims of bullying are more likely to have depression, anxiety, increased sadness and loneliness, sleep problems, decreased academics, and health complaints. Children who bully are more likely to abuse substances, engage later in life in earlier sexual activity, get into fights, drop out of school, and become abusive adults towards family, spouses, and children than children who are not considered bullies. Bystanders are more likely to

abuse substances, have increased mental health problems, and miss or skip school. (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.)

These previously mentioned effects of bullying have been seen in later years after the incident(s) has occurred. Adams and Lawrence (2011) found that these effects might last into the college years for students who either had been bullied or bullied another person in middle and high school. This study also found that participants in bullying situations in their younger years had an increase in their likelihood of being involved in the same roles in college, whether as the victim or the bully.

There is currently a vast knowledge of research on bullying and topics surrounding bullying in older children (kindergarten and older). School social workers are frequently asked to work with students who need to develop prosocial skills. These groups may be small pull-out groups with a specific goal such as anger management or social skills groups. These interventions may include classroom/school interventions in reducing bullying, creating a less hostile environment, and teaching friendship skills.

Social workers in early childhood programs are also asked to be a resource in teaching these same skills, but little is known about bullying in the preschool classroom (children between 33 months and 5 years old). It would benefit social workers to know what works in these early childhood programs, enabling them to help children before they enter kindergarten. The goal of this research is to investigate what bullying behaviors exist in the preschool classroom and how they affect both the child being bullied and the child acting as the bully. This researcher also hopes to gain knowledge about what is already being done in the classroom as prevention methods and what preschool teachers

believe should be done in the future. These prevention methods would be valuable to know for classroom teachers and for social workers, as they may be creating programs or consulting with staff/colleagues on useful ways of preventing, or working with, bullying.

Literature Review

While there is a vast array of knowledge and research on the topics of bullying and the effects of it, almost all of the research is on bullying in children elementary age and older. There are many theories into what may lead to the formation of bullies and bullied children, but no consensus has been found. The majority of the research that will be discussed here was completed with children over the age of 5 years.

The research discussed in this literature review has looked at the behaviors of bullying in early childhood (ages 33 months to five years) but may have called bullying by different terms in their publications, such as aggression or relational interactions. Finally, in this literature review will be a look at what is currently being done in bullying prevention programs and the many areas where the gaps in preschool programming that exist.

Causes of Bullying

There are many studies that looked at potential causes of bullying in children older than preschoolers. Each study shows different rationales as to why bullying occurs. Some of the studies focused on characteristics of the bully while others studied those who are bullied. Many researchers attribute bullying behaviors to complex and multiple reasons that create a situation in which bullying occurs.

Characteristics of children who bully. Splete (2005) conducted a study based on mothers' reports of their four-year-old children. The study looked for common characteristics in children who became bullies. She found that cognitive stimulation and emotional support from parents showed a decrease in the likelihood of children becoming bullies. She also found that children who watched more television were more likely to become bullies and attributed this to a decrease in cognitive stimulation.

Perren and Alsaker (2005) found other common characteristics of bullies in their study with early elementary students. They found that bullies tended to be more aggressive and lacked prosocial skills. They also found that children who became bullies tended to have more friends and more leadership skills.

Bansel, Davies, Laws, and Linnell (2009) had another theory on what caused bullying. They attributed bullying behavior to a striving for power. They found that bullying is not due to a weak character flaw, as previous research had suggested, but instead is due to a child trying to gain and maintain power in a school setting. This study suggests that it is not home life or parenting styles that produce, or do not produce a bully, but rather it is the power struggle.

Characteristics of children who are bullied. Perren and Alsaker (2005) found common characteristics in victims of bullying as early as kindergarten. They concluded that victims tended to be more aggressive than non-victims were. The research showed that victims tend also to be isolated, more withdrawn, submissive, and frequently had no playmates; this may or may not come from home life or internal factors. The research concluded that work should be done with children in kindergarten settings. They suggest

working with children already bullying, who are victims of bullying, and those who are at risk for falling into one of these groups (bully, victim, or bystander).

Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, and Bates (1997) also found common characteristics of victims of bullies, but the characteristics came from home life and affected the type of victim the child may become. In their study, it was suggested that home life directly affected how a child responded to bullying. This included whether he or she became an aggressive victim or a passive one. The study showed that children who live with harsh maternal experiences, specifically those that witnessed many acts of violence in the homes, created a more aggressive victim. It should be noted that parenting styles did not differ between passive victims and normative boys.

Preschool peer interaction and development. During the preschool years, children are learning to navigate in the social world around them. Whether this is through what they see in real life or through media sources, it is all being processed in their brains. Through this processing, behavioral patterns are beginning to emerge. Haun and Tomasello (2011) conducted a study with 4-year-old children and found that children at this young age will conform to the ideas and social opinions of other children around them. This held true even if the children knew the opinion was wrong. They went on to show that children are "...indicating sensitivity to peers as a primary social reference group" (Haun & Tomasello, 2011, p. 1759).

As children are processing their interactions with peers and peer pressure, they are starting to create behavior patterns. These patterns learned in early childhood, unless changed by different peer interaction or adult interventions, are likely to continue

unchanged as the child enters elementary school. This may account for some of the learned bullying behavior seen in older children who bully, even starting as early as kindergarten. These children learned how to get approval or attention from peers or other people around them and continued these learned behavior patterns.

During these preschool years, children are also able to start learning positive social interactions. Bovey and Strain (n.d.) describe positive social interactions as:

“...important because they lead to positive social and emotional development in children. Research has shown that children who can interact successfully with their peers, even during preschool, are more popular, have stronger friendships, and are included more often in classroom activities than children who lack these skills” (p. 2)

The researchers stated that such positive social interactions include being able to share, getting a peer's attention, and being nice to a peer.

Other research studies have shown that it is during the preschool years that children's aggression may also start to come out for various reasons. Bonica, Arnold, Fisher, and Zeljo (2003) found positive correlations between early childhood relational aggression and children's language development. The questions they asked to define relational aggression may give examples of what bullying looks like in a preschool setting. Examples of such questions include “This child tells a peer that he/she won't play with that peer or be that peer's friend unless he/she does what the child wants” and “This child verbally threatens to keep a peer out of the play group if the peer doesn't do what the child says” (p. 555). This study also found that teachers perceived girls as more

relationally aggressive overall and that physical aggression was negatively related to language development.

Roseth, Pellegrini, Bohn, Van Ryzin, and Vance (2007) also found that physical aggression declines over time as verbal aggression increases. These authors attributed this inverse relationship to a natural occurrence as children age. There was also a correlation of this occurring as a school year progressed. This correlation was attributed to children trying, in the beginning of the school year, to form their peer groups, negotiate social dominance, and create affiliations and, as the year settled, so did the aggressive behaviors.

Reducing Bullying

In elementary students. Perren and Alsaker (2005) conclude that interventions, including teaching social skills to children who bully and assertiveness to children who are bullied, will only help if there is also curriculum at a classroom level. They suggest classroom curriculum should include open discussions around the topic of bullying with clear rules against bullying. Discussions should also include the promotion of friendships to lessen chances of isolation for children. They also suggest creating a code of conduct for the classroom so children will hold each other accountable.

Many programs and policies have been created to stop bullying in elementary-aged children and older. Yerger and Gehret (2011) conducted a study of many of the national anti-bullying programs. They found there are many programs that have proven to be effective, but they are created for elementary schools. These programs have not been tested in preschools and may be too difficult for preschoolers to comprehend.

One such program that has shown effectiveness in reducing school-age bullying is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. According to the teacher guide, the program works to make change on multiple levels such as classroom, school, and community. The goals are to “reduce existing bullying problems among students, prevent the development of new bullying problems, and achieve better peer relations at school” (Olweus & Limber, 2007, p. 1). This program may be too advanced for preschoolers however, as they may not understand the role-plays and do not have reading skills associated with some of the activities.

Another program for teaching children positive social interaction skills is the Second Step program by the Committee for Children. According to their website, this program is aimed at children in preschool through eighth grade. The goal is to work on children’s emotional and social development (Committee for Children, 2012). There are many success stories on their website, although none speak directly to the effects in the preschool setting.

Bully prevention in preschools. Farrell (1999) found that there is a need in early childhood education for bullying prevention programming in preschool. The author also stated that this need might not be widely acknowledged in education settings potentially due to bullying being called by other names in the early childhood field. She speculated that in these early childhood settings, teachers may call bullying behaviors something different, although examples of terms were not given. This use of multiple names may cause the problem of bullying to be minimized. She concluded that there are many causes of bullying in preschoolers and more intervention work needs to be done. Ferrell stated

one intervention could include creating a nationwide lexicon surrounding bullying in early childhood. Another intervention she stated was that more training for early education teachers; specifically, how to create a respectful atmosphere and work on prosocial skills in the classroom.

Other programs have been created to work on specific aspects of preschool behavior that is considered maladaptive while not specifically working on “bullying.” Such programs include the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, which has a series of briefs on promoting positive developmental skills including language, social interactions, and managing behaviors.

Powell and Dunlap (2009) also created a comparison guide about different evidence-based programs. In their publication, they compare many different programs geared at early childhood and show which skills are directly targeted at which populations of children. These programs focus on a wide range of topics including emotional regulation, decreasing aggression, promoting social skills, and family interventions. Again, these programs are aimed at certain behaviors and not necessarily bullying in context.

Conceptual Framework

As the focus of this research project is to assess bullying behaviors that may take place in the preschool years, what the behaviors consist of in a preschool setting, and how to handle it when situations arise, a developmental stages theory framework will be used

as a lens for this project. Developmental theory according to Hayslip, Neumann, Louden, and Chapman (2006) is comprised of four fundamental assumptions:

(1) that stage-specific functioning rests upon that in previous stages and is preparatory for the subsequent stage, (2) that the stages are qualitatively different from one another and, consequently, are differentiated by distinct organizing principles, (3) that the organization of the individual's functional structures integrates previous structures that were preparatory, and (4) that the sequence of stages is universal and not subject to substantial individual variability, except to the extent that the tempo/timing of each stage may vary across persons... (p. 115)

Another way developmental theory is described is that the focus "is on how human behavior unfolds across the life course, how people change or stay the same over time" (Hutchinson and Charlesworth, 2011, p. 56). There are many different aspects of development and human change, but for the purpose of this research, the focus will be on aspects of preschoolers' cognitive, behavioral, moral, and personality/social development in their ability to bully or understand bullying. Each of these aspects, as well as theorists who contributed to them, are explained in the following sections.

Cognitive Development

According to Piaget, who was a leading researcher in children's cognitive development, children progress in their cognitive development through four stages. The stage that concerns preschoolers is known as the preoperational period (defined as children who are between two years and seven years old). Burns (2008) described

children's cognitive abilities as being able to think about people, places, or events that are not present with them in the moment at this stage of development. These events and objects could be a future thing such as a party, a parent picking them up or a favorite toy at home they miss.

During the preschool years, Forte (2007) stated that according to Piaget's model children are learning about themselves and their environment through pretend play and increasing awareness of their social environments. Pretend play is how children are able to gain insight into the fact that not everyone views the world the same way they do. They also learn that different people have different identities. This is also when children start to understand social roles and how the world works around them. Forte also wrote that according to Piaget's model this is the time when children are able to see others as thinking differently from them and demanding proof in arguments where there is a difference in opinions.

Behavioral Development

There are many theories on how children develop in relationship to internal and external factors. The theories that will be discussed in relation to bullying will be those of the Social Behavioral Perspective. Hutchinson and Charlesworth (2011) state that developmental theory attributes a person's behavior to something that is learned by interacting with our environments through reinforcement, imitation, and personal expectations. The theory goes on to state "all human problems can be formulated as undesirable behavior and all behavior can be defined and changed" (p. 60).

By looking at preschoolers' behavior through a developmental lens, one explanation to children's bullying behavior could be that it comes from their environment. This could lead to the potential to answer questions including why children bully and how to change these behaviors.

Personality and Social Development

Burns (2008) described Erikson's theory of prosocial development as comprising of eight stages, six of which concern development of the child. Burns also stated that environment and relationships are what shapes a child through each of these stages. Within each stage Erikson stated that a child is dealing with a conflict that must be resolved in order to move to the next stage. The stages concerning the developing preschooler are Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (children aged 1-3 years) and Initiative versus Guilt (ages 3-6 years).

As a child moves through these stages, he or she develops "ego strengths, which result from the successful resolution of each of these crises" (Burns, 2008, p. 21). This then helps a child learn and have the ability to interact with the world around him or her whether it is in typical ways or abnormal ways.

Moral Development

Burns (2008) wrote that one of the main theorists in children's moral development is Kohlberg. Kohlberg's theory is based on the works of Piaget. Burns continues to describe Kohlberg's theory as having three levels and six stages. The stages are not

broken down into specific age groups but by progressing at each person's own time from stage to stage and level to level.

The stages concerned with preschool behaviors, especially in respect to bullying, are found in the first level, the pre-conventional level. These stages are first obedience orientation and then instrumental orientation. In the first stage, children base their reasoning on right and wrong directly from what authority figures tell them. In the second stage right and wrong are determined more by the child's inner self, primarily, what would help the child gain something. In the second stage right and wrong are subjective and many times based on an exchange of favors. Both of these stages give insight into why some children bully and some become victims. They may also give direction as to how to prevent bullying in preschoolers. (Burns, 2008)

It is during these stages that children are concretely learning there are different ways to get objectives met, and some are more likely to work than others. This leads to the child's moral development, which may come from peers or adults in their lives. What gets set in their minds in these stages will create the foundation to their interpersonal communications in the future. These behaviors could be reinforced through positive or negative interactions with peers and adults. This stage of moral development may be one area social workers and teachers could begin to implement stage appropriate anti-bullying curriculum.

Developmental Theory and Bullying

If a child fails to navigate through the stages in each of these developmental areas, Walsh (2011) stated that abnormal or maladaptive coping skills will occur. These results could be one explanation to why children may bully in the early years of life; that is due to a lack of successful movement through a stage. An understanding of these stages may also help to design prevention ideas in the classroom and assess what works and what does not in preschool bullying prevention.

Gaps in the Current Literature

There is very limited knowledge of what bullying looks like in a preschool classroom. One thing that can be stated at the current time is that there is no consensus as to what causes bullying in general. There are also no studies that looked at causes of preschool bullying. Very few studies have looked at bullying in the preschool classroom and how the children involved are affected. There is also a lack of research on what is being done in the preschool classroom to prevent and stop bullying. The focus of research has been on aspects of development. It is unknown what works and what does not work due to a lack of research.

This research planned to help increase the knowledge of what bullying looks like in the preschool classroom. It also explored potential reasons and influences that cause children at such a young age to bully. Finally, this research looked at what is being done in the classroom and if it has any effects on the children involved.

Methods

The goal of this research project was to collect data and gather stories from preschool teachers to understand what bullying looks like in the classroom. A secondary goal was to look at what teachers are currently doing in their classrooms. More specifically, to understand what interventions and preventions teachers are currently doing, and what their perceived effectiveness is by teachers. Teachers and social workers who are developing classroom and center-wide programs working toward ending bullying and bullying behaviors in early childhood-aged children can utilize the new information.

Research Design

In-person, qualitative interviews and focus groups were conducted to gather data. A qualitative study method was chosen, as this research was exploratory in nature. A goal of this research was to gain more information regarding preschool bullying, as there is currently very limited information on this topic. A second goal of the research was to capture the stories of what takes place in the preschool classroom, or as Berg (2009) stated, to gain “a greater depth of understanding” (p. 2). The qualitative nature of the study also had the ability to get at the “what, how, when and where...its essence and ambience” (p. 3).

Preschool centers around the Twin Cities were contacted to see if they would be willing to have their teachers participate. Teachers at these centers also gave names of other teachers and centers that they thought might be willing to participate. The interviews and focus groups took place at each center and lasted between 20 minutes and

60 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by a research assistant who agreed to confidentiality of data. The researcher also took field notes on what was said during the interviews, but no identifying information was gathered from the participants or the centers.

The interviews and focus groups used a pre-determined set of questions created by the researcher. The interview schedule can be found below. The goal was to capture not just the behaviors that are seen in the classroom, but also the stories, reasons, and potential causes for the behaviors.

Sample

The sample consisted of seven preschool teachers. This included two group interviews with two participants each and three individual interviews from the names given in the group interviews. All of the teachers were female. Two of the teachers taught in inner-city preschools, four taught in suburban preschools, and one teacher taught in British preschools. The teachers were all considered lead or assistant teachers and had been in this field between six months and 12 years.

Participants (both centers and individual teachers) were told that the interview/focus group was voluntary. They were also informed that their identity (the teachers' and the centers') would remain confidential in any publications of the research.

This was both a random sample and a snowball sample. An internet search was conducted for preschool centers in the Twin Cities area and random centers were contacted. Center directors were asked permission to interview teachers in their center. If

the directors agreed to allow teachers to participate, the directors were then given scripts of what and how to ask teachers if they wanted to participate. If any teachers expressed interest, an interview was set up. Two preschools agreed both to participate and had teachers willing to participate in focus groups. From these two focus groups, four additional individual names were given to interview later. All four of these teachers were contacted and three agreed to participate and were interviewed.

Interview Schedule

A panel of social work peers agreed the interview questions are reliable. They also agreed that the questions would show stability between centers as they use common language and descriptions of bullying (Monette, Sullivan, & Dejong, 2011). Students agreed that the survey had face validity; that is to say it looked as if it would measure what it was designed for.

Participants were given the definition of bullying that was created by the researcher after the researcher looked at many ways bullying was defined in previous literature. This definition defined bullying as: an aggressive behavior that is intentional, may be repeated with one or more victims, and makes use of a power imbalance such as strength or popularity to cause harm to someone else or gain control over them/get them to do something. Bullying examples include: teasing, leaving someone out on purpose, telling others not to be someone's friend, hitting, biting, and name calling.

The interview schedule was comprised of the following questions:

1. How long have you been a preschool teacher?

2. What is your title/position in the preschool?
3. Have you witnessed bullying (by the definition, see below) in the preschool classroom?
4. What types of acts/scenarios do you see that may be considered bullying?
5. Do you see gender differences in:
 - A. Who bullies?
 - B. In who is the victim?
6. What types of interventions do you use when bullying occurs in your classroom?
(Prompt if only victim or bully is mentioned: Do you work with the victim or bully?)
7. Why do you think children are bullying in the classroom?
8. What do you think are some of the effects of bullying on:
 - A. The Bully?
 - B. The Victim?
 - C. Others who witness the Bullying?
9. What do you think should be done about bullying:
 - A. On a classroom level?
 - B. A school level?
 - C. A community level?

- D. A policy level?
10. What do you think the role of a social worker could be in preventing bullying?
11. What do you think the role of a social worker could be in intervening with children who:
- A. Bully?
- B. Are bullied?
12. What is your opinion of how media affects bullying in the classroom?
13. Have you seen changes from when you started teaching to now in regards to bullying in the classroom?

Data Analysis

All the interviews were completed and transcribed before analysis was started. A research assistant who agreed to confidentiality of the data completed the transcriptions. A thematic analysis was then completed, through the method described by Berg and Lune (2012). The transcripts were read through completely and coding of key words and phrases was done. They were read again and clustering of the keywords into themes and meanings were completed. It was also noted how many of the teachers commented on each of these keywords or themes. This process was done the same way for both the individual interviews and the focus groups. The last step taken was to compare the themes that emerged to what is currently in the literature and note which themes were

new findings. Berg and Lune state the purpose of doing this type of analysis is to interpret data from patterns, themes, bias, and meanings.

Protection of Human Rights

Transcriptions and field notes will be kept in a locked cabinet for an indefinite amount of time. Audio recordings were destroyed upon the completion of transcriptions. Participants were advised of all information pertaining to collecting, transcribing, and presenting of material. Those who agreed to participate in the interview were asked to sign a consent form (a sample can be found in Appendix B). The researcher is the only person who knows the identity of the participants. This method contained no risk to the participants.

Findings

There were many different areas surrounding bullying researched during these interviews. As the data were analyzed, seven dominant themes emerged. Within six of these seven dominant themes, subthemes were also discovered. These themes and subthemes are described in the following sections.

Bullying Situations

Teachers all gave examples and stories of situations they saw that would be considered bullying. All of the stories had overlapping themes and fell into one of four categories. These categories are exclusion, aggression, teasing, and gossiping. Each of the categories is listed below along with examples. Also within some of the categories are specific reasons teachers believe that type of bullying occurs.

Exclusion. All teachers described situations that include one or more children purposely excluding another child for different general reasons. Some of the general or broad reasons teachers gave as grounds for excluding a child were the child's inability to do something (such as being able to color in the lines), the way the child looked or dressed, and just not being able to be one's friend in general. Two examples of bullying by exclusion given by teachers were "they [the bully] will refuse to make space [during circle time] for the other child [the victim] and I have seen refusal...to just be another student's friend" by one teacher and another teacher shared: "they [the bully] will leave out the other kid just because they can't be friends at the moment."

Besides teachers giving generalizations of what exclusion looks like, two specific themes emerged as to why exclusion is used to bully. The first one is that the victim has something the bully wants and so the bully excludes the victim from play/friendship group to get the object she wants. The second theme is that the bully wants to gain power or control of the group or to gain popularity in general. These themes will be further discussed under the category of causes of bullying.

Aggression. Four of the teachers described bullying situations where the bully was physically aggressive towards his or her victim. Teachers' opinions on bullying through aggression varied as to what caused it. One teacher felt it was due to children not knowing how to handle a situation while another teacher stated that children got aggressive when they wanted something another child had, similar to why bullying by exclusion happens. The other two teachers who spoke about bullying through aggression did not comment on why specifically this type occurs. The teachers gave examples of

bullying through aggression as children who hit, bit, and punched. One teacher told a story where a child did not like another, "and would just turn around and punch the child if he was too close."

Teasing. Six out of seven teachers gave examples of teasing and /name calling. They stated students would tease for many reasons including how a child looked, name calling based on looks or possessions, and teasing because children could or could not do something. One teacher described seeing "a lot of our five year olds tell our three year olds they can't do that because they are too little...." Another teacher gave an example of students "calling another stupid, dumb, or fat." One teacher talked about students teasing one another because of their skin color.

Gossiping. The final category teachers described was gossiping. Many teachers gave examples of students talking about other students for a variety of reasons. Sometimes these discussions happened where the victim could hear and sometimes when the victim could not. All examples given involved girls who were using gossiping as a means to bully. One teacher stated, "I know it's crazy to think, but kids are already starting the he said she said...I have caught students at the table discussing who is the meanest student in the class and why." Another teacher describes, "There was one time when someone was telling everyone not to be friends with a certain kid because they picked their nose."

Causes of Bullying

Every teacher stated different reasons or causes of bullying. They all gave reasons on why they think children bully; none of the teachers gave reasons for why children become victims. Some had similar ideas as to what caused bullying, but each contributed a unique cause as well. Many of the causes seemed to overlap or lead from one to another, such as developmental problems would lead children to try and gain popularity by bullying. These four main causes: status gain, developmental, media influence, and gaining attention, will be discussed next followed by a section on unique causes teachers gave.

Status gain. One of the causes of bullying that was mentioned by multiple teachers was that children were trying to look better in front of their peers or "look cool" as described by one teacher. Teachers commented that by putting others down or excluding other children it raised the bully's status or popularity. It made others want to be the bully's friend. One teacher talked about how a child would, "only invite cool kids who did what she said to her birthday party" and then children would do what she said for the coveted invite.

Developmental. Another cause that was agreed on by two teachers was that children lacked appropriate social tools. These tools may be in the form of communication or in conflict resolution. One teacher stated "I don't think the children are always intentional in their bullying...they just do not know how to effectively handle the situation." Another teacher stated "...at home they have not yet been taught things like sharing or turn taking and now have to learn these skills." This cause seemed to

overlap and lead to others as described by one teacher, "...students at this age do not know how to handle situations that do not go their way so the way they think will solve the problem is by making themselves look better than the person sitting next to them."

Media influence. Teachers were also asked their opinion on the effect of media on preschool children. Four teachers stated they thought children learned from the media that "...violence is how the good guy wins." Teachers discussed that children are watching media and learning that the good guys can use violence to beat the bad guys and then the good guys become heroes. One teacher told of a story where her student thought he was spider-man, and anytime he would see someone "...doing something wrong he would run over and attack them violently. He had no understanding that what he was doing was bad." This type of story was told by all four teachers. It was agreed to be a cause of bullying.

Gaining attention. The final cause of bullying many teachers stated was a need or want for attention. One teacher thought that children did not get attention at home so they "bully because they know that will get attention from the teacher." Another teacher felt that some children liked "negative attention over no attention." A third teacher described children seeing others get special attention from teachers for "being naughty" and wanting that same attention.

Unique Causes. Some of the unique ideas that were given once by teachers included having hard home lives, not understanding other children's physical differences (such as skin color), being reactive to others, and a need for power or control. One teacher stated that bullying in her center seemed mainly to be attributed to socio-

economic status. Specifically she stated "...where I work it is more the kids that come from lower income families (that bully)...."

Effects of Gender on Bullying Styles

Teachers had many opinions on how gender factored into bullying. The following section describes the similarities between the genders in regards to who bullied. The section that follows includes areas where teachers saw differences, mainly in how bullying occurs and characteristics of each gender that becomes a victim. .

Similarities. Teachers were asked if they saw differences between genders in who bullied or who the victims of bullying were. All of the teachers stated they believed that the amount of bullying taking place was consistent between genders. They also stated there are no differences in whether one gender or the other would become a bully or become a victim. One teacher stated "bullying is even on both sides."

Differences. Three of the teachers stated that it is not if bullying occurred but how bullying happened that differed between genders. Two teachers stated that they saw girls as more exclusive and use relational bullying. One teacher gave the specific example of what one child said to another, "...you are not my friend cause you do this or wear that." Another teacher stated that girls "have a tendency to be more mean....they say such cruel things."

According to these three teachers that saw gender differences, boys were more physically aggressive when they bullied. One teacher answered the question about gender differences by stating, "...boys it's more aggression, like hitting you, punching, biting..."

Another teacher stated that she sees boys not getting their way in a game and "turn around and punch the other kid." Two of these teachers said that boys may not be bullying by the definition but are just more impulsive, but will still get labeled as aggressive bullies.

The final differences these three teachers spoke about were in regards to the characteristics of a gender that cause them to become victims. Specifically amongst boys, teachers saw characteristics that were common to bullying victims which included being quieter or less masculine. One teacher stated that it is the boys who are "the quieter ones....the ones who tend to hold back more" who get bullied more. Another teacher said that boys who are more "girly than normal" are the ones who become victims more often.

Effects of Bullying

Teachers were asked to give their opinions on what they felt are the effects of bullying on the bully, the victim and the bystanders who witness bullying. The effects given ranged from immediate and short-term to long-lasting. These effects are found below.

For the bully. During the situation or immediately after, according to two of the teachers, the bully may feel empowered and superior. After the teacher intervenes, cautions one teacher, the bully may feel angry and resentful. Three of the teachers expressed concern that if the behavior is ignored or not stopped it will become a habit. Students "grow up thinking that there is nothing wrong." One teacher even said bullying will escalate if adults do not attend to the behaviors.

Two teachers stated they thought that an effect of labeling a preschool child a bully, is that it could "create a self-fulfilling prophecy." The child hears he or she is a bully or mean to others and then that child lives up to the name. These teachers suggested instead to label it as bad choices or something that would imply the child controls the behavior instead of the child being controlled by the behavior.

For the victim. All of the teachers had varying ideas of the effects of bullying on the victim. Teachers stated children became sadder than before the bullying started, as well as depressed, angry, and develop feelings of being unloved. It was also stated that children develop self-doubt, lower self-esteem, and feelings of defeat. These teachers felt that the effects could be long-lasting and engrained into the child's personality. One teacher said that victims "...have more self-doubt and feel defeated," which was echoed by another teacher. A second teacher stated that when children are bullied about topics such as weight, "...that it's always going to be a part of them, they are not ever going to forget that."

Three of the teachers described a cycle of victims becoming bullies. This occurs when a child is bullied and decides, consciously or unconsciously, that change needs to occur. They then start acting like the bully so as not to be victimized again or to gain the positive effects they saw the bully gain including status, popularity, objects, or attention. One teacher said, "It's just a vicious cycle between being the victim and then becoming the bully so that they are no longer the victim." Another teacher stated she has seen the victim become the bully "so many times."

Bystanders. On the children who witness bullying, all teachers described outcomes that fall into three direct effects of bullying in the classroom. The first is that it causes children to become fearful of others and the classroom. The classroom becomes a place that feels unsafe and can cause anxiety because children are being harmed and in some cases a teacher may not even know to stop it from happening and make repairs with the hurt child, such as in the case with relational bullying. One teacher commented "I think it's scary for other people to see bullying....kids do not like being in situations where other kids are being mean."

A secondary effect of fear in the classroom, according to four of the teachers, is an increase in tattling, confusion over safety, and sadness. Children, to ease fear, get a teacher involved in any and all behavior in the classroom, instead of using their own social skills. One teacher highlights the confusion over safety and increased tattling by saying, "many times children will tell an adult because they know it is wrong....other times they won't tell because they are afraid the bullying will turn on them..."

The third direct effect on children who witness bullying, described by three of the teachers, is a rise in bullying behavior. Children will see what the bully does or what the bully can get away with and then copies the behavior. Children may also try and gain the same positive benefits they see the bully get, such as power, attention, and objects. The children want to "test their limits" and "emulate the behavior." As children see others bullying, they start to wonder, as one teacher describes, "what they can do and get away with."

Intervention Methods

Teachers used a variety of methods in their classroom to intervene when bullying occurred. These methods can be broken down into two categories based on the type of bullying that occurred. The first category is based on whether the bullying was physical, such as in the case of aggression and fighting. The second category is based on relational bullying such as teasing, gossiping, and exclusion.

Physical intervention methods. Most teachers agreed that when this type of bullying happens, interventions focus more on the bully than the victim. One of the teachers stated that she will "gather the hurt child, make sure nothing is wrong physically, and try to calm them down....acknowledge all feelings."

In regards to what teachers do with the bully, interventions tend to focus on communication and cause and effects of actions. One teacher said she would, "explain to this child what he or she did was inappropriate and unacceptable. We go through what hands are for....I ask what the child can do to make the other child feel better and then help the child do that."

Other teachers discussed ways that they get children to understand their behaviors. One teacher described that she, "will ask the bully if they are mad and the bully usually responds yes and then she asks what made the bully mad" she goes on to ask the victim if this is what the victim thinks happened and have the children talk it out and she acts as a mediator. Some of the teachers stated that if these aggressive behaviors continued they would try and get parents involved.

Relational intervention methods. Teachers agreed that when children engage in this type of bullying they try and help the child understand how their words affect the victim. Most teachers try and talk to the child and explain cause and effect to the bully. One teacher stated she will, "...try to work with the child who is teasing to recognize what their actions can do to the other child..." while another teacher stated she "...explains how words can make people feel bad and cry." One of the teachers stated she asks the bully, "is this something nice or friendly you are saying about your friends" to try and get the bully to think outside of him or herself.

When teachers were asked about intervention methods, all gave answers regarding how they work with the bully. Upon prompting how they work with the victim, teachers stated they would try and comfort the child or help give the child words to express their feelings. One teacher, when asked if she does anything with the victim, stated that she will "comfort the child and try and get them to use their words, tell them you don't like that." One of the teachers stated that she tries to get the victim and bully to communicate with each other. She will help "give them words if they are not sure how to talk" such as how you felt, why things happened, what can happen next time, and how this can be prevented.

Prevention Methods

Teachers were asked what they felt could be done to prevent bullying. Prevention was specifically asked about on four levels: classroom, school, community, and policy level. Teachers had many different ideas that are described in the following sections.

Classroom. Teachers expressed many ideas they are already using in the classroom as prevention methods. Some of the methods mentioned by more than one teacher included being proactive, watching for warning signs that bullying may start, and dealing with bullying immediately so to stop future incidents.

One teacher stated she felt classrooms needed more curriculum and books for "working with the bully...everything seems to be for the victim." Another suggestion given by a teacher was to "have the student wear gloves to make them more aware of their hands" if they are physically bullying. A third prevention is to pull the child who is bullying aside and talk to him or her, "as you don't want to embarrass the child in front of the class, that makes it worse" and make sure you hear their side too. The final prevention idea given is teaching children what to do, "...we always tell children what not to do, but don't always tell them what to do."

School. There was one clear idea given by many teachers on a school level. They stated that there needs to be school-wide policies regarding bullying and that it needs to be "enforced with consistency from classroom to classroom and between teachers." Other prevention methods included having professionals come in and talk about bullying, getting parents of victims and bullies involved, and documenting bullying "so as a child switches classrooms, the teachers know what is going on."

Community. On a community level three of the teachers gave an idea each. The first idea is making bullying prevention "known to the community," so community members can help prevent it. This could include talking at community events or doing outreach type projects to let the community know there is a problem. The second idea is

that teachers should "...speak out, when it is safe, and stop community members from bullying." If children see adults bully, they think it is ok for them to do it too. The final idea is teaching the community that they are role models to preschool children and should not act as bullies themselves.

Policy. All teachers agreed that policies should be created on a school and community level. These policies should be zero-tolerance, which teachers described as not allowing any acts of bullying to go noticed, no matter how small they may seem. They stated that this should be consistent across schools. One teacher stated that in the policy there should be "...something about assessments too. Some children may be seen as bullies but they really have a disorder like Autism or ADHD and just do not know any better yet." Finally, two of the teachers gave a policy topic idea surrounding when children should be removed from mainstream and placed into a special center.

Social Workers' Role

In interventions. Teachers expressed the need to have more social workers in the centers as they could be utilized in various capacities to intervene when bullying occurs. The first intervention idea given was in being able to talk with the children, both bully and victim. The social worker can work with the bully on "...why this was not a good choice and then with the victim to feel safe and listened to." Teachers stated they did not always have time for this one-on-one, but felt it was important in stopping bullying.

Teachers also felt social workers could talk to parents and work with them to develop behavior plans "...so there is consistency between what happens at home and

what happens at school." One teacher felt that the social worker could also guide teachers in creating behavior plans at the school as teachers are not "...always trained in bullying specifically."

In prevention. Teachers gave many prevention ideas that would utilize social workers. The first idea that multiple teachers suggested was in having social workers come into classrooms to talk with children "about what should we do and encouraging them (the children) in friendship activities." Teachers also expressed interest in having social workers help create policies regarding bullying and ideas for how to handle situations. The last idea given by one of the teachers was to have social workers meet with parents to understand different backgrounds of students who are bullies or victims. By understanding these backgrounds "...teachers and social workers can come up with the best plan for helping that child."

Discussion

There were many findings that came from this research to be discussed in this section. Some of the findings are new and add to the current literature in the field. Other findings either support previous findings or in some cases contradict previous research. This section will look at each finding and how it relates to the current body of research. Also included in this section will be implications for social work and implications for further research.

Bullying Situations

There were no studies found in the literature review that described what bullying situations happened in the preschool classroom, only what type of bullying exists more in this age group; physical bullying happened more than relational (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, Hamby & Kracke, 2009). According to the reports from teachers, more situations that fit the definition of bullying in this age group are relational. This directly contradicts the study by Finkelhor et al. (2009) and more research is needed in this area to get a full picture of what bullying situations are happening in the preschool age group.

This research found that bullying is happening as early as preschool age according to the definition used and that children can understand that their actions can be used for specific purposes. All teachers agreed that bullying is happening in the preschool age group and had multiple stories to share in regards to what it specifically looks like in their classroom. These findings allow social workers and educators the knowledge that interventions and preventions should start earlier than elementary school and that the word bullying can be used to describe these preschool behaviors.

Causes of Bullying

Teachers described many causes behind bullying in their preschool classrooms that supported the previous research. These causes included a striving for power, factors from their home life, and children not having the appropriate social and developmental tools. The wanting of power teachers described supports previous research in older elementary children done by Bansel et al. (2009) who found the same cause. This

suggests that power as a cause in bullying starts earlier than previously known, that it does in fact start in preschool.

The second mentioned theme that teachers described as a cause of bullying were factors relating to home life. Teachers in this study felt that it was two factors in particular that lead children to bully. The first mentioned factor was that children come from low social-economic status homes and the second factor mentioned was that children had not been taught appropriate social skills. The idea that factors from home life lead to bullying agrees with past research, but the specific factors are different than previously found.

In previous literature, Splete (2005) stated that specific factors of home life such as the lack of parental support that caused bullies. Schwartz et al. (1997) stated that victim types for bullying were a result of maternal harshness and witnessing violence at home where as Perren and Alsaker (2005) stated that it may be home factors that create victims, but they were unsure as to what the factors were. Because it is unclear between past research and current research what the specific home factors are, more research needs to be done to clarify what these factors are in preschool children.

This research also found that teachers felt it was a lack of social and developmental skills that lead children to bully. This supports previous findings in research done with older children. Bonica et al. (2003) stated aggression in children may come out due to a lack of language skills. The fact that this is the case in preschoolers is a starting point for prevention curriculum creation. Curriculum should consist of social and language skill development. The goal of the curriculum should be to raise children's

ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally so they can create positive situations and not resort to bullying behaviors to get their wants and needs fulfilled.

The current research also uncovered new causes that had not been seen in previous research. One cause that emerged in the research was that children are trying to gain popularity with their peers. Along with this teachers agreed that bullying also happens when children are seeking attention. These two new causes further support the need for curriculum in preschools on more positive ways to get their wants met without causing harm or disturbances in the classroom.

Effects of Bullying

The current research found effects of bullying on bullies, victims, and bystanders. Bullies were said to feel empowered and create habits of bullying if not stopped. Victims were said to have increased self-doubt, decreased long-term self-esteem, feelings of sadness, and may become bullies themselves. Bystanders have increased fear and tattling behaviors as well as increased incidents of copying the bully's behavior.

The current research supports and adds to previous findings by the Department of Health and Human Services (n.d) on the effects of bullying, which was done on older children. The agreed-upon effect is that victims have higher levels of sadness compared to non-victims. This research added the other previously mentioned effects to the body of literature, as no literature could be found on effects of bullying in preschool.

The research is unable to study many of the other effects found in previous research due to the short-term nature of the project. The effects that could not be studied

include: dropping out of school, substance abuse, and earlier sexual activity due to this not being a longitudinal study. This shows that more longitudinal work needs to be done on what the long-term effects are.

Effects of Gender on Bullying Styles

As there were no gender differences found in this study as to who bullied more, only in how children bullied, all children in this age group could benefit from intervention and prevention curriculum. Teachers stated girls tended towards more relational bullying while boys were more physical. Boys' physical bullying was attributed many times to a result of not having developmental abilities to get what they wanted. This is where curriculum or gender-specific work could be done, if gender specific curriculum were created. Work on language acquisition, impulse control, and peaceful conflict resolution should be at the core of curriculum aimed at preschool boys. As girls tend towards more relational bullying, books and bullying curriculum for them could focus more on friendship and prosocial skills. These potential skills for boys and girls will be discussed further in prevention and interventions in the next section.

Intervention and Prevention Methods

Teachers described many intervention and prevention methods. None of the methods given were in the form of a curriculum but were more done individually and on a case-by-case basis. Some of the ideas given included consoling and validating the victim's feelings, explaining to the bully why he or she cannot do or say something, and increasing friendship skills. This directly supports Perren and Alsaker's (2205)

conclusion that curriculum for this age group should include social skills training and creating an accountability system to teach right and wrong.

The idea of teaching more social skills could be incorporated into a more formal curriculum used in the classroom. Teachers agreed that there needed to be more proactive measures in place and that having a standard way of doing things from classroom to classroom would be beneficial. They also stated that by having consistency, whether in policy or programming throughout the agency, with parents, and in the community at large would aid in preventing bullying. This supports the findings of Ferral (1999) as well as those of Yerger and Gehret (2011), and would give common language to the topic of preschool bullying.

More research would need to be conducted on effectiveness of created curriculum, both what word/language works in the classroom and on a national level. Further research would also need to be conducted on whether a new curriculum would decrease behaviors, such as described by Powell and Dunlap (2009), or would reduce bullying as a whole.

The Social Worker's Role

This research found that teachers felt social workers could be utilized in a variety of ways. While only one teacher had a social worker in her current center, all teachers felt their centers would utilize social workers in multiple different ways. These ways included as a connection between teachers and parents, as a consultant on ideas for classroom bullying curriculum and lessons, and in interventions with the victim and bully to help all

children feel safe and heard. There was no research found on how social workers could help in preschool settings. While social workers are used in school and early childhood settings to help reduce bullying and bullying behaviors, no research was found on their best utilization. This research was able to identify these roles for social work utilization and give ideas for future best practices for social work involvement to reduce bullying.

Strengths

There are two main strengths to this research project. The first is that it was done with teachers who taught in urban, suburban, and rural areas and so the results have some generalizability in different settings. This research also looked at teachers in both daycare centers and preschools, further adding to its generalizability.

Limitations

There were a few limitations to this type of study, the first being that it is limited to a small sample size due to time constraints. In addition, some participants in the groups may not have fully disclosed stories or answers as their peers are around and they may be afraid of repercussions. This survey also utilized a snowball sample after the original random sampling and thus the sample was not fully random hindering the degree of generalizability.

Future Implications

This research uncovered many implications for prevention curriculum. Teachers agreed that children at this age group do bully and need to be taught better ways to make friends and handle life situations. The main implications that will be addressed here are:

- The need for a nationwide curriculum
- The need and desire for social workers in preschools settings
- The need for policy changes at the micro, mezzo and macro levels
- Public awareness campaigns to let the community know about preschool bullying

A nationwide curriculum for use with preschoolers needs to be created to help combat preschool bullying when children are young. This curriculum should focus on social skills, language acquisition, and impulse control. It could be classroom-wide or aimed at each gender separately. The curriculum should also be holistic in nature and provide information to parents and families. Parents need to know what is happening in this age group and what they can do at home to stop bullying.

Teachers also want more help in the classroom from social workers. They asked for social workers to help in both the interventions and in prevention programs. Teachers also felt that social workers could provide important connections between school and home. Finally, teachers felt that social workers could help children in feeling safe again when bullying does occur. This shows a clear need and desire to hire social workers to work in preschool settings.

There needs to be policy changes and public awareness at all levels. Bullying is happening and needs to be called that. Zero-tolerance policies, as described previously, need to be put in place. Schools, communities, and the country needs to stop bullying when it starts, in preschool. Policies not allowing adults to bully need to be enforced better, especially when the adults are in the presence of children. Children are modeling the aggressive behaviors they see in adults and adults need to realize that they are being watched by children.

Law makers need to be made aware and make changes in bullying policy to include preschool-aged children. The public needs to be aware that bullying is happening in children as young as preschool. Not only is bullying happening in the preschool setting, but the community needs to start putting an end to children seeing bullying in adults around them in the community. This needs to be done through public campaigns and media awareness that children are watching the adults around them to see how to treat others. If adults are bullying other adults, children will bully other children.

Conclusion

Bullying has been proven to be a problem in America. This research showed that it is not only a problem once children get to school but also in the preschool years. This research also showed that there is a clear need for a more standard curriculum in classrooms and preschool centers. Finally this research concluded that bullying in preschool needs common terms and that it should be called bullying, not just aggression or children being mean. Teachers want social work help in preschools and in their

classroom and social workers should be able to help. The need has been shown and now needs to be met.

All these findings are preliminary and, as this was a small sample, need to be looked at in further studies. These future studies should not only look at how teachers are currently handling bullying but what can and should be done on a policy level to stop bullying when it is first starting, in the preschool years. By implementing policies and curriculum in this age group, bullying in older children could be significantly reduced.

Further research would also need to be conducted on how effective curriculum would be both on an immediate level and on a long-term level. By stopping bullying when children are young, some of the effects of bullying seen in older children could be reduced or eliminated. With 86% of American teenagers self-reporting having been a victim of bullying at some point in their lives (Kaiser Foundation, 2001), policies need to be created and put in place as soon as bullying begins, and this study showed that is in preschool. This study is only the beginning in many needed future research projects.

The last most important change that needs to occur as a result of this research is on a policy level. Bullying is happening as early as preschool and the nation needs to be aware. Language surrounding bullying at this age needs to be consistent and policies for not tolerating bullying need to be created. Starting these policies in elementary school is too late, by this point in time children may have been engaging in bullying behaviors or being victims of bullies for years. The curriculum and focus needs to shift to stop bullying where it starts, in preschool.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study to investigate what bullying behaviors exist in the preschool classroom and how they affect all children in the classroom. A secondary goal is to look at what is already being done in the classroom as prevention and intervention methods. This study is being conducted by Laura Humphrey, an MSW student at St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Kendra Garrett.

You were selected as a possible participant in this research because you are a preschool/early childhood teacher. The participation in this study is voluntary and your identity will remain confidential

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to gather information about bullying in the preschool classroom and the effects it has on all children involved. Approximately ten to fifteen teachers are anticipated to participate in this research project

Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a 30-60 minute interview or focus group conducted by myself. This interview/focus group will be audio recorded and later transcribed by the research assistant who is also signing a confidentiality agreement

Risks and Benefits

There is a minimal risk in confidentiality for participating in this study as others in your center are also participating. To minimize this risk, I am asking that when you sign this consent form you are also agreeing to the terms of confidentiality described below in the confidentiality of data section. I perceive no other risks for participating in this study. There are no direct benefits for participating in this study.

Compensation:

No compensation will be given for participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept confidential in any report that is published or when findings are presented, information will not be provided to identify you or your center. The audio recordings will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed. The interview transcripts, field notes, and consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet for an indefinite time period. It is also required that you not discuss with others, including co-

workers and employers, who participated in the focus group or what was said to help maintain confidentiality

Voluntary nature of the study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer and may stop the interview at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Catherine University, University of St. Thomas, or the School of Social Work. Your participation or lack of participation will also in no way affect your relationships with your employer.

Contacts and questions

You may contact any of the resources listed below with questions or concerns about this study:

Researcher: Laura Humphrey
xxx-xxx-1324
Hump1952@stthomas.edu

Advisor: Kendra Garrett, PhD.
651-652-5808
kjgarrett@stthomas.edu

UST IRB: 651-962-5341

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I am at least 18 years old. By signing below, I consent to participate in this study and agree to be audio recorded.

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix B**Research Assistant Confidentiality Form**

I agree to assist with this study. I agree that I will:

1. Keep all research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any format (e.g. disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the primary investigator of this study.
2. Keep all research information in any form (e.g. disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession. This includes:
 - a. Using closed headphones when transcribing audio taped interviews;
 - b. Keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews in computer password-protected files;
 - c. Closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
 - d. Keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet;
 - e. Permanently deleting any e-mail communication containing the data
3. Give all research information in any form or format (e.g. disks, tapes, transcripts) to the primary investigator when I have completed the research tasks.
4. Erase or destroy all research information in any form or format that is not returnable to the primary investigator (e.g. information stored on my computer hard drive) upon completion of research tasks.

By signing below I am stating I understand what is being asked of me and I agree to the terms listed above.

Signature of Research Assistant
and Date

Signature of Researcher
and Date

Printed Name of Research Assistant

Printed Name of Researcher

Appendix C

Preschool Center Contact Script

Good morning/afternoon, my name is Laura Humphrey and I am a graduate student in the master of social work program at St. Thomas University and the University of St. Catherine's. I am working on a project looking to speak with preschool teachers to gather data on behaviors of preschool children that could be considered bullying. I want to not only look at what behaviors children are doing but also what teachers are doing in response to these behaviors.

I am hoping to either have a voluntary focus group with the teachers at your center or voluntary one on one interviews with individual teachers. The focus group or interviews will take approximately 30-60 minutes each. I am able to work around your center's needs, such as coming in at naptime to interview your teachers. All information, including the center and teacher names, will be kept confidential. Would your center be willing to participate in this study?