

Website Review

Kids Against Bullying

<http://www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org/>

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The *Kids Against Bullying* interactive website is one of five online initiatives funded by the PACER Center in Bloomington, Minnesota. The Center was founded in 1977 to help parents of children with disabilities. Currently the Center conducts more than 30 self-help and outreach programs for parents, students, professionals, and other organizations. In 2006 PACER launched *Kids Against Bullying* to help children cope with and prevent bullying, and in 2009 they expanded the website to include *Teens Against Bullying*.

The causes of bullying are multiple, and child psychologists estimate that at some time in their school lives 40% of students are excluded, rejected, teased, picked on, or severely bullied. Students of color, disability, and different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are often vulnerable targets of bullying. What is bullying? Bullying is acting or making negative remarks to have power over another person, such as calling

them names, teasing, taunting, writing nasty remarks, leaving victims out, not talking to them, threatening, making them uncomfortable or scared, taking or damaging their possessions, hitting or kicking, and making them do something against their will. An emerging form of digital bullying or cyberbullying occurs on the Internet in blogs, wikis, social media sites (Facebook or Second Life), or via cell phones. When individuals or groups perpetrate bullying, their victims experience long lasting emotional pain. Bullying in school contributes to increased dropout rates, lower self esteem, social isolation, depression, substance abuse, declining grades, increases in illness, and violent acts. Recent incidents of school violence when victims strike back confirm that bullying has tragic consequences for students, families, schools, and communities. The transition between elementary and middle school has been classified as the brutalizing period due to the increased aggression experienced by students.

The *Kids Against Bullying* website has nine menu options which provide innovative and interactive ways for educators to combat bullying:

1. **Games & Fun** – provides word games and art activities which deal with feelings.
2. **Contests** – encourages and invites students to write essays about being bullied.
3. **Watch This** – contains anti-bullying videos narrated by students and celebrities.
4. **Kids Say** – is an opinion poll site reporting data on bullying.
5. **Smart Stuff** – provides definitions of bullying, how to spot and prevent it.
6. **4 Teens** – offers anti-bullying activities for young adults.
7. **Stuff for Adults** – contains data to help adults identify and minimize bullying.
8. **Accessibility** – is an accessible version of the *Kids Against Bullying* website.
9. **Your Opinion Counts** – conducts surveys and data driven reactions to bullying.

The appearance and navigation of the web use cartoon format with audio and video links. The fonts are inconsistent in type, size, and design. The upper and lower horizontal menus have dropdown sub-menus which provide links to print, video, and audio data from other sites and servers. All web pages are printer-friendly and can be forwarded as links or email attachments. The website does not provide an internal or external search engine. The homepage displays and downloads in common browsers in four seconds and is compatible with IE 8, Firefox 3.6, Opera 10.53, and three other browsers. The website has three accessibility errors and nine warnings and is updated daily. The latest iteration was June 2010.

Resources

Cyberbullying 2010: What the Research Tells Us—Pew Internet and American Life Project (<http://www.pewinternet.org/Presentations/2010/May/Cyberbullying-2010.aspx>)

How Parents Should Help Protect Their Children From Serious School Bullying (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiLdgc9o2bU>)

The Cyberbullying Research Center (<http://www.cyberbullying.us/aboutus.php>)