

Definition and measurement

Bullying includes hitting and teasing, as well as more passive forms such as exclusion from conversations and play. Bullying does not include fighting between equally strong children. The broad definition of bullying does not show which forms are most prevalent in which country, or the duration and intensity of bullying.

Data are drawn from school-based samples from the *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey* for the years 2005-06. Bullying estimates are calculated using reported rates of bullying and being bullied weighted by sample numbers for 11-, 13- and 15-year-old boys and girls. The proportions of first-generation migrant students at age 15 are based on self-reported statistics of country of birth published as part of the OECD PISA 2006 results.

Being a bully or being bullied is not uncommon.

Around one in ten OECD children is a recent bullying victim, and the ratio of bullies is similar. Figure CO5.1 shows that children are most likely to have experienced bullying in Turkey and Greece. Bullying is least common in Sweden and Spain. Greece and Austria have the most bullies, whereas Sweden, the Czech Republic and Iceland have the fewest.

Perpetrators and victims of bullying are more likely to be boys than girls. Only in Hungary and Greece are girls victims of bullying more often than, or equal to, boys. There are no countries with more female than male perpetrators.

Bullies slightly outnumber the bullied, suggesting that bullying is performed in groups. Observational research on bullying suggests that between 80 and 90% of episodes are attended by other children: three-quarters of whom reinforce the bullying behaviour, or at least do not challenge it (Atlas et al., 1998; and Hawkins et al., 2001). For boys there is no clear rela-

tionship across countries between the number of bullies and the number of victims. For girls it is a little clearer, with more girls being bullied than bullying, which may reflect cases of boys bullying girls or girls more reluctant to admit or acknowledge bullying.

Bullying generally increases as children get older (CO5.2). As children get older, and spend more time in school, patterns of bullying change. For boys the increase with age is more marked, particularly in Greece, Luxembourg, Austria and Germany. Only Turkey reports a drop in bullying for both boys and girls with age, though absolute levels in that country remain comparatively high.

There is more bullying at age 15 in countries where there are more 15-year-old migrant students (CO5.3) When children bully in groups, or where bullying is part of normal group behaviour, research suggests that friendships are made and maintained in part to show a distinction from other groups, or individuals (Duffy and Nesdale, 2008). The cross-national evidence provides some support for this hypothesis.

Further reading

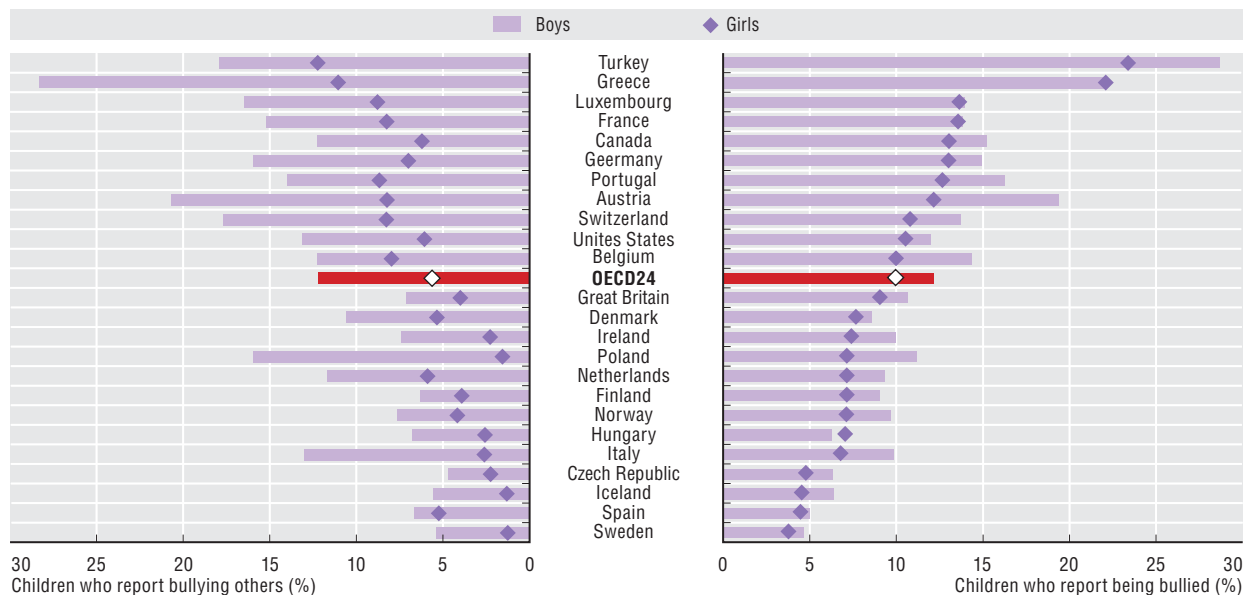
- Atlas, R. et al. (1998), "Observations of Bullying in the Classroom", *Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 92, pp. 86-99.
- Currie, C. et al. (2008), *Inequalities in Young People's Health: HBSC International Report*, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Duffy, A. and D. Nesdale (2008), "Peer Groups, Social Identity and Children's Bullying Behaviour", *Social Development*, pp. 1-19.
- Hawkins, L. et al. (2001), "Naturalistic Observations of Peer Interventions in Bullying", *Social Development*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 512-527.
- OECD (2008), *PISA 2006 Database*, OECD, Paris.

Table note

Table CO5.2: Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Norway, Ireland, the United States, Turkey and Mexico are missing. Data for Belgium is Flemish Belgium only. Data for the United Kingdom does not include Northern Ireland.

CO5.1. Boys are more often both victim and perpetrator of bullying

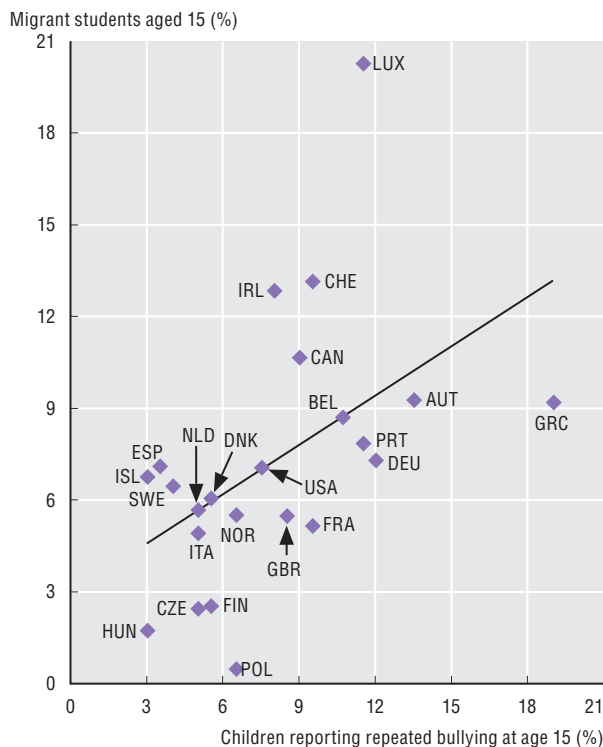
Victimisation and perpetration by gender, countries ranked by total average perpetration percentage



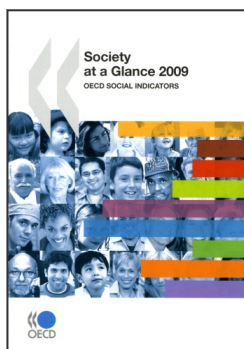
CO5.2. Bullying is more common amongst older children

	Girls			Boys		
	11 years	13 years	15 years	11 years	13 years	15 years
Austria	5	11	11	11	26	26
Belgium	6	6	7	12	11	14
Canada	6	8	5	10	13	13
Czech Republic	2	3	2	3	6	5
Denmark	2	6	5	7	11	15
Finland	2	4	2	5	6	8
France	6	11	8	13	15	18
Germany	5	7	9	9	17	21
Greece	8	13	12	16	28	38
Hungary	2	4	2	3	7	10
Iceland	2	1	1	5	6	6
Ireland	2	3	2	6	7	9
Italy	7	6	5	13	12	14
Luxembourg	7	9	10	8	16	24
Netherlands	3	4	5	11	12	12
Norway	1	1	3	8	5	10
Poland	4	6	6	15	14	18
Portugal	8	9	8	14	15	13
Spain	4	6	6	5	8	7
Sweden	1	1	2	3	4	9
Switzerland	5	10	10	13	19	21
Turkey	16	13	7	21	19	13
Great Britain	2	5	6	4	8	10
United States	8	9	7	11	14	14
OECD24	5	6	6	9	12	14

CO5.3. More children are bullied when the first generation migrant share of children is high



Source: *Inequalities in Young People's Health: HBS International Report* (Currie et al, 2008). OECD PISA (2008).



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