

# Impacts of Bullying on Students With Disabilities

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**Students with disabilities are tremendously affected by bullying. There are four major considerations to make (Pacers National Bullying Prevention Center):**

## First Point

Bullying affects a student's ability to learn.

Students with disabilities have many challenges to overcome—we all have challenges to overcome, but a student with disabilities will have extra challenges, and may need extra support. We know that bullying affects:

- Rates of class absenteeism
- Grades in class
- Ability to concentrate in class
- Any interest in doing well in school

## Second Point

Often bullying for students with disabilities is also harassment, since harassment deals with protected classes.

Such behaviors include:

- Verbal abuse, name calling
- Written statements that put down or sabotage students who are disabled
- Threats and humiliating behaviors
- Physical assault

## Third Point

Students with disabilities must learn to advocate for themselves.

Parents, educators, communities and other students have an advocacy role to prevent bullying. We need to find ways to support our students who are being bullied, e.g. to institute bullying prevention programs at our schools, and to help students who are vulnerable to bullying, who are being hurt by bullying, or are isolated from other students.

Students who are disabled need to learn to speak up for themselves, to communicate their needs, and to take action if something doesn't look right.

Parents, counselors and educators need to speak to their children about bullying, by listening without judgment to what children have to say, and to provide for their children a safe place to discuss their feelings. It is incumbent for parents, counselors and educators to teach their children how to recognize bullying. Often students with disabilities do not recognize bullying when it

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occurs. In fact students must be Upstanders and learn to report bullying when it occurs.

## Self advocacy means:

- Speaking up for oneself
- Describing one's challenges, strengths and needs
- Taking responsibility for oneself
- Knowing your rights
- Getting help and knowing who to ask for help when needed

## GET INFORMED!

### Fourth Point

Know the federal laws and resources about bullying

For example:

**FAPE** - Ensure that a Free Appropriate Public Education is given to students with disabilities

**IDEA** - Students with disabilities are eligible for special education under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act

**IEP** - Students who are eligible for special education under IDEA will have an Individualized Education Program.

Let's fight bullying students who are disabled and let's eradicate bullying in general!



### ABOUT CLARA..

Clara Wajngurt, is an executive coach, author, speaker and professor in higher education for thirty five years, an expert in the self-development of others, and in empowering those around her. She is also the founder of Bullying Prevention Consulting.

Bullying Prevention Consulting offers workshops and consults to small and large scale groups including individual sessions.

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