

**The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**

**John G. Rowland**  
 Governor

**A Healthcare Service Agency**

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 Commissioner

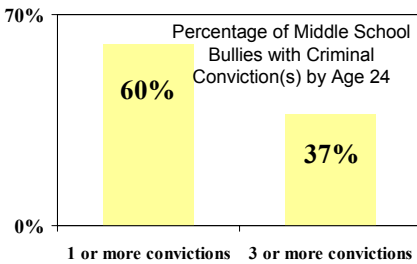
**What's bullying got to do with it?**

Prevention and early intervention services are critical components of the DMHAS Healthcare System. Using a competitive grant award from the federal Center for Mental Health Services, DMHAS is implementing an initiative to integrate strategies that *promote children's mental health* with strategies that *prevent violence and substance abuse* among children. The program's twin goals are to 1) create a coalition of state agencies, community providers, academic partners, and experts in the fields of mental health, substance use, and violence prevention, and 2) establish two community-based pilot programs that integrate mental health, substance abuse and violence prevention strategies. But what does bullying have to do with this? Take this little quiz:

Darryl has a reputation at his school as a bully. Two months into the school year, the 10 year old fourth grader has been suspended three times. He disrupts the class and hits and threatens classmates outside the school room. His mother feels overwhelmed. She is a single mother working full time to support herself, Darryl and his infant sister.

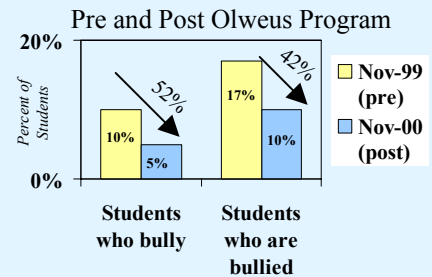
**Q.** Who requires more support from government agencies, has more court convictions, more alcoholism, more antisocial personality disorders and uses more mental health services, when they become adults?

**A.** Children who were named by their schoolmates, at age eight, as the bullies of the school.



*What about those who are bullied? By age 23, children who were bullied in middle school were more depressed and had lower self-esteem than their peers who had not been bullied.*

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Model is an evidence-based intervention that has been designated a "SAMHSA Model Program" on the basis of its proven results. DMHAS' Prevention Service Unit oversees two programs - the Highville Mustard Seed Project in New Haven and the Parkville Overall Prevention Project in Hartford - both of which include public school-based bullying components patterned on the Olweus model. These programs offer interventions on three levels - school wide, classroom level, and individual level - to improve peer relations and make the school a safe and positive place for students to learn and develop.



Darryl first came to the attention of the school's bullying prevention program through a standard screening administered at the beginning of the year. He participated in a "Stars in the Making" group. An assessment revealed multiple symptoms of depression, and Darryl was referred to the Child Guidance Clinic, partners on the Bullying Prevention Team. Darryl's mother attended an 11 week "Family Linkage" parenting group offered evenings at the school. Darryl will attend his mother's "graduation" from this group this Thursday. He had no suspensions since the last marking period, and both he and his mother report Darryl feeling happier and more in control.

Keys to DMHAS' success at preventing Darryl's future need for DMHAS services include:

- Curriculum designed to improve the supportiveness of the school environment and reduce the likelihood and tolerance for bullying,
- Support groups for those youth deemed particularly at risk of problematic behavior, and
- Strategies for strengthening the family.