

# Bullying study focuses on gifted students

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Purdue University researchers say bullying of gifted students is an overlooked problem that leaves many such students emotionally shattered.

In what is believed to be the first major study of bullying involving gifted students, researchers found that by eighth grade, more than two-thirds of gifted pupils had been such victims.

"All children are affected adversely by bullying but gifted children differ from other children in significant ways," said Jean Peterson, an associate professor of educational studies.

"Many are intense, sensitive and stressed by their own and others' high expectations and their ability, interests and behavior may make them vulnerable," said Peterson.

Peterson and Karen Ray, a doctoral student in counseling psychology, surveyed 432 gifted eighth-graders in 11 states

They found 67 percent had experienced bullying by eighth grade, 16 percent defined themselves as bullies and 29 percent had violent thoughts.

The most common kind of bullying was name-calling, followed by teasing about appearance, intelligence and grades, and pushing and shoving.

The results of the survey study are published in the April edition of Gifted Child Quarterly, and the results of the interview portion of the study will be published in the same journal in July.

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