Bullying has been a problem for children for many years. Recent research has shown that it continues to be a major concern for children. The Growing Up in Ireland study found that 40% of children aged 9 reported being victims of bullying in the previous year. The EU Kids Online study reported that 23% of children in Ireland aged 9 to 16 years have experienced some form of bullying, both online and offline.

Cyberbullying is an extension of traditional bullying. Most young people who are cyberbullied also experience traditional forms of bullying. Bullying is harmful to both victims and perpetrators and should always be taken seriously.

Sadly, bullying tends to hit the headlines linked to very sad cases of child and youth suicide. This generally results in a flurry of media interest and promises by politicians. More recently there have been some significant initiatives taken in response to media attention and public pressure. The Ombudsman for Children’s Office consulted with children and published a report, Dealing with Bullying in Schools. The Department of Education and Skills convened an Anti-Bullying forum in 2012 and published an Action Plan on Bullying in January 2013. Time will tell whether this renewed focus on bullying in schools will make a difference.

In the context of the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector, bullying does not receive much attention. At the time of writing this editorial, discussion is focusing on the aftermath of the RTÉ Breach of Trust investigation. That programme featured children being bullied by early years staff whose role should have been to nurture and care for them. The ECCE sector needs to give attention to bullying as a potential issue, which may involve children, but also staff as perpetrators. The focus needs to be on anti-bullying policy and procedures, prevention and best practice. Children in our care deserve no less.

ANNE CONROY
WHAT WE KNOW

Bullying is a top concern for children worldwide. Time and time again, when surveyed about their concerns, children will tend to place bullying at the top of their list. Most recently we learned, for example, that Comhairle na nÓg, the child and youth councils in the Irish State’s 34 local authority areas, called for a phone app which could be a survival guide for teens and which would direct them to the best services (McMahon, 2013).

Impact of Bullying (Traditional and Cyber)

Our children have good cause to be fearful of bullying. To be bullied, whether by traditional or cyber methods, can have serious implications for a child’s health and education. Bullying creates stress and if it continues over a period of time there is a high risk that it will result in an erosion of confidence and self esteem. Other frequent symptoms are raised anxiety, fear, loneliness, reluctance to go to school, isolation, educational underperformance and depression (Boulton et al, 2008). Self-harming and suicidal behaviours, while rare, are also expressions of the deep despair which so commonly results from being bullied (McMahon et al, 2010). The recent and tragic deaths by suicide of Phoebe Prince, Erin Gallagher, Ciara Pugsley and Lara Burns, all of school going age, are a testimony to...
Take longer to uncover who the aggressor might be than it would with direct bullying.

Relational and social bullying can be both direct and indirect. This form of bullying sets out to manipulate and damage a child’s reputation and/or relationships by ignoring, excluding, isolating, passing notes or spreading false information and malicious rumours.

Cyberbullying, in contrast to the above traditional forms of bullying, is any negative behaviour which, with the help of the internet, phones or other technologies, conveys hostile, threatening and hurtful messages. Behaviours can range from severe threats to posting embarrassing photographs. One in five Irish children aged 11 to 16 have been, for example, sexual images and over one in ten have received sexual messages online, commonly known as sexting (O’Neill et al, 2011).

It is of note that while traditional bullying tends to defined by its repeated nature, this is not necessarily the case for cyberbullying. This is because one cyber-attack has the potential to reach large audiences and to stay out in cyberspace indefinitely, thus constituting repetition.

Much bullying is identity or prejudiced based (O’Higgins et al, 2010) with, for example, 71% of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered young people having been bullied about their sexuality (Minton et al, 2008).

The Government’s recent and welcome Plan of Action on Bullying (Dept of Education and Skills [DES], 2013) recommends that the definition of bullying in the new and forthcoming national procedures for schools includes a specific reference to identity based bullying (i.e. homophobic, transphobic and racist bullying and bullying of young people with disabilities or special educational needs). The Plan also correctly points out that ‘bullying should be considered as part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond what can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault and harassment’ (p.28).

The prevalence of bullying in our young people

The State of the Nation’s 2012 Report on Children reported that 24.3% of children aged 10-17 reported having been bullied at school at least once in the past couple of months in 2010 (Dept of Children and Youth Affairs [DCYA], 2012). Traveller children, immigrant children and children with a disability and/or chronic illness were more likely to be bullied. A rate of 21.5% was found for the same age group 16 years ago
(O’Moore et al, 1997) which suggests that we have had an increase in the level of victimisation. However, it is possible that the greater awareness of bullying which has undoubtedly taken place during the intervening years due to efforts from individual schools may have given rise to a greater readiness to report it. However, with the rate of 40% of nine year olds in 2008 (Williams et al, 2008) and 42% of adolescents reporting bullying in 2010 (Dooley and Fitzgerald, 2012) together with 18.3% (23.6% girls and 15.7% boys) involved in cyberbullying (O’Moore, 2012), this indicates that there can be no room for complacency in tackling bullying in all its forms.

Cyberbullying in Ireland, as with traditional bullying, prompts an extremely strong reluctance on the part of young people to report it. Only 18.8% boys aged 6 – 12 and 26.7% girls reported that they were cyberbullied to their parents (O’Moore, 2012). For the 11% of children who had received sexual messages online, just 21% of parents were aware of it (O’Neill et al, 2011). This makes it extremely difficult for adults to intervene and to provide the much needed support, especially for those who are both cyber and traditionally bullied as this increases the risk of depression, low self-esteem, loneliness and suicide (Gradinger et al, 2009; LeBlanc, 2012).

Reasons put forward for not reporting cyberbullying to parents is the fear that parents will over react, such as taking away phones and restricting internet use. Children believe also that they by themselves can put a stop to bullying. However, there is evidence to indicate that young children and teens are using coping strategies which may lead to an escalation of the bullying. For example, almost one third of Irish teens sent an angry response back when cyberbullied as compared to 16.3% who asked the aggressor to stop (O’Moore, 2012).

**WHAT TO DO**

Aware that most children and teens attend schools, the recommendations which follow, although they refer more explicitly to schools, need to be applied as forcefully to all organisations, centres and clubs which have a duty of care for young people.

If we are to be guided by international best practice in the prevention and intervention of school bullying then efforts to reduce bullying and cyberbullying are enhanced by a whole-school community approach. This approach has been endorsed by the children and young people who participated in the Ombudsman for Children’s consultative process on the subject of dealing with bullying in schools (Ombudsman for Children’s Office, 2012). It is central also to the recommendations of the Action Plan on Bullying (DES, 2013) and the Guidelines on the Prevention of Cyberbullying in the School Environment. The whole-school community approach reaches out to all the members of the school community, the staff, pupils, families and the wider community (O’Moore, 2010). It builds a supportive school culture, consistently implementing and reviewing policy and practice to effectively reduce bullying. It enhances also school staff and student understandings and skills in relation to bullying behaviours. In addition, it forms partnerships between the different members of the school and wider community.

The Anti-bullying Policy

For a school policy to be effective it must send out a strong message to all its members that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and that it will not be tolerated. For a school policy to be effective it must send out a strong message to all its members that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and that it will not be tolerated. The policy must have a definition of bullying with reference to all forms of bullying. It is important also that the policy states the procedure which the school will follow when there is a complaint of bullying by a student, parent, staff member or a member of the wider school community. The sanctions which may follow when a complaint of bullying is upheld should also be outlined. Too often parents are not aware of their schools’ anti-bullying policies. Building awareness and consistent implementation of the school policy can only be achieved if all parents, students and staff are clear on the school’s procedures for preventing, detecting, reporting and responding to incidents of bullying. However, to enhance understanding of and commitment to the school policy and practices, they need to be developed in collaboration with all members of the school community (O’Moore, 2010). It is very important that young people especially, as stressed in the Ombudsman for Children’s Report (2012), are consulted as this will give them a greater sense of ownership of their school’s anti-bullying policy. To promote the policy all available forms of communications, both off line and online should be used.
Understandings and Competences
Once a strong policy is in place it must be followed by developing the understandings and competences which will assist all members of the school community to prevent, identify and respond effectively to bullying behaviour.

Young people will need regular awareness raising programmes to help them understand what bullying is, the forms it can take and their damaging effects. Frequently overlooked, for example, and important for an understanding of bullying, its causes and finding the appropriate intervention, is that bullying is made up of three main groups, namely, pure bullies, pure victims and bully-victims (O’Moore, 2010).

In view of Irish children’s digital skills being at the lower end of the European spectrum (O’Neill et al, 2011), curricular time must also be given to developing the digital and technical skills which are necessary for children to become better able to avoid the risks of cyberbullying and indeed grooming.

In addition, young people need to learn the principles of netiquette when communicating and socialising online, notably that they should apply the same standards of behaviour when online as in real life. They also need to understand the risks and benefits of responding to cyber-attacks. To seek social support from friends, peers, family and teachers, and to take a problem-solving approach/assertive response is associated with more effective coping. Ineffective coping, on the other hand, is to take an aggressive stance or one that is passive and avoidant. The legal consequences and risks of prosecution should also be made clear to young people.

It is crucial that every opportunity is taken by adults in care of children to improve the skills of those who are involved in bullying, notably, social skills, empathy, moral reasoning, conflict resolution skills and anger management.

To deliver on effective implementation strategies, schools and youth organisations will need to assess the capacity of their staff to deliver them. If necessary, professional development opportunities must be provided and links with external agencies and professionals must be made.

Young people need to learn the principles of netiquette when communicating and socialising online, notably that they should apply the same standards of behaviour when online as in real life

It is important that parents strike a balance between supervising and monitoring their children’s internet use and promoting trust and self-discipline

Providing information for families has been shown to be a significant factor in reducing the level of bullying among children (Farrington and Ttofi, 2009). Given that cyberbullying occurs more often outside of school or youth centres, developing parent’s understanding of cyberbullying is crucial. It is important that parents strike a balance between supervising and monitoring their children’s internet use and promoting trust and self-discipline, especially as 64% of 9–16 year olds access the internet in their friend’s house (O’Neill et al, 2011) and have secretive social networking accounts unknown to their parents. Parents and carers need to understand the positive and negative uses of the different modes of electronic communication such as websites, blogs, chat rooms and gaming and how they can support their children in responding to and reporting cyberbullying. Comprehensive online courses are now available to support schools in their initiatives to tackle both traditional and cyberbullying (www.vista.org; http://cybertraining4parents.org/ebook/).

Collaborative School-Family Community Relations
Schools must take leadership and include all members of their community in the responsibility to tackle bullying. One form of bullying should not be ignored for the sake of another. All members need to be empowered to report incidents of bullying, to recognise that the problem lies with the aggressor and that the sooner the bullying is addressed the sooner it will stop. They need also be made aware of external agencies and organisations where they can seek information, advice, guidance and counselling if affected by bullying.

Supportive Social Environment
Positive relationships need to be built between staff, students and parents. When families feel connected to their schools, the children are more likely to achieve academic success, to hold positive attitudes towards self and others, to refrain from bullying, not to skip or drop out of school and to have fewer health problems (Bond et al, 2007). Positive interactions can be facilitated by avoiding punitive approaches to indiscipline and bullying and instead apply restorative approaches such as the ‘No Blame Approach’, which promotes empathy in children as well as teaching them to take responsibility for their actions and to make good. There is a poor level of peer intervention among Irish teens when they are witness to
There is a poor level of peer intervention among Irish teens when they are witness to cyberbullying, which requires both staff and parents to encourage them to take a leadership role in discouraging bullying and supporting the victims of bullying.

cyberbullying (O’Moore, 2012), which requires both staff and parents to encourage them to take a leadership role in discouraging bullying and supporting the victims of bullying. Leading by example will reinforce this view.

To conclude, guided by the evidence to date, it is evident that bullying is widespread among children in Ireland and that while traditional bullying is more prevalent, cyberbullying is emerging as a growing problem. In view of the associated health problems, society, schools, teachers, parents and young people will need to work together to prevent and counter bullying. Schools are well placed to help in this process. In building a whole-school/school-wide community approach they can reach out to parents, young people, staff and the wider community to develop understanding and skills, social competence and active citizenship to prevent, identify and respond to the bullying behaviours which are so prevalent in our society to-day.
Acting on this commitment, Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn T.D., and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald T.D., convened an Anti-bullying Forum on the 17th May, 2012, to explore ways to tackle the problem of bullying in schools. On the day of the Forum, Minister Quinn issued a public call for written submissions on how we could more effectively prevent and tackle bullying in schools.

The Minister also established an Anti-Bullying Working Group, which I chaired, and asked us to ‘identify priority actions that can encourage schools to develop anti-bullying policies and in particular strategies to combat homophobic bullying to support students’.

The working group considered 68 submissions and consulted with government departments and agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academics and researchers, colleagues from the UK and individuals who had experience of bullying. The working group also considered national and international literature on the topic including research on approaches and interventions that have been tried over recent decades. The impact of bullying and the very serious consequences for individuals and families was also considered.

In January 2013, Minister Quinn and Minister Fitzgerald launched the Action Plan on Bullying. The Action Plan contains 12 actions and recommendations relating to a further 13 topics.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

As part of its deliberations, the working group considered a number of definitions of bullying and also a range of research and issues related to different forms and types of bullying. The different forms and types of bullying considered by the working group include relational bullying (including deliberate exclusion), identity-based bullying and cyberbullying.
Our key findings and recommendations relate to the need to update the definition of bullying which was provided in the Bullying Guidelines issued to schools by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in 1993. We make suggestions in the Action Plan about what should now be included. We also highlight the need to consider bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand alone issue.

It is clear from available data that many children and young people will encounter bullying and unfortunately for a minority it will have a very negative impact on their young lives.

PREVALENCE OF BULLYING
The working group considered findings from both national and international research, which shows wide variations in the reported prevalence rates of bullying.

Data from the Growing Up in Ireland study (2009) shows that 40% of nine-year-olds reported being victims of bullying in the previous year, and boys and girls experienced similar rates of victimisation.

In 2010, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) reported that 24.3% of children aged 10–17 said they were bullied at school at least once in the past couple of months.

The State of the Nation’s Children: Ireland 2012 report included an international comparison on data from children aged 11, 13 and 15 years. In this study, the average percentage of children who reported being bullied at school at least once in the past couple of months was 29.2%. This ranged from 11.1% in Italy to 54.0% in Lithuania. The corresponding percentage in Ireland was 27.3%.

Overall, it is clear from available data that many children and young people will encounter bullying and unfortunately for a minority it will have a very negative impact on their young lives.

IMPACT OF BULLYING
The working group considered the impact of bullying on those who are bullied, those who bully and those who witness bullying. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of children and young people, on engagement with school, on self confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests. The UK Equality and Human Rights Commission reported that the negative outcomes of bullying were ‘loss of self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression, difficulties with school work, reluctance to attend school, and, in extreme cases, self-harm and suicide’.

Among the key findings of the working group was the need for schools to provide educational experiences that seek to minimise all forms of bullying and, thereby, negate the potential impact of bullying behaviour. We also found that specific prevention initiatives are required to address identity-based bullying and that interventions and supports need to be provided for children and young people directly involved and impacted by bullying.

WHO IS AT RISK OF BULLYING?
While bullying can happen to anyone, the working group found that there are some groups who may be more susceptible to bullying.

Research shows that there are groups who are more vulnerable to bullying including children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs; children from ethnic minority and migrant groups; children and young people from the Traveller community; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) young people and those perceived to be LGBT; and children of minority religious faiths.

WHAT DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT BULLYING?
The findings of the Ombudsman for Children’s report ‘Dealing with Bullying in Schools: A Consultation with Children & Young People’ is referred to in the Action Plan.

The OCO report found that children had particular difficulties in speaking up about bullying. Children voiced concerns about:

- Fear of reprisal by bullies
- Being perceived as ‘a tell-tale’ for reporting bullying
- ‘Getting into trouble’ with the teacher or principal for reporting bullying
- Not feeling fully confident of being believed

Young people identified homophobic bullying as one area of particular concern that needs to be addressed.

WHAT ARE SCHOOLS ALREADY REQUIRED TO DO?
Schools are already subject to a number of international conventions and legal provisions including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Constitutional requirements regarding fair procedures and also duties and
There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all; promote value for diversity; address prejudice and stereotyping; and to highlight that bullying behaviour is unacceptable.

responsible under a number of national laws including under the Equal Status Acts as well as their duties and responsibilities under the common and criminal law.

In addition to the broader national framework, the Education Act 1998 and other education specific legislation sets out duties and responsibilities which are aimed at encouraging and enabling schools to create safe, positive, respectful and inclusive environments for learning.

The working group highlights that every school must have in place an anti-bullying policy, within the framework of the school’s overall school code of behaviour, which includes specific measures to deal with bullying behaviour. This requirement is already on a legal footing as a result of section 23(3) of the Education (Welfare) Act.

There are also a number of relevant national strategies including the Intercultural Education Strategy 2010–2015 and the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy. The Education Act 1998 emphasises that schools should promote the social and personal development of students and provide health education for them.

The working group highlight that there is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all; promote value for diversity; address prejudice and stereotyping; and to highlight that bullying behaviour is unacceptable.

In the Action Plan, a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness are highlighted. These include:

- Stay Safe Programme for primary schools
- Social, Personal and Health Education
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme
- Civic, Social and Political Education

DO WE NEED MORE LEGISLATION?
During the course of the working group’s deliberations, a number of submissions, presenters and public commentators raised the need to have more legislation in Ireland to tackle bullying.

The working group did consider some of the legislative provisions in other jurisdictions and cautioned against some of the approaches taken. In particular, the working group was not satisfied that additional criminal sanctions against children and young people was an appropriate legal approach.

The working group did not recommend the introduction of new legislation at this time and suggested the immediate focus should be on implementing the actions in the Action Plan to support the school system in effectively preventing and tackling bullying in schools.

RESPONSES TO BULLYING IN SCHOOLS
Various anti-bullying programmes have been tried in schools in many countries and evaluations reveal that programmes have had varying levels of success in reducing levels of bullying in schools. Programmes typically include both prevention and intervention features and a range of components and techniques.

Taking into account all of the research reviewed and submissions and presentations received, the working group did not recommend a particular anti-bullying programme, however, we have recommended nine core principles which should underpin a school’s approach to preventing and tackling bullying. These are:

- A positive school culture and climate
- School-wide approach
- Effective leadership
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Anti-bullying policies
- Consistent recording of reported bullying behaviour
- Education and training
- Prevention strategies including awareness raising
- Established evidence-based intervention strategies

These principles are described in more detail in the Action Plan.

The working group also highlight a range of immediate actions that schools can take which will help to prevent and tackle bullying. These include:

- Modelling respectful behaviour
- Consistently tackling the use of discriminatory and derogatory language
- Supporting the establishment and work of Student Councils
- Involving parents and parents associations in awareness raising measures around the use of social media
...activities children and young people engage in outside of school, including sport, youth clubs and the arts can all help to develop important life skills, increase their confidence, self esteem and resilience as well as providing new opportunities to make friends.

**THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM SCHOOLS CAN SOLVE ALONE**

While the working group’s remit related to school based issues, we also emphasised the fact that parents and other adults who interact with children and young people, in formal and informal settings, have a huge role to play in preventing bullying and also in supporting children and young people who are being bullied, have bullied someone else or have witnessed someone being bullied.

In addition, activities children and young people engage in outside of school, including sport, youth clubs and the arts can all help to develop important life skills, increase their confidence, self esteem and resilience as well as providing new opportunities to make friends.

**The Action Plan on Bullying outlines:**

- The role of parents and wider society
- The importance of positive early childhood experiences
- The value added by the youth work sector
- The potential positive impact of participation in sport and physical activity on health and well-being
- The role of social media and telecommunications companies in helping to tackle cyber bullying
- The role of the media in reporting bullying and suicide cases in particular

**TWELVE ACTIONS IN THE ACTION PLAN ON BULLYING**

The working group suggested 12 actions to help prevent and tackle bullying in schools and Minister Quinn has broadly accepted all 12 actions. The Minister has ring-fenced €500,000 to support implementation of the Action Plan in 2013 and work is already underway on implementing the actions.

1. New National Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools to be developed and in place for the start of the 2013/14 school year. Work has commenced on developing new anti-bullying procedures for schools, in consultation with the school management bodies, teacher unions and national parents councils.

2. A review of Teacher Education Support Services to ensure appropriate continuous professional development for teachers is due to be completed in the first half of 2013.

3. SPHE inspections and Whole School Evaluation to be adapted to include more evidence gathering of a school’s actions to create a positive school culture and prevent and tackle bullying. These changes will be made during the 2013/14 school year.

4. The School Self-Evaluation process should support schools in evaluating their own effectiveness in creating a positive school culture and in preventing and tackling bullying. This should be done through the provision of criteria to judge quality within the Leadership and Management and the Support for Students dimensions of School Self-Evaluation (SSE). Work on the development of the criteria for the Leadership and Management dimension of SSE will begin within the Department in 2013. Work on the Support for Students dimension will begin in 2014.

5. A single national anti-bullying website to be developed and go live in 2013 to provide information for parents, young people and school staff on types and methods of bullying and how to deal with bullying behaviour.

6. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) to provide support for Stand Up! Awareness Week Against Homophobic Bullying. Stand Up! was held between 11th – 15th March 2013 and is receiving support from the DES for the first time this year.

7. DES to support a media campaign around cyberbullying specifically targeted at young people. This media campaign was launched as part of Safer Internet Day on 4th February 2013 and further information is available on www.watchyourspace.ie.

8. A coordinated plan for training and awareness initiatives for parents and boards of management to be provided in conjunction with management bodies and parents councils. The plan is due to be agreed by end Q2 2013 with roll out to commence thereafter.

9. Awareness raising measures, including guidelines, for policy makers and DES agencies and services which work in the schools sector will be developed during 2013.
10. A Thematic Evaluation of bullying in a sample of primary and post primary schools will be carried out by the Inspectorate to assess the effectiveness of actions taken by schools. The evaluation framework and instruments will be developed in 2013 to enable school-based work to be conducted in 2014.

11. The National Disability Authority has agreed to carry out research on effective supports for children with disabilities and / or special educational needs. This research work is underway and is due to be completed later this year.

12. The National Office for Suicide Prevention agreed to assist DES with research on the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying on mental health and suicidal behaviour. The research proposal is being finalised and the research work is due to be completed later this year.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
The working group also made 13 recommendations for further consideration and these include:

■ A review of protocols for the sharing of information between state agencies providing services to schools.

■ Consideration be given to amending the Teaching Council’s Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers which set out the mandatory elements to be contained in programmes of Initial Teacher Education and the learning outcomes. The Learning Outcomes in the Guidelines do not currently include specific references to bullying.

■ DES to engage with book publishers who produce materials for schools in relation to stereotyping.

■ The Press Ombudsman to consider adding a reference to the handling of media stories related to bullying and suicide to the text of Principle 9 (Children) in the Code of Practice for Newspapers and Magazines.

■ Consideration be given to developing a national framework to communicate and promote a common vision and policy aims regarding bullying including respect for diversity and inclusiveness to include early childhood through to adulthood.

The Action Plan on Bullying is available to download from the DES website www.education.ie
Webcasts and presentations made at the Anti-Bullying Forum and the written submissions received are also available on the website.

REFERENCES
- Department of Health and National University of Ireland, Galway (2010) Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Ireland Report
- Equality Authority. “School Bullying”. Presentation to DES Working Group, July 2012.
ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN’S OFFICE
Since Emily Logan was appointed Ireland’s first Ombudsman for Children in 2003, the Ombudsman for Children’s Office (OCO) has met and heard from thousands of children, parents and professionals across the country in the context of fulfilling its overall statutory mandate to promote and monitor the rights and welfare of children under eighteen years, without prejudice.

This mandate is provided for in primary legislation, the Ombudsman for Children Act, 2002. Among the Ombudsman for Children’s corresponding statutory functions as set out in the 2002 Act are:

- To receive, examine and investigate complaints about public bodies providing services or making decisions about children and families as well as organisations providing services on behalf of the State.

DEALING WITH BULLYING

Children’s Perspectives

KAREN McAULEY, Participation and Education Officer, Ombudsman for Children’s Office

“We can’t solve bullying unless people speak up. You can put a stop to bullying if we tell a teacher, parent or someone who can help.”

— Child consulted by the OCO
To give advice at Ministerial level on developments in legislation and public policy that relate to children’s rights.

To promote awareness among members of the public, including children, of children’s rights.

To consult with children and highlight matters relating to their rights and welfare that are of concern to children themselves.

In fulfilling these and other statutory functions specified in the 2002 Act, the Ombudsman for Children is fully independent and directly accountable to the Oireachtas.

EXTENSION OF OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN’S REMIT TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS

A pivotal role for the Ombudsman for Children’s Office is to deal with complaints brought by or on behalf of children in relation to the actions, or inactions, of public bodies that may have adversely affected a child or group of children.

Offering an alternative redress mechanism to the courts, the OCO provides an independent, impartial and free complaints-handling service. When dealing with complaints, the OCO is neither an advocate for the child nor an adversary of the public body complained against.

From 30th April this year, and following a comprehensive review of the 2002 Act by the Ombudsman for Children during 2012, the OCO's complaints-handling remit has been extended very significantly to include 180 additional public bodies. Among these bodies are the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the State Examinations Commission (SEC), the Courts Service and the Adoption Authority. In relation to the additional bodies that are now within remit, it is important to point out that the OCO can only deal with complaints relating to actions or inactions that have taken place on or after 30th April 2013.

In light of this extended remit, it is anticipated that the nature of the complaints brought to and dealt with by the OCO will diversify further in due course and that the opportunities for intervention by the OCO to increase accountability, promote transparency and improve the quality of decision-making that directly affects the lives of children will grow.

To date the OCO has dealt with over 7,000 complaints; in 2012 alone we handled 1,465 complaints. On average, over 40% of complaints made to the OCO annually relate to education and bullying is consistently among the five issues raised most frequently in education-related complaints.

The OCO has no role to investigate or substantiate alleged incidents of bullying in schools. However, we have had occasion to consider the manner in which such matters are dealt with in and by schools. In a majority of cases, the OCO encourages Boards of Management to resolve issues arising through schools’ local complaint procedures. Where necessary, we examine the matter further so as to arrive at an understanding of the issues involved and, where appropriate, make recommendations as to how the matter may be resolved in the best interests of the child or children affected.

The majority of complaints dealt with by the OCO are brought by parents on behalf of their children. While it is our experience that parents are the most tenacious advocates for children, it is also important to note that there is a wide network of professionals who are willing to act and advocate on behalf of children, including children who are among the most vulnerable in our society.

BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: AN EVOLVING AND COMPLEX CHALLENGE

Having engaged with hundreds of schools throughout the country, the OCO is aware of the vital place that schools occupy in the lives of children, their families and communities, and we appreciate the different ways in which principals, teachers and other professionals working in schools are involved in promoting and protecting a range of children’s rights on a daily basis. Among the challenges that professionals working in schools can encounter is the complex and evolving problem of bullying among children.

From considering complaints related to bullying, we are aware that a range of issues can impede schools’ ability to handle incidents of bullying. Among these are the fact that, where bullying takes place in school, it can often occur out of sight of school staff and then continue outside school. In some cases, the underlying causes of bullying can concern prejudicial attitudes that may not be openly discussed or challenged. Furthermore, bullying can be symptomatic of factors arising in a child’s life outside of school, including at home, in the community and in the wider society.

Correspondingly, although schools certainly have an important role to play in the prevention of bullying and intervening when incidents of bullying arise, work to combat bullying, and its underlying causes, needs to involve responsibility being taken and shared, as appropriate, by all members of a school...
community, with appropriate assistance from the wider education and health systems and interventions by other sections of society, including those providing valuable support services to and working with children in their local communities.

**OCO CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN ABOUT BULLYING**

In light of concerns about bullying that have been raised with the OCO by children, parents and professionals and in accordance with the OCO’s obligations to consult children and highlight issues of concern to them, we conducted a consultation with over 300 children and young people between 10 and 17 years of age to find out what actions they felt could make a significant contribution to dealing effectively with bullying in schools. The views and ideas shared with us by participating children and young people suggest that, in addition to ensuring that interventions to deal with specific incidents of bullying are timely, appropriate and effective, it will be beneficial to do preventive work focused on raising awareness of bullying among children, tackling discriminatory attitudes that can give rise to bullying, developing children’s appreciation of and respect for diversity, and building their confidence to speak up about bullying.

Although this consultation focused specifically on hearing children’s views on actions that might be taken in and by schools to deal with bullying, several of the main points and suggestions they made may also be of interest and relevance to those working with children in other environments, including professionals providing after school services to children in their local communities.

**HAVING AN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

‘Good ways that children should be able to take part in making a plan is circle time, being open on your own opinion and discussing it with others.’

Participating children shared the view that having an anti-bullying policy is vital. They felt that an inclusive approach should be taken to the development, implementation and review of anti-bullying policies and that children and parents should be supported to actively contribute to these processes. Children and young people also emphasised the importance of communicating anti-bullying policies effectively. They suggested that schools’ anti-bullying policies should include: a statement of the school’s core values; an explicit commitment to dealing with the bullying; definitions of different types of bullying and bullying behaviours; an outline of the measures that will be taken to prevent bullying; and clear information about how incidents of bullying will be dealt with.

...an inclusive approach should be taken to the development, implementation and review of anti-bullying policies and children and parents should be supported to actively contribute to these processes.

**RAISING AWARENESS OF BULLYING**

‘More awareness from a younger age creates a better understanding of the effects of bullying from early on.’

The children and young people consistently spoke about the importance of raising awareness and understanding of bullying, including among children themselves. Understanding the different types of bullying that exist, the types of behaviours that can be understood as bullying, and the reasons why people become involved in bullying were among the areas they identified in this regard. They stressed in particular that children need to be supported to more fully understand and appreciate the hurt and harm (immediate and longer term) that can be caused by bullying, whether it occurs in person or online.

They also made a number of suggestions as to how schools might approach raising awareness of bullying among children, some of which might be adapted for work on this issue with children in other settings. Among their ideas were: children working together on creative projects (for example, preparing a song or a short play, or creating a game or a quiz) that can form part of an anti-bullying day or week; delivering workshops that use participatory/creative methods to develop children’s understanding and empathy around the issue of bullying; displaying posters that inform children about bullying; and inviting in speakers with relevant knowledge and experience to talk with children about the issue.

**NURTURING RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY**

‘It’s ok to be different!’

Recognising that people can become the targets of bullying for many different reasons, the children and young people consulted by the OCO also highlighted the value of education programmes that support children to explore different aspects of identity and develop their appreciation of diversity. They stressed the importance of day-to-day practices that promote and model respect for diversity and pointed to the value of group work as a way of enabling children to learn more about
one another and to develop skills in cooperation and collaboration. Children also suggested that holding special events like a ‘friendship week’ can be an enjoyable way to encourage positive, inclusive relationships among children.

ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO SPEAK UP
‘Why can’t the children say anything about it? The bullies often threaten people they bully. Children need someone they trust … If they tell someone about it, it can be stopped.’

Many of the children and young people consulted by the OCO said that speaking up about bullying can be a difficult thing to do and, moreover, something that children would be reluctant to do. The reasons they gave for this included: fear of reprisal by bullies; concerns about being perceived as a ‘tell-tale’ and, with that, being isolated by their wider peer group; not having evidence to back up an allegation of bullying (for example, a witness or record such as a saved text message); not knowing how a report of bullying will be dealt with; and not feeling fully confident of being believed or that an allegation of bullying will be followed up and dealt with fairly and effectively.

Children and young people suggested that it is important to give children encouraging messages about speaking up as being a positive thing to do and, as such, to displace negative associations of it with ‘telling’ or ‘ratting’. In light of children’s reticence to speak up, they also felt that adults need take pre-emptive steps – for example, checking in regularly with children to see how they are getting on; being alert to potential signs of bullying; encouraging children to talk if they have concerns of any kind; and giving children clear guidance on what to do if they are being bullied or witness bullying.

While children and young people had different views on who children might be more likely to talk to about bullying, there was a general sense that younger children would be more likely to speak with their parents or another trusted adult. Moreover, when asked to characterise the kind of person who children would be willing to speak about bullying to, children in two of the groups consulted by the OCO did not hesitate to find words/ phrases: ‘friendly’, ‘caring’, ‘open-minded’, ‘kind’, ‘patient’, ‘calm’, ‘respectful and respected’ and ‘understanding’ were among the terms used.

USING RESTORATIVE MEASURES
‘Confront the bully … and find out why they bully and support them so that they stop bullying.’

A further interesting message to emerge from the consultation was the broadly shared view among children and young people that incidents of bullying could be most appropriately dealt with through restorative measures such as mediation. They felt that children directly affected by bullying and their parents/carers should be included in efforts to resolve the matter and that, whenever possible, victims and perpetrators of bullying should be supported to resolve their differences.

HIGHLIGHTING CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVES
Published in November 2012, the OCO’s report on this consultation with children and young people – Dealing with Bullying in Schools – was disseminated to schools across the country, as a resource to support their ongoing work to deal with bullying. It was also submitted to the Working Group established by the Minister for Education and Skills to examine how different forms of bullying can best be tackled in schools. The OCO notes the consideration given by the Working Group to its report and the incorporation of viewpoints shared by children with the OCO into the Action Plan on Bullying that was launched at the end of January 2013 by the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

To find out more about the OCO’s work, including its extended remit to deal with complaints, see www.oco.ie. The OCO’s report ‘Dealing with Bullying in Schools’ can be downloaded from the website.

Printed copies of the report are also available and can be requested by contacting the OCO directly at oco@oco.ie or on 01-8656800.
This article builds on the data collected in Ireland by the cross-national EU Kids Online II project — a large 25 country survey which investigated children’s experiences of the internet, focusing on issues of use, activities, risks, and safety. The article explores incidences, forms and consequences of cyberbullying among Irish children, as well as discussing possible prevention and intervention strategies.

Bullying is an age-old social problem, beginning in the schoolyard and often progressing to the boardroom (McCarthy, Rylance, Bennett, & Zimmermann, 2001). It may be defined as the abusive treatment of a person by means of force or coercion. It is aggressive behaviour that is repeated over time, is intentionally harmful and occurs without provocation. Research shows that traditional bullying differs from cyberbullying in many ways, despite the fact that cyberbullying research and theorising is largely guided by findings in the traditional bullying literature (Campbell, 2005) (Tokunaga, 2010).

The term ‘cyberbullying’ is used widely nowadays not only in academic research but also more widely in the media and in public discourse. Cyberbullying is most often defined as the use of electronic information and communication devices such as e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, mobile

1 Details of the questionnaire and project methodology are available on www.eukidsonline.net
phones, pagers and defamatory websites to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person’ (Slonje and Smith, 2008).

In general, cyberbullying can be easy to recognise, but some aspects can be less obvious. Englebard and Muldowney (2007) describe cyberbullying as an opportunistic offence, since it results in harm without physical interaction, requires little planning, and reduces the threat of being caught.

In spite of the fact that relatively few children are affected, cyberbullying ranks highest among parental concerns (Eurobarometer, 2008). This translates into high levels of restrictive mediation with a consequent high toll on children’s access to online opportunities (O’Neill, Dinh, 2012). Overall, levels of restrictive mediation of children’s internet use in Ireland are high (93%) compared to the European average of 85%. In Ireland, nearly one in four (23%) of 9–16 year olds experienced some form of bullying, online or offline. Bullying online or by mobile is less common (4%) than face to face. Levels of bullying in Ireland are a little above the European average (23% vs. 19%) but lower for cyberbullying (4% vs. 6%) (O’Neill, Grehan, Olafsson, 2011). Across Europe, 6% of 9–16 year olds who use the internet report having been bullied online while only half as many (3%) confess to having bullied others. Since 19% have been bullied either online and/or offline, and 12% have bullied someone else either online and/or offline, it seems that more bullying occurs offline than online (Hasebrink, Görzig, Haddon, Kalmus, Livingstone, 2011).

Children reported highest incidences of having been bullied in Estonia (44%) and Romania (42%) while incidences are lowest in Southern European countries (Portugal, Italy, Greece). Broadly, bullying online is more common in countries where bullying in general is more common. This suggests online bullying to be a new form of a long-established problem in childhood rather than, simply, the consequence of a new technology (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig & Olafsson, 2011).

**WHO IS BULLIED?**

In the EU Kids Online survey, children were asked if someone had acted in a ‘hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months’ either in person or via mobile phone or text, or on the internet, for example, via email or social networking sites (Livingstone, Kirwil, Ponte & Staksrud, 2013).

**Figure 1: Child has been bullied online or offline in past 12 months**
Nearly one in four (23%) 9–16 year olds in Ireland say that someone has acted in this way towards them, online or offline, in the past 12 months. Slightly more boys than girls claim to have been bullied (25% vs. 21%). This is a regular occurrence for 12% of the sample: 7% say someone acts towards them in a hurtful or nasty way more than once a week and for 5% it is once or twice a month. For 11% it is less often, suggesting one or a few instances have occurred in the past year.

Younger children, 9–10 years of age, claim to be bullied the most (28%), well above the European average of 17%. There are only slight demographic differences in that slightly more children from low and medium SES (socioeconomic status) homes report more frequent forms of bullying.

Does cyberbullying correlate with higher levels of internet use?

To further our analysis in patterns of online use among Irish children based on levels of use and the range of online activities, six clusters or types were identified, ranging from ‘low use/low risk’ to more intensive forms of online activity. Table 1 analyses reports of being bullied within each of these clusters.

The six clusters reveal some interesting patterns in relation to experiences of being bullied.

1. **‘Low use, low risk’**: most children fit into this category of low online use/risk and a small range of activities. Not surprisingly, it has the lowest prevalence of being bullied at all or face to face (19% and 13% respectively) though it does have the second highest proportion of repeated bullying of more than once per week.

2. **‘Low-use, gaming/or entertainment-oriented’**: has a similar profile to cluster 1 with one in 5 having been bullied at all. This group has somewhat higher levels of online bullying (4% compared to just 1% in cluster 1).

3. **‘Learning-oriented’**: 1 in 4 of this group has been bullied and a higher proportion of this takes place online (9%).

4. **‘Moderate-use, entertainment and communication’**: comprising a quarter of internet users, 1 in 4 of this group has also been bullied and 10% have been bullied either by mobile phone or online.

5. **‘High-use, social networking oriented’**: this higher use cluster also has higher levels of being bullied at all (28%) with roughly similar amounts offline and online.

6. **‘Focused social web use’**: this cluster has the highest level of children who have been bullied on the internet (14%) and both online and offline (39%). It also accounts for the highest percentage of children who have been bullied face to face (31%). This cluster is older in profile and consists of slightly more boy than girls.

Looking at the prevalence of children who have been bullied both online and offline by cluster, there is a general tendency for face to face forms of bullying and cyberbullying to go hand in hand. It is important to note that the survey assessed children’s responses at one point in time only and we cannot conclude that the child who is bullied offline is more likely to become a victim online or vice versa.

The frequency of being bullied at all among clusters is also interesting. While cluster 6 has the highest percentage of children have been bullied more than once a week (10%), cluster 1 – with the lowest level of internet use – has the second highest level of being bullied repeatedly (more than once a week: 7%).

Table 1: Child has been bullied online or offline in past 12 months by clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CL1</th>
<th>CL2</th>
<th>CL3</th>
<th>CL4</th>
<th>CL5</th>
<th>CL6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In person face to face</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the internet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By mobile phone calls, texts or image/video texts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has been bullied at all online or offline</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less often</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QC112: Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months? QC113: How often has someone acted in this kind [hurtful and nasty] way towards you in the past 12 months? QC114: At any time during the last 12 months, has this happened [that you have been treated in a hurtful or nasty way]? QC115: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet. (Multiple responses allowed)

Base: All children who use the internet
WHO BULLIES?
Since bullying is an activity that occurs largely among peers, children may not only be bullied but they may also bully others, either on the internet or in other ways.
- 14% of all children say that they have bullied others or had acted in a hurtful or nasty way in the past 12 months compared to the 23% of children who have been bullied in the past year.
- Bullying others is more common among 15–16 year olds (24%) and among boys (19%). There are few differences by SES in reports of bullying others. Again, most bullying takes place in the offline world and notably rises with age. Those that had bullied others online were almost exclusively older teenagers.

Does being bullied make some children retaliate by bullying others?
Figure 2 examines the Irish data and asks whether children have been bullied online for three separate groups: those have not bullied others at all; those that have bullied others offline only; and those that have bullied others online.

Figure 2: Which children are bullied online?

The most striking pattern to emerge shows that of children who have bullied others online, 44% have themselves been bullied online. This suggests that online bullying, in many cases, is a reciprocal process in which children both bully and are bullied by others.
- It appears that children from higher SES backgrounds, older teenager and slightly more girls are more likely to be both bullies and to have been bullied themselves online.
- By contrast, of children who have not bullied others, just 3% have been bullied online. Among those who have bullied others offline only, only 1% have themselves been bullied online (a much lower rate compared to the European findings, at 10%).

WHAT FORM DOES CYBERBULLYING TAKE?
The most common form of bullying is in person, face to face: in fact, offline bullying is four times more common than online or bullying by mobile phone or text. Fifteen per cent say that someone has acted in a hurtful or nasty way towards them in person, face to face, compared with 4% who say that this happened on the internet or by mobile phone calls or messages.

The reason for looking at the different forms cyberbullying may take is to identify whether particular applications such as chatrooms or social networking sites provide contexts in which bullying behaviour can occur.

- The majority of bullying takes place face to face with just 4% online. Younger children are more likely to have been bullied face to face while cyberbullying is much more a phenomenon for teenage years.
- Most cyberbullying takes place by mobile phone or text (10%), followed by some form of online bullying (9%), mostly related to use of social networking sites (6%).
- However, email, gaming websites and chatrooms do not appear as significant threats for online bullying.

Gender is also a factor in the different forms that bullying takes. There are more boys than girls reported being bullied face to face, especially in the younger age group. By contrast, more girls than boys report being bullied online or by mobile phone or text, especially in the teenage group.

THE IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING
Thus, one of the key findings was that cyberbullying did not happen as frequently as media stories would have us believe. Nevertheless, a further important finding was that a small proportion of children had indeed experience negative impacts of cyberbullying.
Figure 3 presents findings for those that been bullied online, how upsetting this experience was, if at all, the last time this occurred.

- The impact of online bullying is striking. Even the overall incidence is low, but its impact is felt as upsetting by nearly three quarters of children bullied. Over half (52%) say they were either very upset or fairly upset by the experience.
- Among 15–16 year olds, 34% were very upset and a further 22% fairly upset underlining the severity of the impact. Girls (32%) are more likely than boys (19%) to say they were very upset after being bullied online.
- The duration of impact after being bullied online also varies, the study shows that over half of children ‘got over it straight away’ (56%), indicating that online bullying was not something that had a lasting impact. However, for the remaining 44%, cyberbullying is something that has a more enduring effect. Almost 14% were more deeply affected for a couple of months or more. This is a very high level of impact compared to the equivalent European finding (2%). The data shows longer lasting effects for the youngest group, girls and low SES groups.

Figure 3: How upset the child felt after being bullied online (only children who have been bullied online in past 12 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Very Upset</th>
<th>A bit Upset</th>
<th>Fairly Upset</th>
<th>Not at all Upset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls 9–10 yrs</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 9–10 yrs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 11–12 yrs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 11–12 yrs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 13–14 yrs</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 13–14 yrs</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 15–16 yrs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 15–16 yrs</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low SES</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium SES</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High SES</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Children</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QC118: Thinking about the last time you were [sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet], how upset were you about what happened (if at all)?
Base: All children aged 11–16 who have been bullied on the internet in the past 12 months.

COPING STRATEGIES

Building resilience and enabling young people to cope with online problems that may bother or upset them is an important objective of internet safety education. In addition to asking about the risks they encountered, EU Kids Online also examined three types of coping strategies young people adopted in response to online threats.

- In relation to being bullied (online or offline), most (28%) tried a proactive solution by trying to fix the problem themselves. A further quarter of those that had been bullied (23%) adopted a more fatalistic response and hoped the problem would go away by itself. However, 19% felt guilty about what went wrong, adding to their sense of victimisation and vulnerability and 27% did not do any of these things.
- The second type of coping strategy asked about was in relation to seeking some form of social support. Most do
in fact talk to somebody about having been bullied online (71%) and in nearly half of cases (42%) this is a friend, followed by one of their parents (36%). Notably, very few (just 6%) speak to a teacher about what had happened. Given the importance of schools in reinforcing positive messages about internet safety and in promoting effective strategies to deal with bullying, this low finding is of concern.

- The third type of coping strategy is the use of any technical solutions, in which the most common responses for young people to employ were ‘blocking the person’ who sent the hurtful message (48%) and deleting messages from those who had sent them (40%). Nearly a quarter (23%) stopped using the internet at all for a while, which, though it helps to remove the source of upset, also means losing out on online opportunities. Given that most online bullying takes place on social networking sites this would appear to be an appropriate step to take. However, only one third of those who did change filter or contact settings found it helpful. Few (just 15%) reported the problem using an online reporting tool or contacted an online advisor whose job it is to deal with such problems.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Public debate often omits that most children have positive experiences with new digital skills and that many digital skills developed online can turn into a great benefit for children in real life. Furthermore, a certain exposure to risks is needed for building resilience and effective coping strategies (Livingstone, Ólafsson, O’Neill and Donoso, 2012). EU Kids Online has found that while cyberbullying is not the most prevalent risk that young people encounter online, it is the one that has the most severe impact. Findings show that it particularly affects teenagers, is closely associated with more intensive internet use and happens mostly on social networking sites.

Alongside the extensive recommendations made by the Anti-Bullying Working Group reporting to the Minister for Education and Skills (2013), the following are some specific recommendations arising from the findings of this study.

- **Improving communication between parents and children should be a priority given the high gaps in awareness.** Awareness-raising efforts should focus on encouraging dialogue between parents/carers and children about cyberbullying and how to deal with it.
- **Awareness of the opportunities for peer mediation support and positive interventions should therefore be developed given that it is to friends that young people will first turn.**
- **Given that so few turn to teachers in seeking support in cases of cyberbullying, updated school policies, continuing professional development for teachers and new resources to support the implementation of the personal safety aspects of the Social Personal Health Education curriculum are needed.**
- **Service providers need to develop and make available more effective reporting mechanisms.** Very few young people use an online facility to report abuse. Blocking mechanisms are used and prove helpful when available but this only partially deals with the problem.
- **Social networking sites, where the majority of cyberbullying Young people do try to use filters and contact settings to manage their online communication but less than a third find this helpful.**

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**REFERENCES**

- Eurobarometer, 2008 Toward a safer use of the Internet for children in the EU. European Commission
INTRODUCTION

Bullying among children can happen at home among siblings or friends, and after school at the local playground. Bullying can also happen online through social media, for example via mobile phone. This is known as cyberbullying. Quite often, bullying occurs in situations where there is little or no adult supervision. While squabbles, teasing and changing friendships are a normal part of childhood, if they occur on a regular basis they may become stressful experiences affecting social and psychological development or causing physical harm.

Bullying may also occur between an adult or adolescent and a child. This may involve excluding the child from an activity or forcing the child to participate in a task against his or her will. It may involve emotional bullying such as humiliating the child in front of others.

In all cases of bullying, parental help and support is a must, for both the child being bullied and the child who bullies.
WHY DO CHILDREN BULLY?
The reasons behind bullying can be complex. Children can bully due to a number of factors:

- Watching aggressive TV programmes or playing violent video games.
- Feelings of insecurity, low esteem or feeling unloved.
- Being used to having their own way at home.
- Changes or disruptions at home such as parental separation, a new sibling or the death of a loved one.
- Acting out of frustration, having poor communication skills or impulse control.
- Feeling like they are not getting enough attention due to family circumstances, for example, living with a sibling with special needs.
- Wanting to show off among peers and feel like the leader in a group.
- Poor understanding of the feelings of others or an inability to see things from another’s perspective.
- Having little understanding of the consequences of their actions.
- Experiencing inappropriate or aggressive family discipline.
- For some children, bullying is about having a sense of control or power. It may be that other aspects of their lives feel out of control and the bullying is a way of controlling a situation or feeling a sense of power.
- The child who bullies may be bullied themselves.

The child who bullies may be unaware of why they bully and that what they are doing is wrong.

WHY CHILDREN ARE BULLIED
Parents should be aware that any child can be bullied. Some children are bullied because they look like they can’t stand up for themselves or perhaps one thing sets the child apart such as wearing the ‘wrong’ shoes or speaking with a different accent. Children can be bullied about their families, for example, if they live in foster care or have an over-protective parent. In some circumstances a child can innocently provoke bullying, for example, the child showing pride in school achievements may be targeted by the child who is not doing so well in school. Or children may be bullied or taunted about their race, religion, gender, physical attributes or mental abilities.

Often, however, a child may be bullied for no particular reason... simply because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Children who bully may well invent a reason for their bullying behaviour in an attempt to justify their actions.

THE WAYS CHILDREN BULLY AND THE EFFECTS IT CAN HAVE
Girls and boys can bully in different ways. Boys may use physical strength while girls may exclude another from a group. In all cases though, the intimidating behaviour experienced can be stressful and hurtful. Bullying behaviour can include the following:

- Name calling, taunting or belittling.
- Excluding a child from a group or activity.
- Physically targeting, from poking and hair pulling to physical attack.
- Making fun of appearance or clothing.
- Taunting a child for succeeding in class or for falling behind.
- Making up stories to get a child in trouble.
- Forcing or daring a child to do something that they don’t want to do.
- Damaging, taking or hiding belongings.
- Indulging in rough and tumble play which another child is not enjoying.
- Blackmailing or threatening behaviour.
- Writing notes or sending text messages to or about a child.
- Sending or posting harmful or cruel texts or images using the internet or other digital communication devices on Facebook, Twitter etc.
- Harassing a child when they are vulnerable such as in a changing room or alone at a bus stop.
- Making non-verbal intimidating gestures, for example, signalling slitting throat.
- Making hurtful comments about family members, where they live or the family car.

Some children with low confidence may tag along with a child who bullies in an effort to boost their own self esteem. They may be aware that the bullying is wrong but not be strong enough to step away or speak up.

Bullying can affect children in many ways. The child being bullied can experience a range of emotions. They can be angry, fearful, powerless, isolated or anxious. Without opportunities to talk, children may become withdrawn or angry. Feelings of anger may in turn lead to the child adopting bullying behaviour themselves. Victims may mistakenly feel it is their own fault and develop low self esteem and poor self confidence.

Everyday childhood experiences can be hindered by stress, anxiety and fear. Schoolwork may deteriorate due to difficulty concentrating or feeling physically ill. This may show itself through stomach aches or difficulty sleeping. Instead of
developing social skills, children who are being bullied may spend their time developing survival strategies such as avoiding situations in school, pretending to be feeling ill (or actually feeling ill due to stress) or dropping out of after-school activities.

It is essential that parents and their child spend one to one time together. A parent may be the only person a child trusts enough to talk about what they have been doing and why.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO LOOK OUT FOR AND WHAT THEY CAN DO

Many children are good at hiding their feelings, particularly if they are afraid to talk. If a parent suspects that their child is being bullied, they should watch out for the following tell-tale signs.

Unexplained bruising or physical injury.
A change in behaviour, the child becoming moody or appearing withdrawn, anxious, aggressive or clingy.
Loss of confidence and low self esteem.
Sudden disinterest in attending groups such as soccer club or girl guides.
Falling out with previous good friends.
Bed-wetting, nightmares or inability to sleep.
Falling behind in school work, sudden anger at teachers, refusing to go to school.
Regularly asking about school holidays and becoming overly upset when it is time to go back to school.
Loss of or damage to personal items and constant requests for pocket money or new school items.
Complaining of stomach ache, headache or other physical ailments.
Displaying aggression through imaginative play/role play, for example with dolls or puppets.
Loss of appetite.
Drawing pictures which express anger or hurt.
Coming home from group activities earlier or later than usual.

Has the parent noticed that the child is hungrier than usual after particular activities or after school? Maybe they are being bullied into giving away their lunch or snack. Parents should be alert and observant and keep an eye out for a pattern – does a 12 year old refuse to go to the shop next door? Does the topic of a book or TV programme trigger emotion?

Parents may be concerned about changes in behaviour, but the child may be unwilling to talk. This could be due to threats made during bullying. Parents can try some of the following:

Spending quality time alone together doing things that the child likes to do. They may be more likely to talk when there are no distractions like a younger sibling.

Asking about school but not expecting answers straight away. Choosing a time when both parent and child are relaxed and free to talk such as when homework is done or when driving in the car is ideal.

Instead of general questions like ‘How was your day?’ asking open-ended questions that focus on specific parts of the day supports a child in communicating with their parent.

Commenting that the child sometimes ‘looks worried’ or ‘thoughtful’, but avoid adding pressure. Too many questions may have the opposite effect and prevent a child from opening up.

If a family has been through changes, talking about feelings, ‘Sometimes I miss our old house’ or ‘When we all lived together…’ etc. By parents sharing their own feelings, a child may feel like opening up. It is important, however, to always talk at an emotional level that the child is able to manage.

Remaining calm. Displaying anger or upset may distress the child further. Parents should listen and be supportive.

Taking what the child says seriously and giving praise for the courage shown in talking about the problem.

Reassuring the child that it’s not their fault. Calmly explaining that what is happening is wrong and needs to stop.

Parents should not promise to keep the bullying a secret. They should openly discuss with the child what they plan to do next. The child may panic now that things are out in the open and fear that the situation may get worse. They will need regular reassurance that the situation needs to be dealt with.

If the bullying occurs in school, contacting the child’s teacher as soon as possible.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS

Help to build the child’s confidence. Ask what they could say when bullied and (if appropriate) have the child practise this.

Parents and children can come up with some clever responses together; being funny could put the other child off. This could be practised through role play or using a mirror. Make sure the child is not hurtful to others. Tell the child not to fight back as they could get hurt or be blamed for the fighting.

Have the child practise appearing calm. Explain that by not reacting, the child who bullies may get bored.

Encourage the child to stay in a group and avoid situations where they may be alone and targeted.

Encourage the child to talk about their feelings, write about it or draw a picture. Explain that it is important not to bottle things up.

Educate the child about bullying, placing the responsibility for the behaviour on the person who is bullying. This helps the child to not take it personally. Regularly reassure that no one deserves to be bullied.
Help to equip the child with the tools needed in resolving conflict. Encourage them to express feelings and ideas confidently and to listen to and negotiate with others in problem solving. Parents can role model how to resolve conflict appropriately — the child will observe how the parents solve problems and negotiate.

If bullying has been going on long term or has been very stressful for the child, extra family support may be needed. The child may need a more therapeutic intervention such as play therapy or one-to-one work. Peer groups such as after-school clubs, friendship groups and activity clubs may be an additional support.

Listen to the child. The younger child may need your support in recognising or naming their feelings, for example, ‘Are you feeling unhappy, upset, hurt about what has been happening?’

Spend quality time together and give the child undivided attention.

By engaging in physical activities the child will develop physical coordination and become less physically tense. This will result in increased self confidence and improved peer relationships.

Maybe the child needs to work on social skills or how they relate to other children. (This can be challenging for a child with specific learning needs.) Ask the school or other professionals for support or advice.

Nurturing self esteem is a key factor in dealing with and overcoming bullying. Identify and encourage the child’s positive attributes. In turn, this will build self confidence.

Encourage the child to make new friends. A fresh start in a new setting will be a positive experience so look into other activities the child could attend such as a drama class or a local youth group.

The most important thing parents can do is to be there to listen to and support the child.

If parents are unaware of the bullying, the chances are that the child’s school is too. Parents should explain the situation calmly and clearly, giving as much information as possible including times, dates, nature of bullying etc. and ask for the teacher’s suggestions as to the best solution to the problem. The school will have to take into account the child who bullies, other students, the school policy and management issues as well as the child so solving the problem may be a slow process.

CHILDREN WHO BULLY

While some children who bully are unaware of their actions and the effects they have, others may be aware of the effects of their behaviour but feel trapped or caught up in this behaviour. These children may be labelled as ‘the bully’ in social settings and find it difficult to step out of this role. Children can be confused about their actions and feelings and may not have the emotional skills or adult support needed to change.

Children who bully consistently over long periods are more likely to engage in anti-social behaviour through the school years and beyond. They may have difficulty developing healthy relationships as aggressive behaviour may stunt their social skills. Bullying may become a long-term way of life in personal, social and work relationships.

Despite their personal situation or reasons for bullying, children should be made aware that bullying is an unacceptable behaviour which is always wrong and harmful. Family support and help from school may be all that is needed to put an end to bullying.

Parents may be shocked if they discover that their child has been bullying another child. They should expect that the child could deny it at first, blame someone else or try to make light of the situation, claiming ‘I’m only teasing’. Parents may need to explain the differences between teasing and taunting to the child.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS

Never ignore the situation. It won’t go away by itself and may get worse. Take what the school says seriously. The child needs their parents’ help and the help of the school to change their behaviour.

Try to get to the root of the problem by talking with the child. Explain that you want to help. Spend one to one time together discussing the problem.

Ask the child if they understand the harm being caused and what the consequences may be for everyone involved.

Ask the older child if they can think of ways to stop what is happening. Praise the child when they play cooperatively.

Explain to the younger child what bullying is, give examples. Talk about its effects on others.

Avoid using terms like ‘a bully’ or ‘the bully’. It is important not to ‘shame’ the child by labelling in this way as it may result in withdrawal or telling lies to hide what has been happening. Instead, refer to the specific actions like name calling or hurting others. This will help the child see that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child themselves.

Parents should think about their own home. Is there often conflict? Does the child always get their own way? Does the child understand that there may be consequences to actions? Have there been recent changes? What does the child watch on TV?
Parents are the child’s most important teacher. Be a model of appropriate behaviour for the child by displaying respect for others, open communication and appropriately managing your own anger.

Direct the child’s behaviour into positive pursuits such as sports or other group activities, for example joining a youth group. This will offer the child a fresh start and opportunities to channel leadership skills in a positive manner. In turn, it will build the child’s self esteem and foster a sense of pride in activities.

Encourage the child to take on responsibility or ‘caring activities’ such as looking after a pet or doing household jobs. Such activities encourage independence, develop self esteem and will help the child to think about the needs of others. Positive experiences instilled at home will carry over into the child’s wider social settings.

Find out if there are others involved. Explain that they should never join in when someone else is being bullied and should help by always reporting incidents of bullying.

Ask the school to keep you informed of further complaints, if any.

Quite often, the child with behaviour problems is the child with unmet needs. Parents should spend quality time listening to and talking with the child, learning about what’s important for them, what has been happening in their life and developing communication. If parents have a busy schedule or more than one child, they could develop a routine whereby each child gets to spend quality time alone with a parent regularly throughout each week. For example, the older child has one to one time when a younger sibling has gone to bed.

Encourage the child by giving positive attention and feedback when they behave appropriately. This can help change the child’s behaviour and build self esteem. Be specific when praising the child’s behaviour, for example, ‘You worked really hard at sharing with your little brother and played nicely today. You should feel good about yourself.’

CONCLUSION

With adult help and support, the child who has been bullying can learn about the effects of bullying on others. Parents, carers and teachers can support the child in changing their behaviour and learning to communicate effectively with others.

Children who are bullied or have been bullying will have difficulty overcoming the problem alone and will need parental assurance and encouragement in tackling it. For your child the most important message is that you are there to listen and to help.

There is further advice about bullying and support for parents on other topics on the Barnardos website www.barnardos.ie
As a frontline organisation which is currently dealing with an average of five serious incidents of racism a week, the Immigrant Council of Ireland is committed to ensuring all young people can learn, work and play in a safe and secure environment. Incidents include racial slurs being used at school, mostly out of sight of teachers, as well as young migrants being subjected to abuse both verbal and physical on public transport. Often attacks involve families with young children. In a recent extreme case, the Immigrant Council has supported a family from Eastern Europe subjected to four years of constant intimidation by youths, culminating in a break-in and their home being vandalised with swastikas and slogans while they were on a day-trip.

For the past 12 years we have been actively engaged with a range of partners to ensure that children and teenagers are growing up in a society where there is no acceptable level of racism. Through our integration work we have formed strong partnerships with young people, educators and policy makers which has resulted in exciting projects to engage children and teenagers.

2013 has seen two flagship projects become reality in our classrooms.

THINK AND ACT
Together with our partners Educate Together and Pivotal Arts we have developed an online teaching resource www.thinkandact.ie. It can be accessed by every school in the country with specially generated video, online and text content used to explain a range of issues including the importance of sport and of equality, as well as the history of regions where many of our migrants come from.

As the young students advance through the Think and Act course, classes can learn about more complex issues such as family reunification, undocumented migrants and religious diversity. Through achieving a greater understanding of these issues we believe
that our children are learning lessons about what is right and wrong that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Educate Together has already been using the programme successfully in its schools, however we would like to see it used by teachers across the country and would invite them to check out the website.

**AMBASSADORS FOR CHANGE**

The Immigrant Council of Ireland has always believed that teenagers have an important role to play in promoting inclusion and integration. We are particularly proud that our Ambassadors for Change programme is now becoming a reality. This group of successful young migrants has been trained to act as mentors in a school environment.

By engaging with young people from all backgrounds our ambassadors will show that Ireland has much to gain from being an inclusive society and everything to lose by shutting out those who want to contribute. The mentors have already worked with student teachers and in the coming weeks will start work with young students in the Dublin area.

The success of both of these programmes has been in their ability to reach into the classroom, engage with students and bring about a real change in attitudes. The views being formed in our classrooms have a reach which goes way beyond the school wall. Young people are always the drivers of change and the work undertaken in schools will spread to the wider community as young people tell their experiences at home and help change the attitudes of others.

The work being undertaken is important not just for the future but should also be viewed in the wider context, where many witnesses and victims of racist incidents do not come forward to report their experiences to the Gardaí.

Our research has shown that people of all ages are reluctant to report incidents because of the belief they will not be taken seriously or that they will be perceived as troublemakers and this could damage their ability to stay in Ireland as well as the general fear some migrants have as a result of police corruption in their country of birth. This reluctance has led to an under-reporting of racism and a general air of complacency.

Since the Immigrant Council joined public transport companies to mount a high-profile awareness campaign in March, the incidents of racism reported to us has increased dramatically. Children have either witnessed or being subjected to racism in many of the incidents, often watching on as their parents are subjected to abuse in public or in extreme cases as their homes are subjected to break-ins and vandalism. As a society we should not and can not tolerate this. We owe it to future generations to continue our work not just in the classroom but in the wider community too and ensure Ireland is a country which offers equality, fairness and justice to all.

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**Immigrant Council of Ireland**

01 674 0202 (admin)

01 6740200 (Information and Referral Service)

Email: admin@immigrantcouncil.ie

www.immigrantcouncil.ie

The Immigrant Council of Ireland’s (ICI) Information and Support Service provides detailed information about complex issues within the Irish immigration system.
2003 marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of BeLonG To Youth Services, the national Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) organisation. In these ten years, the visibility and awareness of LGBT young people has increased hugely. While there are still considerable issues to overcome, the progress made has been undeniable.

From the earliest days of the service commencing, with just one staff member and a weekly drop-in facility, it quickly became apparent that many of the young people attending our service had experienced significant isolation, with many also disclosing experiences of bullying based on their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

Homophobic and Trans-phobic bullying seemed to be all too widespread, based on the anecdotal evidence supplied by these young people. BeLonG To quickly realised that while the safe spaces offered to young people through the service were vital to encourage peer support and to build resilience, there was also work to be done in tackling the societal barriers experienced by young LGBT people.
Research was an important step, and BeLonG To has commissioned, produced and partnered with other organisations to published credible research into the lives and experiences of this previously underserved population. Confirming the previous anecdotal evidence, this research has showed an alarming prevalence of homophobic bullying, particularly in school settings. For example, Supporting LGBT Lives found 58% of LGBT people reported homophobic bullying in their schools, and over 50% had been called abusive names by fellow students. Furthermore, 20% of the sample revealed that they had missed or skipped school because they felt threatened. Importantly, the research has also established a link between experiences of homophobic bullying and mental health, illustrating an increased vulnerability to mental health problems for those who had been on the receiving end of such behaviours. Alarmingly, over a third of those aged under 25 had thought about taking their own lives within the previous year.

So, what can be done to tackle this serious issue? At BeLonG To we believe that everyone has a role to play around the eradication of homophobic bullying. First and foremost, our groups offer a vital safe space for young people to support and encourage each other around the issues facing them. Our Advocacy and campaign work complement this, aiming to affect wider societal change around the visibility and inclusion of LGBT young people.

Our best known work in this area is the ‘Stand-Up – Show your support for your LGBT friends’ campaign. An annual event now in its fourth year, Stand-Up encourages youth services and schools to get involved by showing a commitment to their LGBT friends, encouraging young people to act as allies to the LGBT youth population. Our resource pack is disseminated each year, with tips and suggestions on how to make schools and services more inclusive of LGBT young people, with over 700 schools taking part in the week-long campaign earlier this year. Stand-Up has attracted national and international attention – our accompanying short film produced to coincide with the 2011 campaign has now been viewed over one million times on YouTube, and the work has been endorsed by UNESCO and Colin Farrell, to name just two high-profile supporters of this important work.

In order to attempt to tackle some of the issues affecting LGBT young people, we’ve also promoted the inclusion of LGBT young people in education in other ways too, which complement the Stand-Up campaign. Training for teachers and those who may be working with LGBT youth is an ongoing part of our work, and our experience of working in partnership with LGBT young people means we have built an extensive knowledge of issues affecting this population, and developed an expertise regarding the appropriate ways to support a young person coming to terms with their sexual orientation or gender identity. Over the years, we’ve trained SPHE (Social Personal Health Education) teachers, but more recently were delighted to be involved in developing a whole new part to the SPHE curriculum, especially focused on growing up LGBT.

Another hugely significant advance in relation to the eradication of homophobic bullying came last year, when the Minister for Education announced the launch of an action plan on bullying, with a strong emphasis on homophobic bullying. BeLonG To is delighted to be involved in this initiative, a further sign of the growing awareness that exists around this issue and of the commitment to address it head on. Together, these projects all contribute to building an Ireland which reflects and embraces diversity, and where LGBT young people are respected and cared for equally.

For more information on LGBT youth groups around the country, the Stand-Up campaign, and other BeLonG To initiatives, please see www.belongto.org
Useful Resources on Bullying

The following resources are available to borrow from Barnardos Library. You can search the library catalogue on www.barnardos.ie/library

**Addressing Homophobia. Guidelines for the Youth Work Sector in Ireland**
BeLonG Youth Services, 2011

**Beat Bullying**
Pavilion Publishing, 2003

**Bullying: a Parent’s Guide**
Need2Know, 2011

**But is it Bullying?: Teaching Positive Relationships to Young Children**
Lucky Duck Publishing, 2004

**Citizens Against Bullying: Blowing the Whistle on Bullying. A Six Lesson Citizenship Programme for 8 to 11 year olds.**
Lucky Duck Publishing, 2004

**Cyber-Bullying: the Irish Experience**
Novinka/Nova Science Publisher’s, Inc., 2011

**Cyberbullying and E-Safety**
Jessica Kingsley, 2012

**Let’s Beat Bullying: An Anti-Bullying Resource for Those Working with Young People in Youth Work Settings**
National Youth Council of Ireland, 2006

**The Resolving Bullying Book**
Veritas Publications, 2010

**Understanding School Bullying: a Guide for Parents and Teachers**
Veritas Publications, 2010

**CHILDREN’S BOOKS**

**A Bully Picked on Me**
Pangolin Books, 2005

**Don’t be a bully, Billy: A cautionary tale**
Usborne Publishing Ltd., 2004

**Is it Because?**
Andersen Press Ltd, 2004

**Rising Above Bullying: From Despair to Recovery**
Jessica Kingsley, 2011

Barnardos has free booklets on Coping with Bullying for parents and children that can be downloaded from our website as well as online information and support for teenagers. See [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)
New Titles

Full details of these new library resources and all other resources in our library collection are available on our online catalogue at www.barnardos.ie/library
(Please note, other than Barnardos produced publications, the listed titles are not sold by Barnardos)

ADULT ADOPTION
Adopting a Brother or Sister: a Guide for Young Children
British Association for Adoption & Fostering, 2010

CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Integrated Working with Children and Young People: Supporting Development from Birth to Nineteen
Sage Publications, 2012
Child Development Guide
Barnardos, 2013

CHILD POVERTY
Towards Children’s Well-Being in Europe
Explainer on Child Poverty in the EU European Commission, 2013

CHILD WELL-BEING
Child Well-Being in Rich Countries
Unicef. 2013,innocenti Report Card, Unicef
State of the Nation’s Children Ireland 2012

CHILDHOOD
We’re Friends, Right?: Inside Kids’ Culture
Corsaro, William A. Joseph Henry Press, 2003

CHILDREN IN CARE
Foster Care and Supported Lodgings for Separated Asylum Seeking Young People in Ireland: The Views of Young People, Carers and Stakeholders
Barnardos and the Health Service Executive, 2013

CHILDREN’S RIGHTS
“Picking up the Pieces”: The Rights and Needs of Children and Families Affected by Imprisonment
Irish Penal Reform Trust. 2012

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
Early Speech and Language Matters: Enriching the communication environment and language development in early childhood
Barnardos, 2013

Early Childhood Care and Education
Professional Pedagogy Project, Donegal County Childcare Committee. 2012
Implementing Quality Improvement & Change in the Early Years
Sage Publications, 2011

EDUCATION
Community Schools: Working in Partnership to Support Children, Young People and Families, Policy and practice briefing
Barnardo’s – Northern Ireland, 2012

FAMILY BREAKDOWN
Fred Stays with Me!
Little Brown & Co. 2011
Nina Has Two Houses
Danielle Jacobs, 2011

FAMILY LAW
Conducting Child Custody Evaluations: From Basic to Complex Issues
Sage Publications. 2011

FAMILY SUPPORT
Families Experiencing Multiple Adversities: A Review of the International Literature
Barnardo’s – Northern Ireland, 2012

LANGUAGE
Early Speech and Language Matters
Barnardos Training and Resource Service, 2013