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For Immediate Release

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Parents Want More Bullying Prevention in Schools

Chicago parents continue to voice predominant concern about bullying and are turning most often to their children's schools for help, according to new survey results from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

Childhood bullying, also called peer victimization, is unwanted, repeated behavior directed at a child or group of children causing physical, mental, psychological, emotional and/or spiritual harm. Nearly half (46 percent) of parents in the survey were concerned that their child was being bullied, and 12 percent said they were concerned their child was bullying others. Previous surveys found that Chicago parents considered bullying a top issue facing Chicago youth; parents in the current survey singled out that their child was either the victim of bullying or the bully themselves.

Feedback from parents in the survey underscores the importance of schools in addressing all forms of bullying. Parents said they rely most on teachers (53 percent) to help address difficulties, followed by school administrators (36 percent), social workers (33 percent), mental health care providers (20 percent) and their pediatrician (16 percent).

"Bullying is common, and to address bullying effectively requires everyone—students, parents and staff—to be part of the solution and model positive behaviors that respect every child and adolescent," says Matthew Davis, MD, MAPP, Chair of the Department of Medicine at Lurie Children's, Executive Vice-President and Chief Community Health Transformation Officer at the Patrick M. Magoon Institute for Healthy Communities at Lurie Children's, and Chair of Pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Prolonged bullying can have lasting effects as children grow, including depression, substance use and poor academic achievement. In this survey, more than half of parents indicated that they wanted training from their child's school to recognize the warning signs of bullying, in addition to teacher training on prevention. Social and emotional learning, which has been shown to prevent victimization, offers great potential in addressing bullying effectively. Only 55 percent of parents said their child's schools included this curriculum, 34 percent did not know if this curriculum was offered and 11 percent said it was not offered.

Social and emotional learning fosters positive values, emotional regulation, relationship-building skills, social skills and responsible decision-making in young people. This approach also contributes to healthy child development when everyone involved in a child's learning, family

and community environments models healthy thoughts and actions toward others, which become the social norm.

To understand and prevent bullying, individual circumstances in a child's life must be considered. If you think your child or adolescent is being bullied or is bullying others:

- Talk with your child about what bullying is, why it occurs and how they should respond. Discussions with parents help children understand that bullying is wrong and the motivations behind it. With appropriate guidance, children are better able to cope until the situation is resolved and if bullying recurs.
- Meet your child or teen's friends. Parents can help establish healthy interactions in peer groups and determine if these interactions are contributing to their child's overall development, learning, health, and wellness.
- Review your child's social media activity to uncover any cyberbullying and help them maintain age-appropriate social media use. Cyberbullying occurs in text messaging, social media, in game rooms and through other digital actions. Often, the digital audience is large and offenders can be anonymous.

Parents and students can learn how to prevent bullying through organizations such as [STOMP Out Bullying](#). Lurie Children's [Center for Childhood Resilience](#) provides training, education, and outreach to school professionals, community agencies, city leaders and parents to increase young people's access to mental health services.

Findings from this survey align with previous [reports](#) where bullying was a top concern for Chicago parents about children's health and well-being. Additionally, a 2018 survey of Chicago Public School students affirmed that bullying is widespread: 47 percent of 8th graders, 23 percent of 10th graders and 14 percent of 12th graders reported they had been bullied at school in the past 12 months.

Survey findings are based on data from a recently launched survey project called the Voices of Child Health in Chicago Parent Panel Survey. The survey is conducted exclusively by NORC at the University of Chicago for Lurie Children's, and is administered to Chicago parents three times each year via internet and telephone surveys. The sample consists of 1,642 Chicago parents from all 77 community areas in Chicago, and is weighted to be representative of households with children across the city.

Population-focused child health research at Lurie Children's is conducted through the Mary Ann & J. Milburn Smith Child Health Outcomes, Research, and Evaluation Center at the Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute. The Manne Research Institute is focused on improving child health, transforming pediatric medicine and ensuring healthier futures through the relentless pursuit of new knowledge. Lurie Children's is ranked as one of the nation's top children's hospitals in U.S. News & World Report, and is the pediatric training affiliate for

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Last year, the hospital served more than 221,000 children from 47 states and 30 countries.

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