

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

It is impossible to measure the true magnitude of violence against children worldwide. There is a lack of data on the exact number of child victims because so much happens in secret and is not reported. However, between 500 million and 1.5 billion children are estimated to experience violence annually. In each year as many as 275 million children worldwide are estimated to witness domestic violence.

In the Global School Based Student Health Survey, between 20% and 65% of school-aged children reported being verbally or physically bullied in school in the previous 30 days.

Although some violence is unexpected and isolated, most violence against children is carried out by people children know and should be able to trust and look to for protection and support, such as parents, step-parents or parents' partners, extended family members, caregivers, boyfriends, girlfriends, schoolmates, teachers, religious leaders and employers.

While the family should be the natural environment for protection of children, the home can also be a place where children experience violence in the form of discipline. Data from 37 countries shows that 86 per cent of children 2–14 years old experience physical punishment and/or psychological aggression. Two out of three children are subject to physical punishment.

Certain groups of children are particularly vulnerable to violence, including children with disabilities, children belonging to minority groups, children living on the streets, adolescents in conflict with the law, and refugee, displaced and migrating children. Generally, boys tend to be at greater risk of physical violence and girls face greater risk of neglect and sexual violence and exploitation.

VOCABULARY

Magnitude
Aggression

Bully
Vulnerable

EXPRESS YOURSELF

- What is the most common form of violence affecting children in your country?
- Did the government in your country do something about this issue?
- How can you help children cope after acts of violence?
- How can schools and families work together to help children cope with trauma caused by violence?
- How do we build resilience in children?