PARTICIPATE

Parents and Technology in Cyberbullying:
Intervention and Prevention for Future Experts

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From Bystanders to LEADERS

Parents in (Cyber)bullying advocacy

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Intervention and Prevention for Future Experts

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Intro

This advocacy toolkit has been developed as part of the PARTICIPATE project, which aims to better understand and address cyberbullying affecting children across diverse social contexts, including differences related to age, gender, social status, and ethnicity. By bringing together research, practice, and stakeholder perspectives, the project contributes to building knowledge and identifying effective ways to prevent and respond to cyberbullying in both online and offline environments.

This toolkit builds on these insights and translates them into practical guidance for advocacy. It is designed to support those who want to contribute to positive change — whether by influencing policy, improving practice, or strengthening support for children and families.

Cyberbullying is a complex challenge, but it is also an area where meaningful change is possible. The ways in which children experience digital environments are shaped by decisions made at many levels, from policy frameworks to school practices to everyday interactions within families and communities. This means that a wide range of actors can play a role in shaping safer, more inclusive, and more supportive environments for children.

This toolkit is intended for parent leaders and other people who want to advocate for parents' or on their behalf. While these groups have different roles, they all have the capacity to influence how cyberbullying is understood and addressed. Importantly, advocacy is not limited to formal decision-makers — anyone who brings evidence, experience, and a clear message into dialogue with others can contribute to change.

The approach of this toolkit is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which recognises children as rights-holders. Children have the right to be protected from harm, as well as the right to participate, to access information, and to develop in safe and supportive environments. At the same time, the UNCRC recognises the rights and responsibilities of parents and caregivers to provide guidance and support in a manner consistent with the child's evolving capacities. In digital environments, this means that children should be supported — not only

protected — through relationships that foster trust, communication, and gradual autonomy.

A central message of this toolkit is that cyberbullying is not only an individual issue. It is shaped by social, institutional, and structural factors, including inequalities related to gender, social status, and ethnicity. At the same time, these factors can be addressed through thoughtful policies, inclusive practices, and collaborative efforts. Advocacy can help bring these issues into focus and support more effective and equitable responses.

Parents, guardians, and grandparents are key actors in this process. They are often the first to notice changes in children's experiences and can play an important role in guiding and supporting children's digital lives. Supporting families to engage in open, trust-based communication helps build healthy digital behaviour and strengthens children's ability to navigate online spaces safely and confidently.

Understanding the connection between online and offline experiences is essential. Digital interactions often reflect and amplify dynamics that already exist in schools and communities. This means that efforts to address cyberbullying can have broader positive impacts on relationships, inclusion, and well-being across different areas of children's lives.

Building children's resilience is a central part of prevention. Resilience includes the ability to recognise risks, seek support, learn from experiences, and recover from challenges. When combined with supportive environments and responsive systems, it enables children to engage with digital technologies in ways that are both safe and empowering.

Creating these environments requires collaboration. Schools, families, policymakers, service providers, and communities all contribute to shaping children's experiences. By working together, sharing knowledge, and building alliances, these actors can reinforce each other's efforts and create more consistent and effective responses.

This toolkit builds on existing research, tools, and practices, bringing them together to support advocacy efforts. It is designed to help stakeholders turn knowledge into action, strengthen their advocacy capacity, and contribute to policies and practices that promote safe, inclusive, and empowering digital environments for all children.

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Defining Advocacy

Advocacy is a deliberate and strategic effort to influence decisions, policies, and practices that affect people's lives. It involves bringing attention to important issues, presenting evidence and experiences, and encouraging decision-makers to adopt solutions that lead to positive change.

Advocacy is not limited to lobbying politicians or engaging with formal policymaking processes. It also includes activities such as raising awareness, sharing research findings, building alliances among stakeholders, and promoting new ways of thinking about a problem. Through these actions, advocates help shape how issues are understood and how solutions are developed.

Effective advocacy connects evidence, experience, and action. Research findings, data, and lived experiences are used to demonstrate why change is needed and to support concrete proposals for improving policies or practices.

Advocacy can take place at different levels:

- Policy level, where advocates seek to influence legislation, policy frameworks, or strategic priorities at European, national, or local levels.
- Institutional level, where decisions are shaped within organisations such as schools, service providers, or professional bodies.
- Community level, where public understanding, professional practice, and social norms are influenced.

In the context of the PARTICIPATE project, advocacy focuses on promoting child-rights-based approaches to preventing and addressing cyberbullying. This means supporting policies and practices that both protect children from harm and empower them to participate safely and confidently in digital environments.

Advocacy within this project also recognises the important role of parents and caregivers as advocates. Parents, guardians, and grandparents are often the first to recognise challenges affecting children in digital

environments and can play a key role in promoting solutions that support children's well-being, resilience, and rights.

Successful advocacy requires understanding the perspectives and priorities of those who make decisions. It involves identifying the right audiences, framing messages in ways that resonate with them, and working collaboratively with other stakeholders who share similar goals.

For PARTICIPATE, advocacy is therefore understood as a collaborative process that brings together parents, educators, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to promote policies and practices that support healthy, respectful, and safe digital interactions for children.

WHAT MESSAGES WILL GO THROUGH?

At the heart of advocacy are the messages used to communicate ideas, evidence, and proposed solutions. Once these messages are defined, the next step is ensuring they lead to impact. Advocacy is not only about having strong arguments, but about communicating them in ways that influence how others understand an issue and what actions they are willing to take.

This section focuses on the strategic dimension of communication in advocacy. It supports advocates in moving from general messages to targeted engagement, helping them consider how different actors interpret issues, make decisions, and prioritise action.

In the context of cyberbullying prevention, this means translating child-rights-based principles and evidence into messages that inform decisions, shape practices, and encourage cross-sector collaboration.

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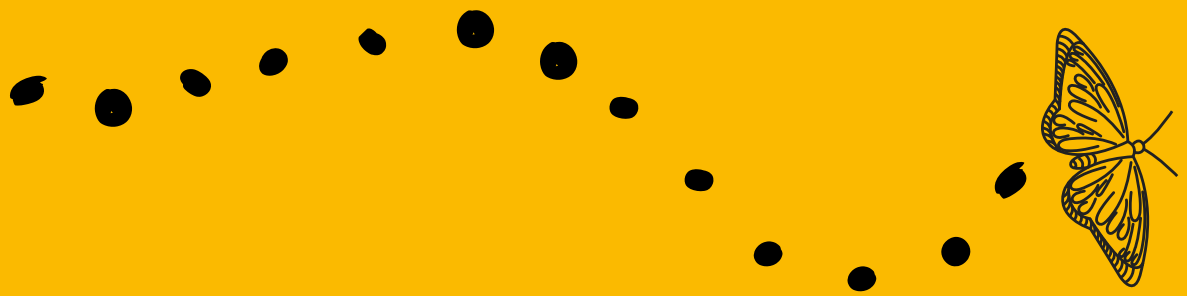
Messages



KEY MESSAGES FROM PARTICIPATE

- **Parents are mostly forgotten in the protection from (cyber) bullying landscape**
- **Assets, knowledge and skills of parents and children are to be built on**
- **Children’s basic rights are restricted in the name of protection**
- **Policy making should adhere to the states’ commitment to the UNCRC**
- **Professionals’ responsibility to develop themselves and become able to support parents**

How to Formulate Effective Advocacy Messages

At the core of every successful advocacy effort are clear, well-formulated messages. Advocacy messages are not simply statements of opinion—they are carefully crafted arguments designed to influence how an issue is understood and to encourage action.

Effective advocacy messages translate complex evidence, research findings, and experiences into clear and compelling ideas that resonate with specific audiences.

A strong advocacy message is clear, relevant, evidence-informed, action-oriented, and consistent. It should be easy to understand, avoiding unnecessary technical or academic language, while remaining grounded in credible information. Messages should connect directly to the priorities and responsibilities of the target audience and point towards a concrete change or solution. Consistency across different advocacy ac tivities helps reinforce the message and increases its impact.

Successful advocacy requires adapting messages to the motivations of different stakeholders. Policymakers, school leaders, professionals, and funders may all respond to different types of arguments. Messages should therefore be framed in ways that reflect their specific roles, responsibilities, and concerns. In the context of cyberbullying prevention, advocacy messages should be grounded in a child-rights-based approach. This means not only addressing risks and protection, but also emphasising children's participation, agency, and well-being in digital environments. Messages should reflect the connection between online and offline experiences, highlight the role of parents and families, and promote resilience and trust-based digital behaviour.

Strong advocacy messages combine evidence and lived experience. Research findings and data provide credibility, while real-life examples and stories make messages more relatable and engaging. Using both elements together helps ensure that messages are both convincing and meaningful.

Finally, advocacy messages should remain focused. Rather than trying to communicate too many ideas at once, it is more effective to prioritise a small number of key messages and use them consistently across different contexts and formats.

IS YOUR ADVOCACY MESSAGE EFFECTIVE?

Use the checklist below to assess and improve your advocacy messages:

Clarity

- Is the message easy to understand for a non-expert audience?
- Have you avoided unnecessary technical or academic language?

Relevance

- Does the message clearly connect to the priorities of your target group?
- Does it address a problem they are responsible for or care about?

Evidence

- Is the message supported by credible data, research, or real-life examples?
- Can you clearly explain where your information comes from?

Action

- Does the message point to a clear solution or desired change?
- Is it obvious what you want the audience to do?

Focus

- Is the message concise and limited to one main idea?
- Can it be easily remembered and repeated?

Consistency

- Is the message aligned with your other advocacy messages?
- Are you using similar wording across different materials and activities?

FROM WEAK TO STRONG MESSAGES

Below are examples of how advocacy messages can be improved

EXAMPLE 1

TOO VAGUE	STRONGER VERSION
Cyberbullying can affect young people's mental health.	Cyberbullying victimisation contributes to depression and anxiety among young people, highlighting the need for targeted intervention programmes that address both bullying and mental health outcomes.

EXAMPLE 2

TOO GENERAL	STRONGER VERSION
Cyberbullying can affect young people's mental health.	Anti-bullying policies must explicitly include anti-racism measures, as generic approaches fail to address the specific dynamics of racial bullying both offline and online.

EXAMPLE 3

TOO ABSTRACT	STRONGER VERSION
We need better understanding of cyberbullying.	A shared and consistent definition of cyberbullying across policymakers, schools, and families is essential to ensure accurate reporting, effective prevention, and appropriate allocation of resources.

EXAMPLE 4

TOO ABSTRACT	STRONGER VERSION
We need better understanding of cyberbullying.	A shared and consistent definition of cyberbullying across policymakers, schools, and families is essential to ensure accurate reporting, effective prevention, and appropriate allocation of resources.

EXAMPLE 5

LACKS POLICY RELEVANCE	STRONGER VERSION
Cultural identity is important for young people.	A shared and consistent definition of cyberbullying across policymakers, schools, and families is essential to ensure accurate reporting, effective prevention, and appropriate allocation of resources.

UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATIONS OF YOUR TARGET GROUP

Effective advocacy begins with understanding what motivates the people you want to influence. Decision-makers rarely respond to messages simply because a problem exists. They are more likely to engage when an issue connects to their responsibilities, priorities, or pressures.

Different stakeholders are motivated by different concerns. For example, policymakers may focus on regulatory responsibilities, public safety, or political priorities. School leaders may be concerned with students' well-being, school climate, and institutional reputation. Researchers may be motivated by evidence, knowledge gaps, and opportunities for innovation. Funders and service providers often prioritise impact, efficiency, and sustainability.Because of this, the same issue may need to be framed differently depending on the audience. Advocates should therefore ask:

- What are the main priorities of this stakeholder?
- What challenges or pressures are they currently facing?
- How does the issue relate to their responsibilities or goals?

In the context of cyberbullying prevention, messages may resonate differently depending on the audience. For example:

- **For policymakers**, the focus may be on children's rights, safety, and the need for balanced regulation that protects children while supporting their participation in digital environments.
- **For school leaders**, the emphasis may be on improving school climate, preventing harm, and strengthening cooperation between schools and families.
- **For training organisations**, the message may highlight the importance of equipping professionals with the knowledge and tools to address cyberbullying effectively.
- **For funder**s, advocacy messages may focus on the long-term benefits of prevention and resilience-building.

Effective advocacy therefore requires adapting messages so that they clearly connect the issue to the interests and responsibilities of the target

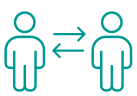
audience. By doing so, advocates increase the likelihood that their message will be heard, understood, and acted upon.

Understanding motivations is an important first step. The next section builds on this by providing a practical, step-by-step approach to identifying and analysing your advocacy target.

ANALYSE THE ADVOCACY TARGET

Once you have identified your issue and shaped your core message, the next step is to decide who you need to influence. In advocacy, not every audience has the same role. Some actors make decisions directly, while others influence those decision-makers or help create the conditions for change.

This section helps you analyse your advocacy target in a practical way, so you can focus your efforts where they are most likely to have an impact.

1.  Identify who has the power to act
2.  Distinguish between decision-makers and influencers
3.  Understand their priorities
4.  Assess what they already know
5.  Identify allies and obstacles
6.  Choose your primary targets
7.  Adapt your engagement strategy

Step 1: Identify who has the power to act

Start by asking: Who can make the change you want?

Depending on your advocacy goal, this may be:

- policymakers
- school leaders
- service providers
- training organisations
- professional bodies
- funders

Be as specific as possible. Instead of identifying "policymakers" in general, think about which ministry, department, authority, or committee is relevant. Instead of "schools," consider whether the key actor is the headteacher, safeguarding lead, or school board.

Step 2: Distinguish between decision-makers and influencers

Not everyone you address in advocacy will be the final decision-maker. Some actors may influence those who are in a position to act.

Ask:

- Who can make the decision?
- Who can influence that person or institution?
- Who is already shaping the debate around this issue?

For example, a ministry may set policy, but researchers, professional associations, parent networks, or the media may influence how that policy is developed.

Step 3: Understand their priorities

Once you know who your target is, consider what matters to them.

Ask:

- What are their main responsibilities?
- What pressures or constraints are they under?
- What kind of arguments are likely to be persuasive to them?

- What language or framing will they respond to?

For example, a school leader may respond to arguments about student well-being, school climate, and trust with families, while a funder may be more interested in impact, sustainability, and scalability.

Step 4: Assess what they already know

Different advocacy targets will have different levels of knowledge about bullying and cyberbullying.

Consider:

- Are they already aware of the issue?
- Do they understand its complexity?
- Are there misconceptions you need to address?
- Do they need evidence, practical examples, or both?

This helps you decide whether your advocacy should focus on raising awareness, reframing the issue, or pushing for a concrete decision.

Step 5: Identify allies and obstacles

Advocacy is rarely effective alone. Mapping allies and barriers helps you understand the wider environment around your target.

Ask:

- Who already supports this issue?
- Who could strengthen your message?
- Who may resist change?
- What are the likely barriers—political, institutional, financial, or cultural?

This step can help you decide whether to act alone, build a coalition, or prepare for resistance in advance.

Step 6: Choose your primary target

You may identify several relevant actors, but advocacy is usually stronger when it is focused.

Ask yourself:

- Who is the most important target for this goal?
- Who is most able to act now?
- Who is most open to influence?
- Where is change most realistic at this stage?

Choosing a primary target does not mean ignoring others. It means deciding where to concentrate your time, energy, and message.

Step 7: Adapt your engagement strategy

Once your target is clear, decide how you will approach them.

This may involve:

- a policy brief
- a meeting or presentation
- a workshop or training
- a campaign message
- a case study or testimonial
- collaboration with a partner who has stronger access

The way you engage should match both the target and the type of change you want to achieve.

QUICK REFLECTION CHECKLIST

Before moving forward, check:

- [ ] Do I know exactly who I want to influence?
- [ ] Do I understand their role and level of power?
- [ ] Do I know what matters to them?
- [ ] Have I identified allies and possible resistance
- [ ] Have I chosen the most strategic target for this stage?

WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO PREPARE

Once the key messages are defined and the relevant advocacy targets are identified, the next step is preparing concrete advocacy actions. Effective advocacy requires careful planning, clear objectives, and a well-prepared evidence base.

Preparation begins with clearly defining what change the advocacy effort aims to achieve. This may involve influencing a specific policy decision, encouraging institutions to adopt new practices, or raising awareness about an issue that requires attention. A clear objective helps ensure that advocacy activities remain focused and strategic.

Another important element of preparation is gathering reliable evidence and examples that support the advocacy message. Evidence may include research findings, policy analyses, data, case studies, or practical experiences from families, educators, and professionals. Combining research evidence with real-life examples can make advocacy messages both credible and relatable.

Advocates should also consider the most appropriate ways to communicate their messages. Different formats may be useful depending on the audience and context. These can include policy briefs, presentations, infographics, case studies, testimonials, or public discussions. The choice of format should help make the message clear, accessible, and relevant for the target audience.

Preparation also involves identifying potential partners and allies who share similar concerns or goals. Collaboration with other organisations, professional groups, or parent networks can strengthen advocacy efforts by bringing together different types of expertise, experiences, and perspectives.

Finally, it is important to anticipate possible questions or concerns from decision-makers and stakeholders. Preparing responses in advance helps advocates address challenges constructively and maintain a productive dialogue.

Advocacy is most effective when it is well-prepared, evidence-informed, and collaborative. By planning actions carefully and building on credible

information and partnerships, advocates increase the chances that their efforts will lead to meaningful change.

How to follow changes and new topics using third party sources - how to evaluate third party sources.

Advocacy takes place in a constantly evolving environment. Policies change, new research emerges, and public debates shift over time. For this reason, effective advocates need to continuously follow developments related to their topic and adapt their messages and strategies accordingly.

Monitoring developments helps advocates identify new opportunities for action, respond to emerging challenges, and ensure that their messages remain relevant. In the field of cyberbullying prevention, important developments may occur in areas such as digital policy, education policy, child protection frameworks, or research on children's digital lives.

Advocates can follow these developments by regularly consulting a range of sources. These may include policy documents, reports from international organisations, academic research, publications from civil society organisations, and media coverage of emerging debates. Conferences, professional networks, and stakeholder meetings can also provide valuable insights into new developments and policy discussions.

However, not all sources provide information of the same quality or reliability. It is therefore important to critically assess the information used in advocacy work. When evaluating third-party sources, advocates should consider several questions:

- Who produced the information and what is their role or expertise in the field?
- Is the information supported by credible research, data, or documented experiences?
- Is the source transparent about how the information was collected or analysed?
- Does the information reflect recent developments or is it outdated?
- Does it prove what it claims to prove?

Using credible and well-verified sources strengthens advocacy messages and helps build trust with decision-makers and stakeholders. At the same

time, advocates should remain aware that research, policy discussions, and public debates may present different perspectives on the same issue.

By staying informed and critically evaluating the information they use, advocates can ensure that their work remains relevant, credible, and responsive to the evolving policy and social environment.

EXAMPLE 1

Using an international organisation report

An advocate wants to highlight the scale of bullying and its impact on children across different countries and education systems. They use a report from the OECD, Bullying in Education, which brings together international data on students' experiences, school climate, and well-being.

HOW IT IS USED

- to show that bullying is a widespread issue across education systems, not limited to individual cases
- to support arguments for stronger policy attention at national and EU levels
- to demonstrate the links between bullying, student well-being, and learning outcomes
- to provide credible, comparative data in policy briefs, presentations, or meetings with decision-makers

WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN USING IT

- the report focuses primarily on peer bullying, and does not capture bullying involving teachers or family members, relying on it alone may reinforce a narrow understanding of bullying as only a peer-to-peer issue
- international data can overlook important local or contextual differences
- it should be complemented with other evidence that reflects the full range of children's experiences

WHY IS THIS SOURCE STRONG

- it is produced by a recognised international organisation with expertise in education policy
- it is based on large-scale, cross-national data, allowing comparisons across countries
- it connects bullying to broader educational outcomes, making it relevant for policymakers
- it is widely used in policy discussions, increasing its influence and visibility

HOW TO USE IT CRITICALLY IN ADVOCACY

Instead of using the report as a complete picture, it can be used as a starting point. For example, advocates can:

- use OECD data to establish that bullying is a widespread and recognised issue
- then highlight what is missing — such as the role of adults in children's experiences
- bring in additional research or lived experiences to present a more complete understanding

EXAMPLE 2

Using a media article with caution

An advocate comes across a widely shared media article claiming that smartphone use can be "toxic" for students who are struggling academically and that these students are more likely to encounter harmful content than their better performing peers.
Article: https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c77dkk3jvvmo

HOW IT IS USED

- as an example of a dominant public narrative linking smartphone use to harm among young people
- to open discussion about common assumptions, concerns and parental awareness of children's digital experiences
- to highlight concerns about harmful online content, peer-group conflict in chat groups and support for stricter phone rules in schools
- to show how media coverage can frame certain groups of young people as especially vulnerable to digital risk

WHAT TO CONSIDER CRITICALLY

- whether the article accurately reflects the evidence from the survey or simplifies it into a more alarmist message about phones being "toxic"
- whether the findings show that smartphones actually cause these problems, or only that struggling students are more likely to come across harmful content online
- whether the claims are supported by strong evidence
- whether the focus on smartphones risks overlooking broader factors such as mental health, school climate, peer relationships, family support or social inequalities
- whether the emphasis on harmful content and "toxic" chat groups may encourage fear-based or punitive responses, such as confiscation or blanket bans, rather than supporting and preventive strategies
- whether the article includes young people's perspectives in a nuanced way, or mainly presents them as passive victims of technology

In this case, the source may be useful for understanding public concern about smartphones, online harms and parental lack of awareness. It can also open discussion about the role of parents in cyberbullying prevention, especially the need for better communication about chat groups, harmful content and young people's reluctance to disclose upsetting experiences.

However, the source should be treated cautiously. It reports findings from a survey, but the media framing may oversimplify a complex issue by presenting smartphone use itself as "toxic." For advocacy purposes, presenting findings should be complemented with more balanced and evidence-based research on digital risk, protective factors, family communication and the broader social context of cyberbullying.

An advocate comes across a media article reporting that three-quarters of children in the Netherlands have been exposed to violence, including as victims, witnesses or perpetrators, and that many do not know how to respond or seek help.

The article: https://nltimes.nl/2026/03/26/survey-finds-three-quarters-dutch-children-exposed-violence

HOW IT IS USED

- as an example of a dominant public narrative linking smartphone use to harm among young people
- to open discussion about common assumptions, concerns and parental awareness of children's digital experiences
- to highlight concerns about harmful online content, peer-group conflict in chat groups and support for stricter phone rules in schools
- to show how media coverage can frame certain groups of young people as especially vulnerable to digital risk

WHAT TO CONSIDER CRITICALLY

- whether the article distinguishes clearly enough between different forms of violence, for example, cyberbullying, peer bullying and bullying from teachers
- whether the survey findings are used to create understanding, or mainly to create alarm
- whether the article gives enough attention to the reasons children may stay silent, such as fear, shame, self-blame or not being believed

In this case, the source may be useful for showing that children's experiences of harm are often not limited to one setting, and that many struggle to speak up or ask for help. For advocacy on parents' roles in cyberbullying prevention, it can support discussion about the need for trust, communication and early support from adults. At the same time, the source should be complemented with more specific evidence on cyberbullying, since it covers a wide range of violence and does not focus only on digital harm.

EXAMPLE 3

Using “evidence-based” publications - the anxious generation example

As an advocate you may encounter a widely discussed and influential book arguing that smartphones and social media are the primary drivers of declining mental health among young people. The book has shaped public debate, policy discussions, and parental concerns across many countries.

HOW IT IS USED

- as an example of a dominant public narrative about youth, technology, and mental health
- to understand why parents, educators, and policymakers are increasingly concerned
- to open discussions about screen time, online risks, and child development

WHAT TO CONSIDER CRITICALLY

- whether the claims are supported by robust, causal evidence, or rely heavily on correlations
- whether the argument selectively uses data while ignoring contradictory findings
- whether complex issues (mental health, inequality, family context) are oversimplified into a single cause
- whether the focus on technology diverts attention from more significant risk factors (e.g. poverty, family stress, lack of support systems)
- whether it promotes fear-based or overly restrictive responses, such as blanket bans, rather than balanced, evidence-based strategies.

CRITICAL REFLECTION FOR ADVOCACY

While the book has raised awareness, it has also had problematic effects on the debate. Its strong, simplified claims have contributed to moral panic around technology, encouraging policies and parental practices that prioritise restriction over engagement, trust-building, and education. This can undermine children’s agency and overlook the positive, social, and developmental roles of digital environments.

Research-informed perspectives, such as those advanced by Candice Odgers (https://www.techdirt.com/2024/06/18/techdirt-podcast-episode-395-what-an-actual-expert-thinks-about-kids-social-media/), emphasise that the relationship between digital technology and mental health is small, complex, and context-dependent. Overstating harms risks misdirecting resources and attention away from structural and relational factors that more strongly influence wellbeing.

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Possible Tools

Advocacy that focuses on a primary role of parents in preventing and addressing cyberbullying through a child-rights-based approach requires the use of credible evidence (policy analysis, scientific articles, books), decision-making guidelines (policy recommendations and how-to), clear communication (infographics and glossaries) and effective engagement with different stakeholders (testimonials and stories). Since advocacy targets diverse audiences, such as policymakers, school staff, parents and young people, it is crucial to use a variety of tools that can address messages in different ways. Tools can be combined depending on the advocacy goal and the stage of the process.

The following section summarises several advocacy tools collected through the PARTICIPATE project network: those tools can help translate knowledge about children's rights and cyberbullying into meaningful messages and policies.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendations are written proposals that provide decision-makers with clear and evidence-based guidance on how to address a specific issue. They are a key advocacy tool for translating research, lived experiences and policy analysis into practical actions for governments, schools, digital platforms and other relevant stakeholders. Unlike general background documents, policy recommendations go beyond describing the problem: they outline concrete options and identify the most appropriate course of action.

In advocacy focused on preventing and addressing cyberbullying, the effectiveness of policy recommendations depends on how clearly the issue is defined and how convincingly the arguments are presented and supported. To be meaningful and impactful, proposed measures should align with children's rights and promote children's protection, participation and well-being in digital environments.

Below is an example of a policy recommendation from the PARTICIPATE

project network that illustrates how a recommendation can be presented in a format that supports policy development.

How can you, as an advocate, use it?

Policy recommendations can:

- support advocacy by turning key concerns into clear proposals for action
- help explain what policymakers, schools, service providers and families should do to prevent and respond to cyberbullying
- connect research and lived experience to concrete changes in law, policy and practice
- strengthen meetings, consultations and campaigns by giving advocates a clear basis for discussion and demands
- challenge overly restrictive, fear-based or one-size-fits-all responses by offering more balanced alternatives

POLICY RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT PARENTS IN GUIDING CHILDREN'S DIGITAL RESILIENCE

Title

Supporting parents in cyberbullying prevention: Protecting family decision-making and children's digital resilience

Key messages

- Most restrictive legislation that is introduced with the aim of protection harms the rights of both parents and children
- Policies on children's digital safety should not rely on blanket restrictions or artificially fixed age limits that ignore children's different needs and abilities.
- Blanket restrictive measures are likely to harm children's rights, including their right to participation, access to information and freedom of expression
- Parents should be supported in their right to guide their children's digital lives and set home rules based on their child's maturity, experiences and capabilities.

- Strengthening digital resilience is a key protective factor and should be embedded in education and prevention strategies
- Parents are key actors in cyberbullying prevention and should be recognised as partners in education, prevention and response.
- Effective responses require collaboration between schools, families, policymakers and service providers, with parents acting as active partners and advocates

What is the issue?

Cyberbullying is a widespread and changing form of harm that affects children across countries and digital environments. Public and policy responses usually focus on restriction, including age-based rules and blanket measures, and it can result in using techniques that ignore children's and parents' basic rights and limit their opportunities for participation, learning and forming social connections. It seems to be an easy solution for school leaders to push the problem outside of the school. However, these approaches can ignore the reality that children develop at different rates and that parents are usually best placed to judge what kind of guidance, boundaries and support their own child needs

Children experience direct negative consequences of cyberbullying. Parents should be recognised as key actors in prevention and response. However, in many cases, blanket restrictions shift attention away from the more difficult but necessary work of prevention, education and communication. They may also reduce opportunities for children to learn how to manage risks, seek help and behave responsibly online. At the same time, restrictive approaches can limit parents' freedom to make decisions within the home and to create rules that reflect their child's level of maturity and individual circumstances.

This issue matters because cyberbullying cannot be prevented only through bans or fixed age thresholds. Children need support, skills and trusted relationships, and parents need the freedom and resources to guide them in ways that fit their capacities and needs.

What do we know?

Cyberbullying prevalence varies significantly (e.g. 14–49.5% in Canada),

and victims experience serious mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression and increased risk-taking behaviours.

Cyberbullying often co-occurs with face-to-face bullying, intensifying its impact on children's well-being.

Digital resilience is the ability to recognise risks, seek support, learn and recover. It is a crucial protective factor that supports safer participation in digital environments.

Protective measures are most effective when they respect children's rights and focus on their best interests, rather than relying solely on restriction.

Research shows that parental involvement strengthens the effectiveness of school-based interventions, highlighting the importance of home-school cooperation.

Parents play a central role in prevention through communication, trust-building, rule-setting, emotional support and modelling responsible digital behaviour.

Approaches based only on restriction may reduce opportunities for children to develop the skills they need to navigate digital life safely and responsibly.

Inspiring practices

- Whole-school approaches to digital safety

Programs that utilise this approach (ex. KiVa) combine education on online behaviour, empathy-based approach and clear reporting system. The key to effectiveness is the coordinated actions between schools, children and families.

- Home-school cooperation models

Programes that actively involve parents in digital safety guiding, education, communication and policy development create more supportive environments for children both online and offline

- Home rules based on children's capabilities

Good practice recognises that families should be able to set rules that fit the child, rather than follow rigid age-based assumptions. This may include decisions about when a child is ready for certain apps, how devices are

used at home, how parents stay involved, and how children can ask for help if something goes wrong.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS

European level

Develop guidelines encouraging multi-stakeholder approaches, including parents, schools and service providers, and support research and programmes that involve families as active partners

National level

Organise or participate in awareness campaigns (for example, before elections) to encourage policymakers and politicians to prioritise children's digital well-being and resist policy proposals based only on fixed age limits or broad restrictions without regard to children's differing capacities and family contexts.

Invest in parent support, digital literacy and public education that helps families prevent and respond to cyberbullying in practical ways.

Local level

Engage with local government representatives to promote prevention strategies that include parents as active partners.

Encourage schools to support family-based rule-setting and open communication rather than shifting responsibility entirely onto the home or relying only on bans.

Create accessible local services and guidance for parents who need help responding to cyberbullying or other online harms.

Call to action

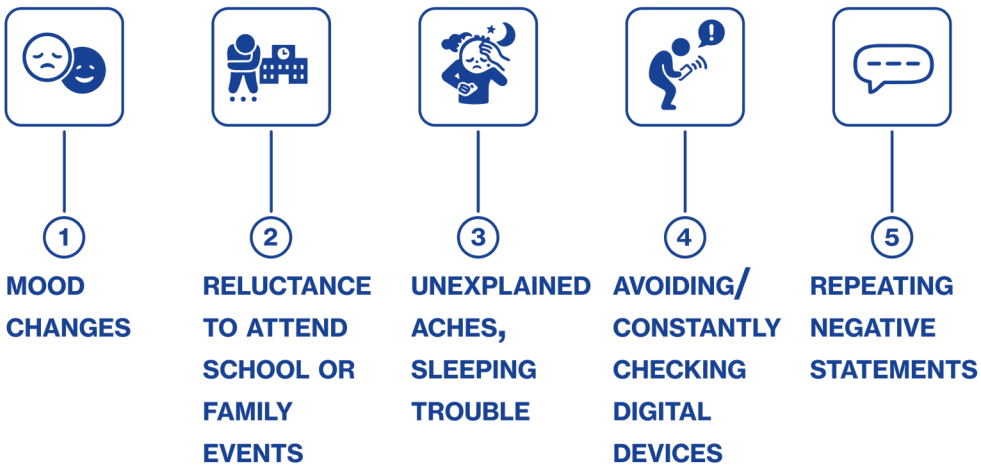
Cyberbullying prevention should not be built around blanket restrictions or artificially set age limits that treat all children the same and reduce parents' freedom to act in their child's best interests. Parents should be empowered to guide their children's digital lives, set home rules based on their capabilities and build relationships of trust that make prevention and early intervention more effective. Policymakers, schools and service providers

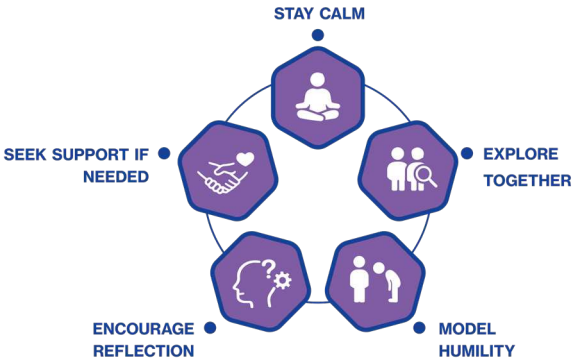
should support families through balanced, rights-based strategies that protect children while also respecting parental rights and strengthening children's digital resilience.

Infographics

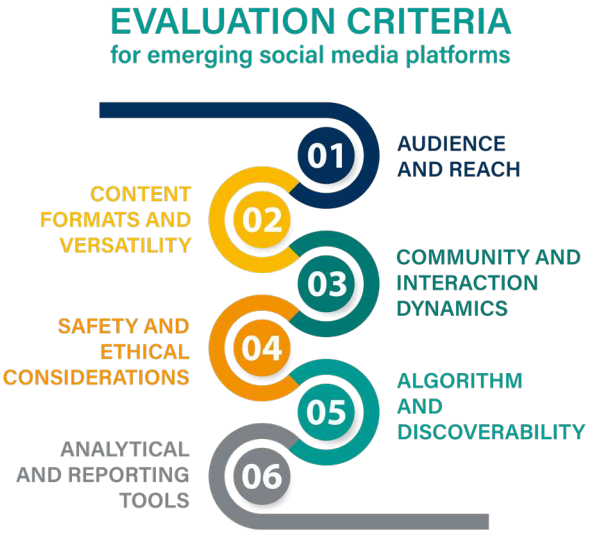
Infographics and other visual advocacy materials can be effective tools for communicating complex issues in accessible and engaging ways. In the context of preventing and addressing cyberbullying, they can help translate research findings, policy messages and personal stories into formats that are easier to understand, share and discuss. Infographics can support awareness-raising, public engagement and more inclusive communication across schools, families, communities and institutions.

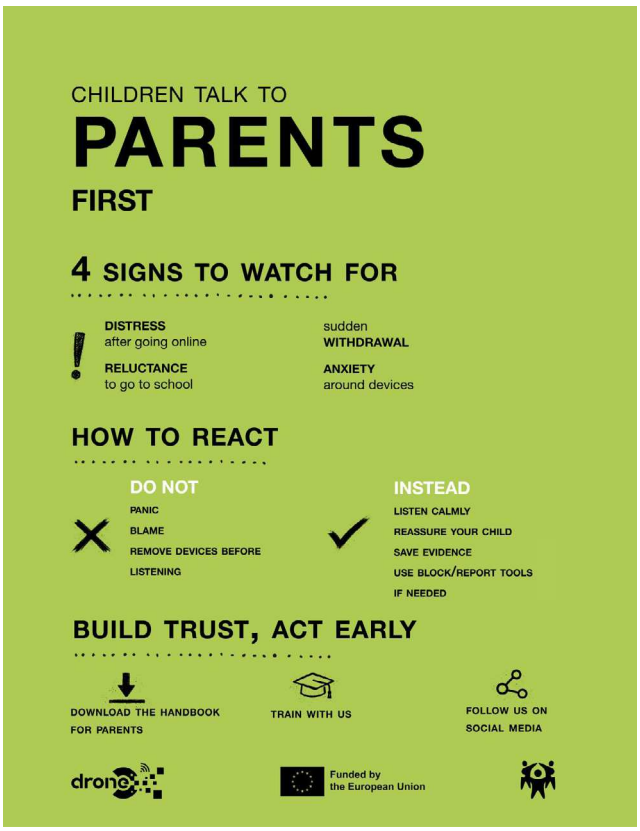
Here is an example of infographics from the PARTICIPATE project network that can be used in advocacy.




STAY CALM
EXPLORE TOGETHER
MODEL HUMILITY
ENCOURAGE REFLECTION
SEEK SUPPORT IF NEEDED


THE IMPACT OF ADULT BULLYING ON CHILDREN BECOMING BULLIES
METHOD AND SCOPE
Children may learn bullying from adults – in their home or at school. Understanding adult roles is key to prevention.
COUNTRIES
Hungary
372 children
11 schools
The Netherlands
426 children
10 schools
AGE RANGE
11-14
FOCUS
• bullying and cyberbullying victimization by peers, adult family members and teachers
• bullying and cyberbullying perpetration by peers
WHAT WAS MEASURED
Frequency of experienced and witnessed behaviour
TOOL
Holistic questionnaire
FINDINGS
FAMILY BULLYING
Family bullying experienced more than once or twice is reported as far more common in the Netherlands than in Hungary.
67,1 NL
14,1 HU
TEACHER BULLYING
Teacher bullying experienced more than once or twice is reported as more prevalent in the Netherlands than in Hungary.
70,1 NL
54,2 HU
PEER VICTIMISATION
Victimisation by peers experienced at least a few times is reported as more frequent in Hungary.
52,2 NL
71,7 HU
PEER PERPETRATION
More children in the Netherlands than in Hungary admit to bullying peers.
54,6 NL
50,4 HU
ADULT BULLYING AND CHILD BULLYING
• Witnessing or experiencing adult bullying can lead to higher chance of peer bullying
• "Bully-victims" report more adult bullying than others
• Family & teacher bullying is strongly prevalent
• In Hungary, adult bullying clearly leads to more peer bullying
• In the Netherlands, the main finding is how widespread adult bullying is
ONLINE AND OFFLINE BULLYING
• Children who bully offline are more likely to bully online
• No distinct cyber-only pathway was identified; online bullying largely overlaps with offline bullying behaviour
• In Hungary, children who engaged in face-to-face bullying were also more likely to bully online
CONCLUSIONS
1 BULLYING CAN BE LEARNED FROM ADULTS
2 PARENTS AND TEACHERS MUST BE PART OF PREVENTION
3 PEER-ONLY FOCUS IS NOT ENOUGH
4 A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK IS NEEDED TO BREAK THE CYCLE
FURTHER READING
MSCA-PARTICIPATE.EU/ADULT-BULLYING-CHILDREN-BECOMING-BULLIES/
PARTICIPATE
Funded by the European Union


EVALUATION CRITERIA
for emerging social media platforms
01 AUDIENCE AND REACH
02 CONTENT FORMATS AND VERSATILITY
03 COMMUNITY AND INTERACTION DYNAMICS
04 SAFETY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
05 ALGORITHM AND DISCOVERABILITY
06 ANALYTICAL AND REPORTING TOOLS


CHILDREN TALK TO
PARENTS
FIRST
4 SIGNS TO WATCH FOR
DISTRESS after going online
RELUCTANCE to go to school
sudden WITHDRAWAL
ANXIETY around devices
HOW TO REACT
DO NOT
PANIC
BLAME
REMOVE DEVICES BEFORE LISTENING
INSTEAD
LISTEN CALMLY
REASSURE YOUR CHILD
SAVE EVIDENCE
USE BLOCK/REPORT TOOLS IF NEEDED
BUILD TRUST, ACT EARLY
DOWNLOAD THE HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS
TRAIN WITH US
FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
drone
Funded by the European Union

This type of infographics present key findings from scientific studies in a simplified and accessible visual format. It helps translate complex data into clear messages that can be quickly understood by non-expert audiences.

Infographics can strengthen advocacy by:

- making evidence visible and easy to understand
- supporting credible, evidence-based arguments with clear and memorable visuals
- helping decision-makers quickly grasp the scale and urgency of an issue
- simplifying complex research for parents, schools and practitioners
- turning statistics and key findings into accessible messages for campaigns, meetings and presentations
- drawing attention to patterns that may be overlooked in longer text-based materials
- supporting workshops, training sessions, meetings by giving participants a shared starting point for discussion
- making advocacy messages more engaging and easier to share across digital platforms
- How to make the usage of infographics effective in your advocacy?
- focus on 2–3 clear messages and avoid overcrowding the design with too much information
- use simple language, short labels and wording that is understandable for non-specialist audiences
- include a short explanation of what the data means and why it matters for advocacy
- choose data that is reliable, relevant and clearly linked to your advocacy goal
- always name the source of the information so the infographic remains credible and trustworthy
- test the infographic with colleagues, parents or young people to check whether the message is clear and useful

How to make an effective infographics?

- start with one clear purpose, for example raising awareness or explaining a research finding
- identify your main audience and decide what they most need to understand or remember
- select only the strongest and most relevant evidence rather than trying to include everything
- organise the content around a simple flow: for example, the problem → why it matters -> what should be done
- use a strong title that communicates the main message immediately
- keep text brief and focused, so the visual remains quick to read
- use charts, icons or simple comparisons only when they genuinely help explain the information
- make sure colours, symbols and layout support readability and accessibility
- include a short takeaway or call to action so the infographic leads into advocacy use
- review the final version carefully to ensure it is accurate, balanced and understandable even without additional explanation

HOW TO USE ADVOCACY AGAINST THESE MESSAGES

https://www.instagram.com/p/DNASc5BtYYD/?igsh=bWljaGQ4NG1oMmFo

Some infographics should be treated with great caution because:

- they often simplify complex issues into emotionally powerful but one-sided messages
- they can rely on fear-based framing rather than balanced explanation
- they may use selective evidence, without showing uncertainty, context or alternative interpretations
- they can encourage overly restrictive responses, such as blanket bans, instead of more proportionate and rights-based solutions
- they may frame children mainly as passive victims, while overlooking their different needs, capacities and experiences
- they can weaken parents' role by implying that fixed bans are better than unique family guidance, communication and home rules adapted to the child
- they can leave out important issues such as digital resilience, education, platform responsibility and the overlap between online and offline harms

EXAMPLE OF CONTENT THAT REQUIRES CAUTION

Infographics that advocate a total social media ban for all children under 16 often use highly emotional language and selective statistics. While such materials may raise real concerns about harmful content, anxiety, exploitation or toxic comparison, they can also close down discussion by presenting a complex policy debate as a simple choice between protection and neglect.

What to consider critically:

- whether the infographic uses evidence accurately, or only selects findings that support a ban
- whether it treats correlation as proof that social media directly causes all the harms described
- whether it ignores differences between children's ages, maturity, support needs and digital experiences
- whether it presents a blanket age limit as a neutral or natural solution,

when it is in fact a value-based choice

- whether it overlooks the role of parents in making decisions and setting boundaries based on their own child's capabilities
- whether it risks promoting fear and moral panic instead of informed, balanced advocacy
- whether it frames children's rights too narrowly by focusing only on protection and ignoring rights to participation, information and expression

How should advocates use such materials?

Advocates should not treat these infographics as neutral evidence. They may be useful as examples of dominant public narratives or of fear-based campaigning around children and digital technology. However, they should be used carefully and always complemented with more balanced, evidence-based and child-rights-based sources. In advocacy on parents and cyberbullying prevention, it is especially important to challenge messages that replace parental judgement with rigid age bans and that ignore the value of communication, trust and home rules shaped around the child's actual needs and capacities.

Key takeaway

An infographic may look clear and persuasive, but clarity does not always mean fairness or accuracy.

How can you, as an advocate, use it?

Infographics can:

- make evidence and key findings of research visible and easier to understand at a glance
- support credible, evidence-based arguments in a concise and accessible way
- help decision-makers quickly grasp the scale, urgency and relevance of an issue
- simplify complex research for parents, schools, practitioners and the wider public
- support discussion in workshops and trainings by giving clear examples, data and talking points
- strengthen advocacy materials by combining evidence with visual clarity

Visual materials

As an example, postcards, zines and message cards can be valuable advocacy tools because they communicate key messages in clear, creative, engaging and accessible formats. In this advocacy context, they can support awareness-raising, youth participation and dialogue across schools, families and communities, while making issues, such as cyberbullying, racism, children's rights and digital resilience, more visible and relatable. These materials are particularly useful for translating complex ideas into messages that are easier to share, remember and discuss.

Here is an example of visual materials from the PARTICIPATE project network that can be used in advocacy.

MEDIA CONTENT - GOOGLE DRIVE

Such visual materials may be especially effective when co-created with children and young people and can be used in:

- campaigns
- workshops
- educational settings
- community events

How can you, as an advocate, use it?

Visual materials can:

- support awareness campaigns in schools, youth spaces and community events
- communicate child-rights-based messages in concise and accessible formats
- open conversations about cyberbullying, diversity, inclusion and online safety, and strengthen workshops and trainings through discussion related to that
- involve parents, children and young people in co-creating advocacy messages and campaign materials [should thank them after they contributed]

- complement policy recommendations with public-facing and emotionally engaging content

Policy analysis

Policy analysis can be a valuable tool in advocacy because it helps make sense of how laws, strategies and institutional responses shape the prevention of and response to cyberbullying. In an advocacy toolkit, it can support a clearer understanding of whether existing policies protect children effectively, respect their rights, and recognise the important role of parents, schools and other actors. Policy analysis can also help identify gaps, risks and unintended consequences in current approaches, making it easier to argue for more balanced, evidence-based and rights-sensitive solutions.

Policy analysis: SAILS legislative mapping on digital childhood https://library.parenthelp.eu/sails-legislative-mapping-on-digital-childhood/

This document is a Legislative Mapping report created for the SAILS project (Safe & Autonomous Internet-based Learning Strategies). It serves as the foundation for developing the "SAILS Safe Resource for Parents" by summarising international and national legislation regarding children's digital safety and rights. It systematically examines existing laws and strategies, assesses their strengths and weaknesses regarding human rights and proposes a specific methodological shift (mitigation over prevention).

HOW CAN THIS POLICY ANALYSIS BE USED IN YOUR ADVOCACY?

Policy analysis can help advocates move from general statements about cyberbullying and online harm to more precise arguments about what current laws and policies are doing well, where they are failing, and what should change. In an advocacy toolkit, it can be used to examine whether existing responses are balanced, rights-based and effective, or whether they rely too heavily on restriction, exclusion and fear-based assumptions about children's digital lives.

The SAILS policy analysis is a useful example of how this can work in practice. It shows how policy analysis can be used to challenge the dominant risk prevention approach, in which children are mainly seen as vulnerable and incompetent, and where safety is often pursued through broad restrictions. In advocacy, this kind of analysis can help question measures such as blanket bans or rigid age thresholds by showing that they may protect children in one sense, while also limiting their rights to free expression, association and access to information. The SAILS analysis also shows how policy analysis can be used to promote a different model: risk mitigation. Instead of assuming that risks must be avoided completely, this approach argues that children should be supported in learning how to navigate digital environments safely, through education, literacy and guided participation. Advocates can use this to argue that cyberbullying prevention should not rely only on removing access, but should also build children's digital resilience and capacity to respond to harm.

The comparative dimension of the SAILS analysis is also valuable for advocacy. It shows that European countries do not follow a single model:

- Hungary and the Netherlands kept the higher digital age of consent of 16
- Spain lowered it to 14 and combined this with a broader legal framework on violence against children
- Greece set it at 15, but the analysis points out a contradiction: the legal system allows a flexible assessment of child maturity in court, while online regulation remains much more rigid

These examples can help advocates show that current policy choices are not inevitable or neutral. They are political decisions, and different countries balance protection, participation and parental roles in different ways. This gives advocates a stronger basis for arguing that more proportionate and flexible models are possible.

The SAILS analysis also shows that policy advocacy should not stop at criticism. Its example of the social sandbox demonstrates how policy ideas can be translated into practice. The sandbox is a fictional social network where students can safely experience and respond to risky scenarios. In an

advocacy toolkit, this is a strong example of how a risk mitigation approach can be made practical: instead of simply banning or restricting, children are given a chance to learn, practise and build confidence in a supported environment.

HOW YOU, AS AN ADVOCATE, CAN USE IT?

Policy analysis can be used to:

- connect your arguments to concrete laws, strategies and policy frameworks
- compare different policy approaches and show that alternatives are possible
- challenge measures that may appear protective but do not effectively address the problem
- strengthen recommendations with a clearer legal, institutional and rights-based foundation
- show how policies affect children, parents, schools and service providers in practice
- argue for responses that are more balanced, proportionate and focused on prevention, support and resilience

Testimonials

HOW TO CREATE THEM

E.g. https://www.tiktok.com/@abc/video/7548707885405015303

https://www.instagram.com/reels/DRfwkpdj931/

Testimonials can be powerful advocacy tools because they bring policy issues and research findings closer to real human experience. In the context of cyberbullying prevention, they can help show how online harm affects children, parents and families in everyday life, and why support, protection and balanced responses are needed. Testimonials can make advocacy messages more relatable and persuasive by giving space to lived experiences, emotions and personal perspectives that are often missing

from formal policy and research discussions.

A testimonial can be especially useful when it challenges a dominant public narrative. For example, the article Why I'm against the social media ban (https://www.google.com/url?q=https://vcdownunder.substack.com/p/why-im-against-the-social-media-ban&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1776443979522341&usg=AOvVaw0sjOgfbGKmdhwlpgf58vG8) is a personal advocacy piece that argues against a blanket social media ban for under 16s. It uses the author's own perspective, professional background and lived experience to question fear-based policy responses and to argue for digital literacy, education and platform accountability instead of broad prohibition. It also shows how personal experience can be used to highlight the potential benefits of digital participation, especially for young people who may find support, identity and connection online

In advocacy, such testimonials can:

- show the human impact of cyberbullying, exclusion or restrictive policy responses
- make abstract rights issues easier to understand through personal stories and reflections
- challenge one-sided or alarmist narratives by showing a different lived perspective
- highlight experiences that are often ignored in public debate, including the voices of children, parents and marginalised groups
- strengthen arguments for balanced, proportionate and rights-based approaches
- support campaign messages, policy discussions, consultations and public engagement activities
- create emotional connection while still supporting broader evidence-based advocacy

HOW CAN YOU, AS AN ADVOCATE, MAKE TESTIMONIALS?

- decide clearly why you are using a testimonial, for example to illustrate harm
- choose stories that are relevant to your advocacy goal

- protect privacy and safety, especially when children or sensitive experiences are involved
- keep the testimonial focused on a few clear points so the message is easy to understand and remember
- connect the personal story to a wider issue
- avoid sensationalising distress or using emotional details only for impact
- review the final wording carefully and , if there are any, thank other contributors for their time, trust and willingness to share their experience
- think about the format that will work best, for example written quotes, short case stories, audio, video or anonymised composite examples

How can you, as an advocate, use testimonials?

- illustrate the human impact of cyberbullying and online harm
- challenge dominant or one-sided public narratives
- highlight experiences that are often overlooked in policy debates
- make research and policy messages more relatable and persuasive
- encourage empathy, discussion and wider public awareness

Stories

Stories can be powerful tools in advocacy because they help people connect emotionally and personally with an issue. In the context of cyberbullying, stories can show how cyberbullying and online harm unfold in context, over time and across different parts of life. Unlike testimonials, which are usually short personal statements or reflections, stories give a fuller picture of situations, relationships, responses and outcomes. In an advocacy toolkit, stories can help explain how online harm connects with school, family life, peer dynamics, support systems and resilience. They can make research and policy issues easier to understand by showing how they play out in realistic or real-life situations, helping advocates engage parents, professionals, policymakers and the wider public.

Examples: Was anyone else bullied by their teacher? https://www.mumsnet.

com/talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/4921602-was-anyone-else-bullied-by-their-teacher

What if your teacher is a bully? https://medium.com/@sayani.rth/what-should-you-do-if-your-teacher-bullies-you-understanding-the-harsh-reality-52f346b69567

In the Mumsnet discussion, the original poster describes being bullied by a teacher, including humiliation, being told they were “useless,” and still thinking about it 15 years later. Other users then add their own experiences, including public shaming, mocking comments about body size and long-lasting effects on confidence and belonging. That kind of story-based material can help advocates show that bullying by adults in positions of trust can have deep and lasting consequences, and that many people carry these experiences for years.

The Medium article is useful in a slightly different way. It is framed as a “true story” and focuses on the specific power imbalance involved when the bully is a teacher rather than another child. It emphasises that the person who should be a source of safety and guidance can instead become part of the harm, which helps explain why these situations can feel especially isolating and hard to report.

In advocacy, stories like these can:

- show the human impact of bullying beyond statistics and policy language
- help audiences understand power imbalances, trust, fear and silence
- illustrate how harm can continue long after the original events
- open discussion about school culture, adult responsibility and safe reporting systems
- connect online and offline harm, especially when bullying is part of a wider pattern of exclusion or humiliation

These examples also show that stories do not have to come only from formal reports. A discussion thread can reveal recurring patterns and shared experiences, while a personal essay can show how one case reflects a broader problem. At the same time, stories should be used with care. They are powerful because they are personal and detailed, but

they do not represent everyone's experience and should not be treated as sufficient evidence on their own. In advocacy, they work best when combined with research, policy analysis and safeguarding principles, so that the emotional force of the story is supported by wider evidence and clear recommendations.

How can you, as an advocate, use stories?

- show the emotional, social and practical impact on children, parents and families
- make abstract policy issues more concrete and relatable
- challenge simplified or one-sided public narratives
- encourage empathy, reflection and discussion among different audiences

How-to

https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/how-to-prevent-bullying

SAILS Guide and/or DRONE Handbook

The "How to" section provides practical guidance for turning advocacy ideas into action. While other parts of the toolkit explain key concepts, evidence and examples, this section focuses on how advocates can actually use different tools and methods in their work. It is designed to support planning, communication and engagement by offering clear, accessible advice on how to develop advocacy materials, use evidence effectively and adapt messages for different audiences in the context of cyberbullying prevention.

EXAMPLE: HOW TO PREVENT BULLYING | STOPBULLYING.GOV

The StopBullying.gov example focuses on practical steps such as helping children understand bullying, keeping communication open, encouraging interests and hobbies, and modelling kindness and respect. Instead of only explaining why cyberbullying prevention matters, it helps show what parents, schools, professionals and communities can actually do in

response. This makes advocacy more useful, concrete and easier to apply in everyday settings.

The example from StopBullying.gov is especially useful because it shows that prevention is not only about formal policy or school rules. It also depends on everyday relationships and actions. The guidance stresses that parents, school staff and other caring adults all have a role in preventing bullying, including talking with children, checking in regularly, helping them seek support, and creating safe opportunities for confidence and friendship.

For your advocacy, this means “how to” materials can help:

- show that prevention requires active support, not only punishment or restriction
- encourage family-school cooperation by clarifying what different adults can do
- promote communication, trust and resilience as part of prevention
- provide practical entry points for people who agree with the message but do not know how to act

Used well, “how to” guidance can make advocacy more action-oriented. It helps advocates move from identifying a problem to showing realistic steps that parents, teachers, schools and communities can take to prevent harm and support children more effectively.

How can you, as an advocate, use “how to”s?

- translate research and policy ideas into clear everyday actions
- help parents, schools and practitioners understand their role in prevention
- support awareness-raising with practical and relatable advice
- make advocacy messages more accessible to non-specialist audiences
- strengthen campaigns, trainings and workshops by showing what action can look like in practice
- connect rights-based and evidence-based messages to concrete behaviour and support strategies

Scientific articles

Scientific articles are important advocacy tools because they provide evidence that can strengthen policy recommendations, inform prevention and intervention strategies, and support credible communication with decision-makers and practitioners. Research articles can help clarify definitions, identify risk factors, evaluate interventions and highlight the experiences of diverse groups of children and young people.

Scientific evidence can strengthen advocacy, but research findings should be interpreted carefully and in context. Not all studies use the same definitions, sample or methods, and this needs to be taken into account. Evidence from scientific articles should be used with attention to methodological quality and diversity of participants.

Below is the article that is suggested by the PARTICIPATE project network and can be used for effective advocacy.

If you as an advocate want to use results of scientific article in your advocacy, you can make an evidence sheet to better structure results and support your arguments with them.

The Connection between Children Becoming peer Bullying Perpetrators and Experiencing or Witnessing Violence/ Bullying by Adults: A Scoping Review by Luca László, Eszter Salamon, Judit Horgas, Maral Nuridin

This article investigates the developmental link between adult-led violence and the emergence of peer bullying behaviours in children. Drawing on social cognition theory, the researchers examine how children internalise aggressive conduct by observing or experiencing maltreatment from authority figures, such as parents and teachers.

Argument: Involving parents in prevention efforts and promoting positive, non-violent parenting practices is crucial

Evidence

- Adverse childhood experiences, including family dysfunction, can increase the risk of becoming a bullying aggressor by up to five times.
- Specific risk factors include parental physical and emotional abuse,

corporal punishment and neglect.

Argument: There is a need for teacher training, accountability and supportive school environments as part of anti-bullying strategies

Evidence

- teacher unfairness and violence are significant predictors of bullying involvement and can explain up to 26% of the variance in students' aggression
- There is currently limited research on the role of teachers and other authority figures, indicating an important gap in evidence and policy attention

Argument: An integrated approach linking child protection, community safety and bullying prevention need to be supported

Evidence

- Children who witness domestic violence or family conflict are more likely to engage in bullying behaviours
- Some evidence shows that up to 70% of children exposed to domestic violence reported aggressive behaviour
- Exposure to violence in neighbourhoods increases the likelihood of becoming both perpetrators and victims (bully-victims)
- Argument: An importance of context-sensitive and culturally aware interventions that address inequality and social norms need to be highlighted

Evidence

- Cultural norms (e.g. acceptance of corporal punishment) can shape children's understanding of violence and influence their behaviour
- Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face higher risks of both victimisation and perpetration, often linked to stress and environmental factors. However, adversity in higher-income families can also have significant behavioural impact

How can you, as an advocate, use scientific articles?

Scientific articles can:

- support advocacy messages with credible, evidence-based information
- strengthen arguments with research findings rather than opinion or anecdote alone
- explain complex issues, such as risk factors, protective factors and children's digital experiences, in a more informed way
- challenge oversimplified, moralising or fear-based public narratives
- dentify what works in prevention, intervention and support, and what does not
- compare different approaches, populations or national contexts through research evidence
- connect lived experiences to broader patterns shown in data and analysis
- complement stories, testimonials, visual materials and other advocacy tools with academic credibility

Books

Books can be valuable advocacy tools because they provide accessible, reflective and emotionally engaging ways to explore complex issues related to the topic - children's rights, cyberbullying and digital well-being. In addition to academic and policy resources, popular science books and fiction can help different audiences better understand the social, emotional and institutional dimensions of online harm. When carefully selected, books can support awareness-raising, professional learning, youth engagement and critical discussion across schools, families and communities

Generally speaking, books can play an important role in bringing attention to urgent issues affecting children and young people, including online harm and digital well-being. At the same time, some widely discussed titles may present selective interpretations of evidence, simplify complex realities or contribute to narratives that encourage overly restrictive responses to children's digital

lives. For this reason, books included in advocacy work should be approached as starting points for reflection rather than as definitive guides. In a child-rights-based approach, it is important to read and assess all materials critically, considering the quality of the evidence presented, the diversity of children's experiences and the potential implications for children's rights, participation and access to digital environments.

Below are examples from the PARTICIPATE project network on how you can use popular science books, academic books, and critiques in your advocacy.

POPULAR SCIENCE BOOK

Letters to a Bullied Girl by Olivia Gardner

This book brings together personal letters of support addressed to a young person who experienced bullying. It offers a deeply human and empathetic perspective on the emotional impact of peer harm.

How can it be used in advocacy?

You can use strong quotes from the book to grasp audience's attention easier.

"The bullying has nothing to do with the abused and everything to do with the abusers."

"Don't let anyone take away your self-respect and self-confidence."

"Your story has taught a lot of kids the right thing to do."

In the context of cyberbullying advocacy, this book can help emphasise the lived experiences of children and young people and support conversations about empathy, recovery and the importance of supportive communities.
It may be particularly valuable in awareness-raising and youth-centred engagement activities.

This book is especially useful for: young people, teachers, parents, youth workers, campaign developers

ACADEMIC BOOK

Cyberbullying: bullying in the digital age by Kowalski et al

This book is a widely used academic resource on cyberbullying that explains how bullying changes in digital environments and what this means for children, parents, educators and schools. The second edition presents cyberbullying as a constantly evolving issue and outlines the specific concerns and challenges it raises for children, parents and educators. It is especially useful for advocacy because it connects research, practice and prevention.

How can it be used in advocacy?

In the context of cyberbullying advocacy, this book can be used as a strong academic foundation for arguments about prevention, education and shared responsibility. It is useful for showing that cyberbullying is a serious and evolving issue that affects children across different platforms and settings, and that responses should involve cooperation between families, schools and professionals. It can also support advocacy for balanced approaches that combine protection with education, digital resilience and clear systems for intervention.

This book is especially useful for: policymakers, researchers, teachers, school leaders, parents

Pedagogy of the Oppressed – Paulo Freire

This book emphasises dialogue, critical consciousness and learners' active participation in shaping their own realities.

How can it be used in advocacy?

It is relevant to child-rights-based advocacy because it supports approaches that recognise children and young people as active participants rather than passive recipients of adult-led interventions. In the context of cyberbullying, it can inform participatory education, youth engagement and more empowering prevention practices.

This book is especially useful for: child rights protection practitioners, teachers, researchers, youth workers

Hold On to Your Kids – Gordon Neufeld & Gabor Maté

A research-informed book arguing that children are increasingly shaped more by peers than by parents, often leading to behavioural and emotional challenges. It highlights the importance of strong parent–child attachment as a protective factor.

How can it be used in advocacy?

This book is powerful for advocating relationship-based prevention, emphasising that strong family bonds reduce vulnerability to bullying and harmful peer dynamics. It supports policies and programmes that prioritise parental involvement, attachment, and trust-building as central to holistic (cyber)bullying prevention.

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder – Holly Jackson

A young adult mystery that explores hidden truths, social pressure, and the consequences of rumours and reputational harm.

How can it be used in advocacy?

The book illustrates how misinformation, gossip, and digital amplification can shape identities and harm individuals. It can be used to advocate for media literacy, critical thinking, and responsible online behaviour as key components of bullying prevention.

The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander – Barbara Coloroso

A practical guide explaining the roles in bullying dynamics and how each contributes to the cycle.

How can it be used in advocacy?

This book supports a whole-community approach, showing that bullying is not just about individuals but systems. It is valuable for promoting bystander empowerment, shared responsibility, and coordinated school–family responses.

Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard – Sameer Hinduja & Justin W. Patchin

A leading research-based text on cyberbullying, its causes, and prevention

strategies.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Provides strong evidence for integrating online and offline prevention strategies. It supports advocacy for policy development, digital education, and school–family collaboration grounded in empirical research.

The Nurture Assumption – Judith Rich Harris

Challenges the idea that parents are the primary influence, arguing that peer groups play a major role in child development.

How can it be used in advocacy?

This book highlights the importance of peer environments, supporting advocacy for peer-led interventions, positive school climates, and group dynamics awareness in bullying prevention.

Cyber Bullying No More – Hollis Thomases

A practical guide focused on understanding and addressing cyberbullying in digital environments.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Useful for promoting digital parenting skills and platform accountability, reinforcing the need for practical tools, awareness, and proactive online engagement in prevention strategies.

Bad Girls – Jacqueline Wilson

A children's novel about friendship, peer pressure, and exclusion.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Helps illustrate the emotional complexity behind bullying, supporting advocacy for early intervention, emotional education, and inclusive school cultures.

The Truth About Truman School – Dori Hillestad Butler

A story about a school gossip website and the consequences of anonymous online behaviour.

How can it be used in advocacy?

A strong tool for demonstrating the risks of anonymity and digital disinhibition, supporting advocacy for digital responsibility and safe online community norms.

Weightless – Sarah Bannan

A powerful novel about exclusion, bystander silence, and the escalation of bullying.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Highlights the role of bystanders and social norms, supporting advocacy for collective responsibility and empowering students to act.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian – Sherman Alexie

A semi-autobiographical novel about identity, marginalisation, and resilience.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Supports a diversity and inclusion perspective, emphasising how marginalisation increases vulnerability. It can inform advocacy for equity-focused and culturally sensitive approaches.

One of Us Is Lying – Karen M. McManus

A thriller exploring secrets, reputation, and the impact of public exposure.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Useful for discussing online reputation, peer pressure, and social media dynamics, supporting advocacy for digital ethics and responsible communication.

Ace of Spades – Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé

A novel addressing systemic racism, bullying, and abuse of power in elite schools.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Highlights structural and systemic dimensions of bullying, supporting

advocacy for intersectional, anti-discriminatory approaches and institutional accountability.

CRITIQUE

Critique of The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness by Jonathan Haidt

This book presents a narrative linking the rise of smartphones and social media with adolescents' mental health worsening. It argues that the shift from a "play-based" to a "phone-based" childhood has contributed to a rise in anxiety and depression, leading to developmental harm.

The author's thesis faced a critique from researchers who argue that its conclusions are not fully supported by balanced evidence. Critics note that Haidt sometimes relies on selective studies rather than robust research with strong evidence, and that the narrative may oversimplify the complex relationship between digital technology and childhood development.
The critique suggests that this book risks promoting moral panic or technophobic interpretations and could lead to support of policies that emphasise restriction approach over an understanding of children's digital lives and rights.

How can it be used in advocacy?

Knowing both the influence and the limitations of books like The Anxious Generation supports critical engagement with popular narratives about children's digital experiences. It helps advocates ensure that policy messages are grounded not only in powerful storytelling but also in balanced evidence and a child-rights framework.

The critique of this book is especially useful for: teachers, policymakers, researchers, advocates and youth workers who want to use book-based insights responsibly in advocacy without overgeneralising or endorsing unverified claims.

How can you, as an advocate, use different types of books?

Books can:

- bring together research, reflection, lived experience and wider social

debate in one place

- highlight key ideas, quotes or case examples that support your advocacy goals
- explain complex issues, such as cyberbullying, digital resilience, children's rights or parental roles, in more depth than short articles usually allow
- support awareness-raising, training and campaign development with material that is easier to discuss and reflect on over time
- complement scientific articles and policy analysis with broader narratives and more accessible language
- use critiques and reflective books to challenge fear-based, overly restrictive or one-sided responses
- adapt ideas from books into quotes, summaries, stories or visual materials for different audiences

Glossaries and definitions

Glossaries and definitions can be important advocacy tools because they provide a shared understanding of key concepts across research, policy and practice. In the context of cyberbullying prevention and response, clear and consistent language helps distinguish different forms of harm, reduce misunderstanding and strengthen reporting, intervention and policy development. Definitions also help ensure that children's experiences are accurately recognised and addressed to support their protection, participation, and well-being.

This glossary can support advocacy by:

- fostering consistent language across research, policy and practice
- helping schools, youth workers, parents and organisations align definitions in reporting procedures and prodigy training sessions
- clarifying concepts for young people participating in advocacy and co-design activities

The words you choose in a definition matter because they shape what your advocacy makes visible, who is recognised as affected and which responses

seem appropriate. In bullying advocacy, for example, defining bullying through repetition, intentionality and power imbalance may help create a clear and research-based framework, but it can also exclude some harmful experiences, especially in cyberbullying, where a single post may cause repeated harm over time, power may come from anonymity or social status rather than physical strength, and victims may still be deeply affected even if others do not see the incident as “real bullying.” This is why advocates should think carefully about definitions: different words do not just describe a problem, they also influence what counts as harm, whose voices are heard and what kinds of solutions are considered legitimate.

Below is an example on how clear definitions can be used in advocacy.

From the DRONE handbook DIGITAL-COMPASS-DRONE-Handbook-for-Parents-IPA-1.pdf

MISINFORMATION

Misinformation refers to false, inaccurate or misleading information that is shared without the intention to deceive. A person may believe the information is true and pass it on in good faith, even though it is not correct or not based on reliable evidence. For example, a relative might share a health “tip” on social media believing it is helpful, even though it is inaccurate or unsupported by evidence.

How can you, as an advocate, use this definition?

- Help audiences understand that not all harmful or false content is shared with bad intent, which is important when discussing online behaviour with children and parents
- Use it to promote digital literacy, critical thinking and fact-checking as key parts of cyberbullying prevention and safer online participation
- Support awareness-raising activities that encourage children, parents and professionals to question and verify online content before sharing it

DISINFORMATION

Disinformation refers to false or misleading information that is created,

used or shared deliberately in order to deceive, manipulate or cause harm. Unlike misinformation, disinformation involves an intention to mislead by intentionally misstating facts, distorting evidence or presenting false claims as true. It may be used to damage reputations, spread fear, influence opinions or create confusion in online environments.

How can you, as an advocate, use this definition?

- Use it to explain that some harmful online content is not accidental, but part of deliberate efforts to manipulate, target or harm others
- Highlight the role that false and harmful content can play in online abuse, exclusion, harassment or coordinated bullying
- Support advocacy for stronger digital literacy, platform responsibility and protection measures that help children and families recognise and respond to deliberate online deception

The terms parental engagement and parental involvement are closely related, but they are not exactly the same.

Parental engagement usually refers to the quality of the parent-child relationship and the active role parents play in supporting their child's learning, well-being and development in everyday life. It is often more personal and relational. In the context of cyberbullying prevention, this includes talking with children about their online experiences, building trust, setting boundaries and helping them seek support.

Parental involvement usually refers to parents' participation in more formal activities, structures or processes connected to schools, services or organised programmes. It is often more institutional. In the context of cyberbullying prevention, this may include attending school meetings, taking part in awareness activities, contributing to school policies or working with teachers and other professionals.

Both are important in advocacy, but the distinction can help show that parents' role is not limited to attending meetings or following school rules. It also includes the ongoing guidance, trust and communication that happen at home.

How can you, as an advocate, use glossaries and definitions?

Glossaries and definitions can:

- explain key concepts in a clear and consistent way
- help different audiences understand important terms connected to cyberbullying, children's rights and digital safety
- avoid confusion when words are used differently in policy, research, media or everyday language
- strengthen advocacy messages by showing exactly what you mean when using important concepts
- challenge misleading, vague or oversimplified uses of language in public debate

5

The Targets

For advocacy to lead to real change, it needs to be directed at those who have the ability to influence policy, practice, and funding. In the context of bullying and cyberbullying, this means engaging actors across different levels of the system — from policy to practice.

This toolkit focuses on the following target groups:

POLICYMAKERS

Policymakers shape the frameworks within which schools, families, and organisations operate. Their decisions influence legislation, national strategies, and resource allocation.

Advocacy towards this group should focus on:

- Expanding the understanding of bullying beyond peer-to-peer interactions
- Ensuring that policies reflect children's lived experiences, including online environments
- Embedding prevention and early intervention in policies and strategies

At European level:

- In the education policy area, they can help define teacher training and curricular policies that support awareness raising, resilience building, and critical thinking.
- They can create relevant funding opportunities, and ensure that the approach of publicly funded projects to (cyber)bullying prevention is holistic and aligned with research
- They can establish binding legislation on digital services

At national level:

- National policies include curricular measures, compulsory professional development requirements of teachers, establishing bullying prevention

programmes, and child protection regulations. Advocacy may include ensuring child rights and parent rights are protected.

- They define national budgets, so you can advocate for ensuring the necessary resources are available.
- In Europe, they are responsible for ensuring subsidiarity, that decisions are made locally, as close to the people as possible. This can ensure that (cyber)bullying measures are tailored to local needs and realities using effective advocacy.

At regional or local level

- Local policy makers are the best situated to listen to local voices and tailor policies to local needs, and advocacy should make them aware of local realities
- Being close to communities, they are able to connect community resources to those provided by the EU or the state. Advocacy should give guidance on it by sharing experiences.

SCHOOL LEADERS

School leaders not only create institutional policies, but also play a central role in how policies are implemented in practice. They influence school culture, priorities, and how bullying cases are handled.

Advocacy should emphasise:

- The importance of whole-school approaches to bullying prevention
- Clear and consistent procedures for reporting and response
- Strong, trust-based communication with parents and caregivers

RESEARCHERS

Researchers contribute to the evidence base that informs policy and practice. They also shape how bullying is conceptualised and measured.

Advocacy towards this group should highlight:

- The need to move beyond a narrow focus on peer bullying
- The importance of including adult–child dynamics in research

- The value of research that is accessible and relevant for practitioners and policymakers

SERVICE PROVIDERS

This includes organisations offering counselling, helplines, child protection services, and other forms of support.

Advocacy should focus on:

- Ensuring services are equipped to address different forms of bullying, including those involving adults
- Strengthening links between services, schools, and families
- Making support accessible and visible to children and parents

FUNDING BODIES

Funding bodies influence which issues are prioritised and which initiatives are sustained over time.

Advocacy towards this group should emphasise:

- The need for long-term investment in effective prevention efforts, not only short-term projects
- Supporting initiatives that address the broader ecosystem of bullying, including family and school dynamics
- Funding research and interventions that bridge the gap between evidence and practice

TEACHER TRAINING AND OTHER TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

These organisations shape the knowledge and skills of current and future professionals working with children.

Advocacy should highlight:

- The importance of integrating bullying-awareness (including adult-to-child dynamics and self-awareness) into training curricula

- The need for practical, scenario-based training on avoiding bullying behaviour and responding to bullying
- Ongoing professional development rather than one-off training

PROFESSIONAL BODIES WITH A ROLE IN POLICYMAKING

Professional associations (e.g. for teachers, school leaders, psychologists) often influence standards, guidelines, and policy discussions.

Advocacy towards this group should focus on:

- Promoting recognition of the full spectrum of bullying behaviours
- Encouraging the development of clear professional standards and training requirements
- Using their platform to bring evidence into policy debates

6

Templates

TEMPLATE 1

Policy Brief Template

Use this template to develop a concise policy brief that turns research, practice, and lived experience into clear advocacy messages and practical recommendations

1 Title

Provide a clear and engaging title that reflects the issue and the proposed direction for change:

2 Key messages

Present 2–4 clear and concise messages that summarise the main points of the brief.

These should:

- ☐ Be easy to understand
- ☐ Be directly relevant to the target audience
- ☐ Point towards a need for action

3 What is the issue

Provide a short description of the issue:

What is happening?

Who is affected?

Why is it important?

4 What do we now?

Present the key evidence and insights.

What does research show?

What patterns or trends are important?

What findings are relevant for policy and practice?

Use bullet points if possible

5 Inspiring Practices

Provide one or two examples of existing practices, initiatives, or approaches that show how the issue can be addressed.

Example 1

What was done?

Was is it effective?

What can be learnt from it?

Example 2

What was done?

Was is it effective?

What can be learnt from it?

These examples should be concrete and trasferable

Keep this section **concise** and **accessible**.

6 Recommendations for actions

Provide clear and actionable recommendations tailored to different levels of decision-making.

European Level	National Level	Local/school/service level
What should be addressed at EU level (e.g. frameworks, coordination, funding, guidelines)?	What policies, regulations, or programmes should be developed or improved?	What actions should be taken by schools, service providers, or local authorities?

each recommendation should be:

- ☐ specific
- ☐ realistic
- ☐ linked to evidence and key messages
- ☐ clear about who should act

7 Call to action

End with a short, clear statement encouraging action.

what to do next	why is action needed now	final call to action

8 Tips for using this template

Provide clear and actionable recommendations tailored to different levels of decision-making.

- Keep it short — ideally 1–2 pages. Decision-makers are unlikely to read long documents.
- Focus on 2–3 key messages rather than trying to cover everything.
- Use clear headings and bullet points to make it easy to scan.
- Start with the problem, but quickly move to solutions and recommendations.
- Adapt the language depending on your audience (e.g. policymakers vs. school leaders).
- Use data carefully — include only what strengthens your argument.
- If possible, combine evidence with a short real-life example to make the issue more concrete.

TEMPLATE 2

Research Article Summary Template

Use this template to turn research into clear, useful insights for advocacy, policy, and practice.

1 Title

2 What we know (key messages)

3 What the research says

4 Why this matters for policy and practice

5 Application in practice

6 Recommendations

7 Source

8 Tips for using this template

1 Title

Write a clear and engaging title reflecting the research focus

2 What we know (key messages)

Summarise 2–3 key findings in plain, accessible language.

Key finding 1:

Key finding 2 (parents and children):

Key finding 3 (policy and practice):

3 What the research says

Provide a short summary of the study: purpose, methodology, and main findings. Keep it accessible and avoid jargon.

Purpose:

Methodology:

Main findings:

4 Why this matters for policy and practice

Explain the implications. Connect the findings to real-world contexts such as schools, families, and digital environments.

Schools

Families / caregivers

Digital environments / services

5 Application in practice

Give a brief example of how this research can be applied in a real setting.

Setting (school, NGO, parenting support programme)

How the research is used

What can be learned from this application

Always connect findings to real-world implications.

6 Recommendations

Policymakers

Schools & Teachers

Parents & Caregivers

Civil society / NGOs

each recommendation should be:

☐ specific ☐ realistic ☐ linked to evidence and key messages ☐ clear about who should act

7 Source (full reference or link to the research)

8 Tips for using this template

- Translate academic language into clear, accessible wording.
- Highlight 2-3 findings that matter most for practice or policy.
- Be transparent about limitations if needed.
- Always connect findings to real-world implications.
- Use this format to make research usable for non-experts.

TEMPLATE 3

PR/Media Article Template

Use this template to turn evidence, experience and advocacy messages into a clear, public-facing publication.

1. Headline / subheadline
2. Key message
3. The issue
4. Why it matters now
5. Voices and perspectives
6. What can be done
7. Call to action
8. Tips for using this template

1 Headline + subheadline

Write a short, impactful, audience-friendly headline.
Add an optional subheadline that expands the message.

2 Key messages

Write one or two sentences that summarise the core takeaway for the public

3 What the research says

Explain the problem or topic in accessible language. Connect it to children, parents, and digital environment.

What is happening?

Who is affected?

Why is this important?

4 Why it matters now

Highlight the urgency, relevance, or recent developments that make this issue timely.

Why is it ugent now? _____

_____

What maekes it relevant today? _____

_____

5 Voices and Perspectives

Include a quote or paraphrased viewpoint from a parent, expert, professional educator or organisation.

_____

_____

6 What can be done

Provide practical, realistic actions for different audiences.

Parents & caregivers

_____

_____

_____

Schools & teachers

_____

_____

_____

Policymakers & organisations

_____

_____

_____

7 Call to action

Encourage engagement: learn more, talk to children, support initiatives or influence policy.

What should people do next?

How can they engage?

Final call to action

8 Tips for using this template

- Translate academic language into clear, accessible wording.
- Highlight 2-3 findings that matter most for practice or policy.
- Be transparent about limitations if needed.
- Always connect findings to real-world implications.
- Use this format to make research usable for non-experts.
- Use this format to make research usable for non-experts.
- Use this format to make research usable for non-experts.

TEMPLATE 4

Case Study/ Inspiring Practices Template

Use this template to document an initiative or practice in a clear, structured way that supports learning, advocacy and transferability.

1 Title

2 Context

3 What was done

4 Who was involved

5 What worked well

6 Challenges and lessons learned

7 Impact, inspiration, adaptation

8 Tips for using this template

1 Title

Write the name of the initiative or practice.

2 Context

Explain the problem or topic in accessible language. Connect it to children, parents, and digital environment.

Where does it take place?

In what kind of setting?

Why is this context important?

3 What was done

Describe the initiative, programme, or intervention clearly and concisely.

What was the main action or apporach?

How was it carried out?

What were the key elements?

4 What can be done

Provide practical, realistic actions for different audiences.

Parents & Caregivers

Schools & teachers

NGOs & organisations

Policymakers & Services

Children & young people

5 What worked well

Highlight 2-3 success factors clearly.

1.

2.

3.

6 Challenges and lessons learned

Briefly reflect on barriers and how they were addressed.

1. What challenges emerged?

2. How were they addressed?

3. What was learned?

7 Impact, inspiration, adaptation

Describe outcomes and observed changes.

Why were they inspiring?

How can it be adapted?

8 Tips for using this template

- Choose examples that are concrete and relatable.
- Be honest and include challenges.
- Focus on what others can learn and apply.
- Keep descriptions concise and structured.
- Highlight 2-3 success factors.
- Clarify why the example matters for advocacy. If possible, include perspectives from those involved.

7

Advocacy is a collaborative effort

Advocacy is rarely effective in isolation. Working with others — whether organisations, researchers, or existing initiatives — can strengthen credibility, expand reach, and avoid duplication of effort. At the same time, it is important to be selective and critical about which external sources and partners are endorsed.

WHY COLLABORATION MATTERS

Joining up with others allows advocacy efforts to:

- Reach wider and more diverse audiences
- Build on existing knowledge and resources
- Present a stronger, more unified message
- Increase legitimacy when engaging with policymakers and institutions

Collaboration is particularly important in the field of bullying and cyberbullying, where responsibilities are spread across education, family environments, and broader systems.

CHOOSING PARTNERS AND SOURCES CAREFULLY

Not all partnerships or sources will be equally relevant or appropriate. When deciding whether to collaborate with or endorse a third-party source, it is important to consider:

- Relevance: Does the organisation or resource align with your goals and focus?
- Credibility: Is the information evidence-based and produced by a reliable source?
- Values: Are their approaches consistent with a child-rights perspective and safeguarding principles?
- Clarity: Are definitions and messages around bullying clear and consistent?

Being selective helps maintain trust and ensures that advocacy messages remain coherent.

ENDORSING EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Endorsing third-party materials (such as reports, campaigns, or tools) can be a useful way to strengthen advocacy, especially when they complement your own work.

When endorsing external sources:

- Clearly state why the resource is relevant
- Highlight how it connects to your key messages
- Avoid presenting external content uncritically
- Ensure that the resource reflects current evidence and good practice

Endorsement should add value, not replace your own perspective.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Partnerships can take different forms, from informal collaboration to structured joint initiatives.

Effective collaboration often involves:

- Agreeing on shared goals and key messages
- Being clear about roles and responsibilities
- Ensuring consistent communication
- Including different perspectives, especially those of parents and young people

Strong partnerships are built on trust and mutual understanding rather than short-term visibility.

MANAGING DIFFERENCES

When working with multiple actors, differences in perspectives or approaches are common. These may relate to definitions of bullying, priorities, or ways of working.

To manage this:

- Focus on common ground where possible
- Be transparent about differences when necessary
- Avoid diluting key messages for the sake of agreement
- Maintain a clear link to evidence and the core aims of the advocacy

AVOIDING FRAGMENTATION

One of the challenges in this field is the large number of initiatives addressing bullying from different angles. Without coordination, this can lead to fragmented efforts.

Advocacy should aim to:

1. Build on existing work rather than duplicate it
2. Connect different initiatives where possible
3. Promote consistency in messaging and terminology

8

Advocacy Training

Parents as primary prevention: advocacy, systems change, and (cyber)bullying

Audience: Future advocates, parent leaders, professionals

Duration: ~7–9 hours

Core Outcome: Participants can design, plan, and implement advocacy initiatives that position parents as central actors in bullying prevention.

HOW TO USE THIS TRAINING

This training is designed for self-paced learning and peer-to-peer development. It can be used individually, in small groups, or as part of a community of practice.

If you are learning on your own

Work through the modules in order. Each module builds toward your final advocacy plan.

- Read the materials
- Complete the worksheets honestly and concretely
- Take time to reflect—this is as important as the content
- Apply each step to your real-life context, not a hypothetical case

Tip: Spread the training over several days to allow ideas to develop.

If you are learning with others (recommended)

This training is most powerful when done collaboratively.

For each module:

1. Prepare individually (read + complete worksheet)
2. Meet as a group (60–90 minutes)

3. Share:

- key insights
- challenges
- draft ideas

4. Give each other constructive feedback
5. Refine your work

Rotate a facilitator role to guide discussion and keep focus.

PEER LEARNING PRINCIPLES

- Be practical: focus on real situations
- Be honest: share uncertainties and challenges
- Be constructive: improve ideas, don't just critique
- Stay solution-oriented

FOCUS ON ACTION

This is not just a learning program—it is a planning and action process.

By the end, each participant should have:

- a clear advocacy position
- a defined target audience
- a concrete plan to act

AFTER COMPLETING THE TRAINING

Use your advocacy plan to:

- engage parents
- collaborate with schools
- influence policy or practice

Whenever possible, continue meeting with peers to:

- share progress
- troubleshoot challenges
- strengthen impact

The goal is not only to understand bullying prevention - but to act together to change how it is addressed, with parents at the centre.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this training, participants will be able to

1. Understand the problem
2. Define the role of parents
3. Analyse systems & power
4. Design advocacy strategy
5. Implement & respond to resistance

Every module feeds into a final advocacy plan

KEY DELIVERABLE (BUILT THROUGHOUT)

Participants develop a parent-centred bullying prevention advocacy plan, including:

- problem definition
- target audience
- key message
- strategy
- actions
- risk management

Before you start, answer these questions:

What motivates you to advocate for ensuring the primary role of parents in (cyber)bullying prevention?

What challenges do you expect?

Module 1

Understanding the problem (Framing for advocacy)

TIME NECESSARY

1–1.5 hours

FOCUS

Not just “what is bullying,” but how it is framed in policy and public discourse

READINGS

https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/what-is-bullying

https://cyberbullying.org/

https://www.oecd.org/education/school/bullying-at-school.htm

ADVOCACY LENS

Bullying is often framed as a school discipline issue instead of

a social + relational system issue

This **framing** determines who is **seen** as **responsible**

WORKSHEET 1

Goal: define the problem in a way that supports advocacy

1 How is bullying currently framed in your context?

- ○ School discipline issue
- ○ Individual behaviour problem
- ○ Social/peer issue
- ○ Family/parenting issue
- ○ Other: _____

2 What's missing from this framing?

_____

_____

_____

3 Reframe the problem (advocacy version)

Complete:

Bullying is not just a school issue. It is a _____ that requires _____ to be effective.

4 Cyberbullying angle

Cyberbullying shows that _____ therefore _____ must be involved.

Module 2

Positioning parents as primary actors

TIME NECESSARY

1.5 hours

FOCUS

Build the core advocacy argument

READINGS

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/parent_engagement.htm

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/serve-and-return/

https://library.parenthelp.eu/digital-compass-guide-for-parents/

ADVOCACY INSIGHT

You are not just informing — you are reframing responsibility from:

“Parents should be involved” to:

“Parents are the primary prevention system.”

WORKSHEET 2 - THE CASE FOR PARENTS

Goal: Build your core argument

1 Evidence-based claims

Write 3 evidence-based claims.

for example: “Strong parent-child relationships reduce bullying risk more than reactive punishment policies”.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2 Translate the claims into simple messages

Example: “Strong relationships protect children more than punishment.”

Your versions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3 Risks when parents are not engaged

- ○ Increased bullying
- ○ Escalation online
- ○ Poor emotional coping
- ○ Other: _____

Explain one: _____

Module 3

Cyberbullying as an advocacy opportunity

TIME NECESSARY

1–1.5 hours

FOCUS

Use cyberbullying to highlight the limits of school-only approaches

READINGS

https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying

https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/teens-and-social-media

https://www.commonsensemedia.org/article

https://library.parenthelp.eu/digital-pathfinder-guide-for-school-leaders/

ADVOCACY LEVERAGE

Cyberbullying happens:

- **at home**
- **on personal devices**

thus, **schools cannot control it alone**. This creates a strong argument for **parent leadership**.

Craft a message: "Cyberbullying proves that ..."

Finish it in a way that supports your advocacy position.

WORKSHEET 3 - DIGITAL PARENTING STRATEGY

Goal: Translate cyberbullying into advocacy leverage

1 Where does cyberbullying happen most?

- ○ Messaging app
- ○ Social Media
- ○ Gaming
- ○ School platforms
- ○ Other: _____

2 What school can NOT control?

_____

3 What CAN parents influence?

- ○ Device use
- ○ Values
- ○ Communication
- ○ Peer Interaction

4 Craft a message

"Cyberbullying proves that...". Finish it in a way that supports your advocacy position. Draft a key advocacy message:

"Because cyberbullying happens _____, parents must _____."

5 Family digital agreeement (draft)

Rules

1. _____
2. _____

Values

1. _____
2. _____

Module 4

Systems & power analysis

TIME NECESSARY

1 hour

FOCUS

Understand who holds power and why change is difficult

READINGS

https://www.apa.org/monitor/nov01/peer

https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/at-school

https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en

KEY INSIGHT

Bullying persists because:

- institutions protect themselves
- peer systems reinforce behaviour
- parents are often excluded from decision-making

Tool: Stakeholder mapping

Identify:

- allies (parents, NGOs)
- blockers (institutions, norms)
- decision-makers (schools, policymakers)

WORKSHEET 4 - STAKEHOLDER AND POWER MAPPING

Goal Understand the system you want to change

1 Key stakeholders

Group	Role	Influence (high / medium / low)
Parents		
Schools		
Government		
NGOs		
Other		

2 Allies

3 Blockers/resistance

4 Who do you need to influence the most?

Module 5

Designing an advocacy strategy

TIME NECESSARY

1–1.5 hours

FOCUS

Move from ideas → structured advocacy plan

CORE ELEMENTS

1. **Problem definition** : what exactly are you changing?

2. **Target audience**: parents? schools? policymakers?

3. **Goal**: awareness? policy? behaviour?

4. **Strategy type**

- awareness campaign
- training program
- policy advocacy

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

https://archive.globalfrp.org/family-involvement

UNESCO whole-school approach

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246652

WORKSHEET 5 - ADVOCACY STRATEGY DESIGN

Goal: Build your strategy

1 Problem you are addressing

_____

_____

2 Target audience

- ○ Parents
- ○ Student
- ○ Policymakers
- ○ Community

3 Your goal (be specific)

By (time), I want to _____

_____

_____

4 Strategy type

- ○ Awareness campaign
- ○ Training programme
- ○ Policy change
- ○ Community initiative

5 Key action

_____

Module 6

Messaging, communication & influence

TIME NECESSARY

1–1.5 hours

FOCUS

How to persuade different audiences

PRINCIPLES

Lead with child wellbeing, not blame

- Avoid: “schools are failing”

 **Use: “parents + schools together are essential”**

MESSAGE TYPES

Emotional → stories

Rational → evidence

Practical → solutions

WORKSHEET 6 - MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATION

Goal: Craft persuasive messages

1 Core message

1 sentence: _____

_____

2 Adapt for audiences

Parents: _____

Schools: _____

Policy makers: _____

3 Emotional hook

_____

_____

4 Evidence support

_____

_____

Module 7

High-risk advocacy: when the bully is a teacher

TIME NECESSARY

1–1.5 hours

FOCUS

Advocacy under power imbalance and institutional resistance

READINGS

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/

UNICEF: https://www.unicef.org/protection

(NL) https://english.onderwijsinspectie.nl/

Teacher bullying section and training in https://library.parenthelp.eu/digital-navigator-guide-for-teachers/

ADVOCACY CHALLENGE

This is where:

- theory meets reality
- systems resist accountability

Strategy framework: Protect first, advocate second

Use: documentation

structured escalation

neutral language

WORKSHEET 7 - HIGH RISK ADVOCACY (TEACHER BULLY)

Goal: Support parents safely

1 Identify the issue

What is happening? _____

Is it repeated? ○ yes ○ no

Power imbalance? ○ yes ○ no

2 Documentation plan

What will be recorded?

_____

_____

3 Escalation steps

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 Child protection plan

How will the child be supported? _____

_____

5 Risk assessment

What could go wrong? _____

How to reduce risk? _____

Module 8

Implementation & Action Planning

TIME NECESSARY

1–1.5 hours

FOCUS

Turn strategy into real-world action

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Participants finalise:

1. Goal
2. Target group
3. Activities
4. Timeline
5. Risks & mitigation
6. Success indicators

FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Create your full Advocacy Plan

Example formats: parent training programme
school partnership initiative
awareness campaign

WORKSHEET 8 - YOUR ADVOCACY PLAN

Goal: Bring everything together

1 Title

2 Problem

3 Target audience

4 Key message

5 Activities

6 Timeline

Step	When

8 Risks & mitigation

Risk	Solution

7 Success indicators

How will you know it worked?

- ☐ parent engagement increased
- ☐ policy change
- ☐ awareness raised
- ☐ other: _____

9 First steps (within 7 days)

OPTIONAL DEEPENING READS

- Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard
- The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander
- Hold On to Your Kids

CORE ADVOCACY TAKEAWAY

Bullying prevention fails when responsibility is placed primarily on schools.

It succeeds when parents are empowered, supported, and positioned as primary actors within a broader system.