

# Children with unsupportive parents are more likely to be both bullies and victims

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Children with unsupportive parents are not just more likely to bully others, but also more likely to have experienced bullying, finds new research from Nazarbayev University.

Mehmet Karakus, Associate Professor from the Nazarbayev University ([https://nu.edu.kz/?utm\\_source=bluesky](https://nu.edu.kz/?utm_source=bluesky))'s Graduate School of Education, and colleagues, explored the relationship between student self-esteem, bullying, and parental support.

Participants aged 11 to 17 years old were asked how often they had bullied someone or been bullied by someone in the past six months, had their self-esteem measured, and were asked how much their parents know about what they are doing and feeling to assess parental support. Their findings demonstrated that parental support had a significant impact on self-esteem and bullying behaviour.

Those who reported a lack of parental support were more likely to have engaged in bullying behaviour as well as been the victims of bullying. This means bullies are also more likely to have been bullied. They also found that low parental support led to a decrease in self-esteem: children who develop supportive and secure relationships with their parents tend to perceive themselves more positively than those with unsupportive parents.

Prof. Karakus says,

“Parental style can influence the likelihood of a child engaging in bullying behaviour as well as experiencing bullying, suggesting that both bullies and victims come from unsupportive family environments. This could be because children living in supportive families can confide in their parents about being bullied and those who are doing the bullying are disciplined for their behaviour. Our findings highlight the importance of parental support in both lowering bullying perpetration and victimisation and enhancing student self-esteem.”

These findings could be used to improve anti-bullying programs. Intervention strategies can be developed to help parents engage with their children and observe how they interact with their peers. Parents can also be trained to develop warm and supportive relationships with their children. Such strategies have previously been found effective in reducing bullying perpetration and victimisation in schools.

These findings were published in the journal *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala*.

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