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Cyberbullying and students with learning disabilities

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CYBERBULLYING AND STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITES

by

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Abstract

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CYBERBULLYING AND THE EFFECTS ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
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Cyberbullying is a new and growing problem that is affecting the youth of today. Children who are classified, under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are thought to be particularly vulnerable to cyberbullying. Parents play a vital role in raising their children and keeping them safe. This study examines whether parents having a child classified, under IDEA, have the same concerns and report the same experiences regarding cyberbullying as parents with a non-classified child. A thirty question survey was administered to parents through an online website called Survey Monkey. The questions were designed to answer five main research questions about cyberbullying. The questions were asked to parents who have a classified child, and then asked again to those parents whose children are not classified. The results of this study found that parents having a child not classified, under IDEA, were more concerned about cyberbullying. Parents having a child classified under IDEA were more aware of cyberbullying and went to a greater extent to protect their child from cyberbullying by monitoring online activity. Additionally, more parents having a classified child reported their child was a victim of cyberbullying; however the gap was narrower than expected. Additional studies would be beneficial to examine if parental responses regarding cyberbullying experiences match what their children report by surveying the children in addition to the parents.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this thesis is to explore a targeted umbrella hypothesis then break it down into five distinct hypothetical explorations. The targeted umbrella hypothesis was to examine how parents of a classified child, under Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and parents of a non-classified child, view the effects cyberbullying might have upon their child.

The exploration of this topic is long overdue. Children today are having secret lives of their own. Parents are no longer able to control much of their children's environment. Children are lost in the world of cyberspace. That is why the focus of this paper explores the roles parents play in the lives of their children. In addition it explores parents' knowledge by taking a look or a glimpse into what life is like for their children in the ever changing world of cyberspace and cyberbullying. The catalyst for this thesis was from a website about a 13 year old boy, Ryan. (http://www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org).

On October 7, 2004, the lives of Ryan's parents changed forever when they realized that cyberbullying took their son's life. Ryan's parents walked into his room, as they had done so many times before. This time it was different. This time they found their 13 year old son, Ryan Patrick Halligan lying dead on the floor. Ryan was a driven young man. He always tried to produce his best work, yet he still struggled to keep up his grades. At the age of nine, in fourth grade, Ryan was classified in school and placed in a special education class.

During the fifth grade, Ryan started to become the victim of bullying. Ryan's parents like many parents, thought this was just a normal experience children go through growing up. They told him to ignore it, that he had friends he could rely on. They also briefly sent him to a therapist to help him with self-esteem and coping issues. For a while the bullying seemed to stop and Ryan was told he no longer needed therapy. When Ryan entered middle school Ryan the bullying began again. Ryan's parents were not too concerned, as it appeared to come and go and did not appear to affect Ryan too much. However, one December afternoon, Ryan came home in tears over an increasing amount of bullying. Ryan's parents enrolled him in martial arts classes. Ryan's dad worked with Ryan over the course of several months. One day, Ryan had a fight with the boy whom was most responsible for bullying him. After this fight, Ryan reported that the bullying stopped, and at one point he briefly befriended the former bully. Ryan's parents frequently checked up on him. Ryan reported that everything was fine and that he was happy. Ryan's parents thought the worst of the bullying was behind their son.

In the summer of 2003, Ryan's parents started to notice a significant increase in time he spent online. Reminding him of rules they previously developed, such as not talking to strangers online, not giving photos to strangers, and no secret passwords; Ryan's parents thought they had safeguarded their son from the dangers of online activity. However, what happened that summer was truly tragic. Ryan started chatting online with a "popular girl" from school. When school began in the fall, the girl who had befriended Ryan began spreading untrue rumors about Ryan's sexual preference. She also showed many people personal instant messages. Ryan, was distraught, felt there was no escape from this truly embarrassing act and decided to take his own life. (http://www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org).

Cyberbullying is a new and growing phenomenon. Not all stories end like Ryan's, however cyberbullying has profound social and academic implications. Social media sites, along with other online communities, have provided great opportunities to collaborate and communicate in ways previously not available. Moreover, these technologies have made great strides in advancing academic methods. However these same technologies have negative consequences as well. Society is becoming increasingly dependent and exposed to technology, specifically communication technology, such as Facebook, Instant Messaging, MySpace, chat rooms, and online blogs. Thus, there is seemingly no escape, no place safe from cyberbullies. Traditional bullying has always been a challenge for children and the families it affects. Cyberbullying takes traditional bullying to new heights. According to (Juvonen and Gross, 2008) 72% of respondents reported at least one incident of cyberbullying in the past year. It is no wonder that this type of bullying has increased significantly in the newspapers, TV programs, school systems, teacher in-service, and many other places.

With the emergence of always "being connected", middle school and high school cyberbullying concerns many students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The impact of this type of bullying is being felt throughout the country. According to American Pediatrics 2010, parent involvement is critical to preventing cyberbullying. Children of all types are susceptible to being a victim of online bullying. One particular group, children with learning disabilities, have difficulty in various academic areas, low self-esteem, and poor communication   skills. In many cases, because a child has a disability and is classified, there tends to be a   more active parental involvement. Parents are more involved with their child's schooling and social development in order to help their child be successful. For this reason, it's important to know whether the concerns of parents and experiences of children with learning disabilities are the same as with children

without learning disabilities. Due to research (Didden, Scholte, Korzilius, De Moor, Vermeulen, O'Reilly, Lang, & Lancioni, 2009, & Patchin, & Hinduja, 2010) that suggests children who are classified under IDEA have difficulty in various academic areas, low self-esteem, and poor communication skills; parents of these children tend to be more involved in their schooling and social development in order to ensure they become successful. Research in this area is limited and needs more investigation.

Research Questions:

In this paper the topic of cyberbullying and the effects cyberbullying has on classified children vs. the effects of cyberbullying upon non-classified children will be explored. In addition to these explorations the roles that the parents play in these situations will be explored as well. Five research questions will be used to take a look at these contemporary issues.

1. Do parents of classified children (under IDEA) have different concerns about cyberbullying than those whose children are not classified and in the general education population?

2. Do parents who have a child classified (under IDEA) and parents whose children are not classified differ in their awareness of cyberbullying?

3. According to parents, are the experiences of classified children (IDEA) the same as children who are not classified in regards to cyberbullying?

4. To what extent do parents of children with and without classification protect their children by monitoring their online activity?

5. Does gender make a difference, with regards to cyberbullying experiences, for children who are and who are not classified?

Through specific and targeted questions, followed by carefully crafted online surveys, the targeted umbrella hypothesis was investigated and evaluated by exploring the following questions:

Question 1 hypothesis: The hypothesis was that parents having a child classified under IDEA would be more concerned in regards to cyberbullying as opposed to parents having a child not classified under IDEA.

Question 2 hypothesis: The hypothesis was that parents having a child classified under IDEA would be more aware in regard to activities that could lead to cyberbullying as opposed to parents having a child not classified under IDEA.

Question 3 Hypothesis: The hypothesis of this question was that more parents having a child classified under IDEA would report their child was a victim of cyberbullying than parents having a child not classified under IDEA.

Question 4 Hypothesis: The hypothesis of this question was that parents having a child classified under IDEA would do more to protect their children by monitoring their online activity.

Question 5 Hypothesis: It was hypothesized that in both groups, parents of girls would report more cyberbullying than parents of boys, as girls tend to be more prone to verbal attacks whereas boys tend to be involved in physical encounters.

Description of Terms

Buddy List: A window offered through most instant messaging programs that allow users to create a list of other people's screen names and view when they are online. They are often used as a quick reference to friends when they are online. Users usually have the option of blocking messages from certain users on the list (Beale & Hall, 2007).

Bully: A person who, either through physical or psychological means, intentionally attempts to or successfully inflicts harm on someone else (Olweus, 2003).

Bullying: The repeated physical, verbal, or psychological attacks or intimidation directed against victims who cannot properly defend themselves. They may not be able to properly defend themselves for numerous reasons, including size, strength, being outnumbered by attackers, or being less psychologically resilient (Mason, 2008).

Bystanders: Students who are aware of or witness bullying or cyberbullying, but do not take action to stop the behavior from occurring (Dunn, 2001).

Cyberbully: A person who engages in the act of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying: Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cellular telephones, and other electronic devices (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). It can involve harmful or cruel texts or images using the Internet for instant messages, e-mail, chat rooms, and social networking sites. (Facebook, MySpace and Twitter). It can also involve digital communication devices such as cell phones. Many of the cyberbully's attacks involve stalking, threats, harassment, impersonation, humiliation, and exclusion (Feinberg & Robey, 2009).

Cyberspace: The virtual space created by the Internet, a three-dimensional model through which a virtual-reality user can move. (Cothran, 2002).

IDEA

Instant Messaging: Instant messaging, or "IM", involves a virtual conversation while two individuals are online at the same time. Rather than speaking, the conversation is held through typing (Precise Cyber Forensics, 2004).

Instant Message (1M): Any online computer program that allows users to instantly send text messages to other online users. Users usually use a screen name and share screen names with

friends in order to identify each other via instant message. Users have the ability to hide their identities and screen names can be switched (Beale & Hall, 2007).

Internet Service Provider (ISP): A service that provides a portal through which users can access the Internet (Cothran, 2002).

Non-Victim: A person who is neither a victim nor a witness to bullying or cyberbullying.

Threat: "A communicated intent to inflict harm or less on another or on another's property; especially one that might diminish a person's freedom to act voluntarily or with lawful consent" (Russell, D. W., Flom, E. K., Gardner, K. A., Cutrona, C. E., & Hessling, R. S., 2003).

Traditional Bullying: Willful and repeated harm inflicted through face-to-face conduct (Mason, 2008).

Victim (or Target): A person who is exposed to the negative actions of a bully or a cyberbully.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Traditional Bullying

Research in bullying has been ongoing for decades. Prior to the advent of the internet, most bullying fell into the realm of what many call "traditional bullying." According to (Lawrence & Adams, 2006), bullying can be defined as "using one's authority, position, or size to undermine, frighten or intimidate another person; this action often leaves the victim feeling afraid, powerless, incompetent, and ashamed." Parents and school systems have been dealing with the playground bully for a long time. There are different types of traditional bullying that have been identified and studied, including social, verbal, and physical bullying (Crick, Nelson, Morales, Cullerton-Sen., Casas, & Hickman, 2001; Rigby & Slee, 1999) .

Types of Traditional Bullying (Social, Verbal, Physical)

Social

Social bullying includes rumor spreading, backbiting, and social segregation from their peers. Social bullying is the most aggressive form of bullying. Research suggests that social bullying has more effect on girls. Girls who engage in social bullying are most often in high social status and tend to target individuals they know (Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988). Rivers and Smith (1994), report that eleven to twelve year old girls appear to engage in social bullying more than boys, with a reported frequency rate of one-third for girls and one-fifth for boys. Two studies by Olweus (1993) also found that girls are more likely to experience social bullying than boys, and are more likely to experience more physical and direct forms of bullying. In comparison

to physical and verbal bullying, social bullying occurs more often in the classroom setting. Research indicated the emotional damage from social bullying is known to have the same damaging effects as physical violence (Lagerspetz, et al., 1988).

Verbal

Verbal bullying consists of teasing, taunting, or mocking the victim in a direct face to face manner (Cole, J. C. M., Cornell, D. G., & Sheras, P., 2006). It appears that verbal bullying is damaging to its victim. It is often overlooked when compared to physical bullying. A UCLA study in 2003 stated: "Many schools have rules and interventions that target physical forms of aggression, but when there is name-calling we find no support for the idea that verbal harassment is less hurtful in causing emotional distress than physical aggression" (UCLA, 2003). Verbal bullying is a fairly common problem facing youths. In fact, according to a study by Calaguas (2011), teasing was found to be the most common type of peer aggression. Verbal bullying affects both genders, according to Nansel, T. R., Overpeck,. Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001), Belittling someone's looks or speech was common between both sexes, along with negative comments about their religion or race. Another study found that 71% of the middle school participants reported being victims of verbal bullying at least once in their lives, and 26% of the participants reported witnessing verbal bullying at least once a week (DiBasilio, 2008). Although both genders experience verbal bullying, girls tend to internalize it more. (Coyne, S. M., Archer, J., & Eslea, M., 2006) suggest that verbal bullying is perceived to be more harmful by girls than boys. Coyne, et al., (2006) also reported that an adolescent girl's perception of her social status is of higher importance to her self-concept than adolescent boys, and therefore, find verbal bullying more damaging to a girl's social status and more harmful than physical bullying. One explanation

why girls use verbal bullying more often than boys is that girls tend to use indirect aggression more than boys (Bjorkqvist, Kirsti, Lagerspetz, & Ari Kaukiainen, 1991).

Physical Bullying

According to the National School Safety Center (2010) physical bullying can be defined as: Direct and physical bullying includes punching, poking, strangling, suffocating, pinching, shoving, hitting, biting, spitting, hair pulling, finger bending, ganging up or cornering, stabbing, excessive tickling, burning, poisoning, theft and shooting (www.schoolsafety.us). Studies show that boys are more apt to be involved in physical bullying than girls. An analysis of the data conducted by Nansel, et al., (2001), involved survey information that was collected in the spring of 1998 by the World Health Organization. Sample size was rather large including 15,686 participants. Nansel, et al., (2001), found that 18% of boys answered they were victims of physical bullying, specifically slapping and hitting, on a frequent basis as compared to 11% for girls.

Cyberbullying

A new and growing phenomenon known as cyberbullying has become a topic that has caught the attention of the media, school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and many other groups. Cyberbullying, in essence, involves the use of electronic devices to bully others. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) define cyberbullying as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text." The term "cyberbullying" has not been around for a long time. One of the pioneers of public awareness of cyberbullying, Belsey (2005), states that "Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others." (www.cyberbully.org).

Who does Cyberbullying effect?

The effects of cyberbullying are quite concerning. Although research in this area is in its infancy compared to traditional bullying, research has shown negative effects of cyberbullying. It is important to learn who is affected by cyberbullying. According to Patchin & Hinduja (2006), gender is not a significant factor in the prevalence of cyberbullying. It appears that the amount of time online and computer literacy are more important factors in determining susceptibility to cyberbullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). In another study conducted by Hinduja & Patchin (2008), it was also found that gender did not appear to play a role in cyberbullying victimization. Not all of the research indicates a non-gender link. For example, in a study conducted by Agarston, Kowalski, & Limber (2007), girls reported being victims more than boys. Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N., (2008), also indicates cyberbullying is more prominent in girls and suggests that boys tend to use physical violence as a possible reason. Research done on gender differences appears to indicate that girls are slightly more affected, although future research may be needed in this area.

It appears that age may have a significant impact on cyberbullying. It was concluded that out of 133 high school students that younger children in high school reported being the victim of cyberbullying more often as compared to older high school students who reported being bullied. (Aoyama, Barnard-Brak, Talbert, 2011).

How does Cyberbullying affect children?

Since cyberbullying is a relatively new concept, it is important to look at the findings on what the effects of cyberbullying are on children. One study conducted showed that youths that were cyber-bullied had depression and school related problems. (Ybarra, Espelage, & Mitchell,

2007). Raskauskas (2010) also found that being a victim of cyberbullying increases depression. Additionally, this study found that unlike traditional bullying there may not be an escape as cyberbullying can occur 24/7. Evidence suggests that besides depression, cyberbullying can take a toll on self-esteem. In a study found by Patchin and Hinduja (2010) a correlation was found between cyberbullying and self-esteem. In fact, their findings suggest that both victims of cyberbullying and perpetrators have been found to have lower self-esteem as a result of cyberbullying. The study notes that the study is not based on a national sample size which may limit the significance of the findings. This is an area where more research would be beneficial. Although research in this specific area is limited, publicized literature to families in regard to effects of cyberbullying do include low self-esteem. For example, according to the National Crime Prevention Counsel, "Victims of cyberbullying may experience many of the same effects as children who are bullied in person, such as a drop in grades, low self-esteem, a change in interests, or depression. However, cyberbullying can seem more extreme to its victims because of several factors" (www.promoteprevent.org/publications/prevention-briefs/preventing-cyberbullyingschools).

The incidence of teen suicide as a result of cyberbullying has garnered the attention of communities across the nation. In 2007, 1,963 middle school aged children were asked about suicidal thoughts. According to this study, children who were victims and offenders of cyberbullying both had more thoughts on suicide and an increased risk of following through with suicide. (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010).

Teen suicide as a result of cyberbullying is yet another area where much more research is needed. The study described above, Hinduja & Patchin (2010) is consistent with research that has been done on suicide for traditional bullying. A survey conducted between 2002 and 2004 in six New York High schools found that traditional bullying was associated with teen suicide. This

study found that both victims and perpetrators of bullying had an increased risk of depression and suicide. Girls were also more likely than boys to have suicidal thoughts. (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007).

Frequency of Cyberbullying

With the explosion of technology, specifically, communication technology, it is important to understand how it is being used. Communication technologies, such as cell phones, computers, internet devices, etc, are devices that a cyberbully could use to bully students. How frequently is cyberbullying occurring? A telephone survey done in the spring of 2005 attempted to find out this answer. According to this study, 9% of students reported being harassed online. One interesting result of the data was that 57% of the offenders were people they did not know in person, but met online. (Wolak, J., Mitchell, K., & Finkelhor, D., 2007). This study included a sample that represented the whole country not just a particular area. Wright, Burnham, Inman, & Ogorchock (2009), conducted a study in a school system located in the south eastern part of the United States. Accordingly, the study found that out of 114 participants, around half knew of specific cyberbullying events that had occurred. Further, of the students who reported being a victim of cyberbullying, 53% answered that they had been victimized on the website MySpace and 50% indicated that the bullying occurred via a cell phone. Interestingly, 35% answered they had been victimized through an online virtual game. (Wright et al., 2009).

Types of Cyberbullying

Denigration. Denigration is a term used for cyberbullying which refers to when an adolescent/or adult posts hurtful lies about another person online (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). Cyberbullies are known to post fictitious stories and lies about an individual on social networking

sites (Facebook, MySpace), personal webpages, and on random blogs. Victims of denigration may not be able to delete this information, since the person might have created these accounts with fictitious names and passwords or the victims just does not have access to remove the slander.

Flaming/Harassment. Flaming is the act of exchanging negative emails between two or more people. (Willard, 2007). Most studies refer to flaming as messages sent containing various forms of hostility, aggression, intimidation, insults, sarcasm, and the use of unfavorable attitudes and unpleasing language. Flaming messages are usually messages using all capital letters to show anger and yelling, excessive punctuation marks, and profanity sent in text messages or online instant messages. Repeatedly sending these types of messages through email, text messages or online instant message is a form of harassment. Threatening a person repeatedly will emotionally upset someone and these acts constitute cyberbullying. (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007).

Impersonation. Impersonation is the act of misleadingly identifying yourself as another person and posting current information as if you were actually that person (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). Since the internet is comprised of secrecy, impersonation is the easiest form of cyberbullying. It is untraceable as to who posted the slander and to verify if the information is presented accurately. Chat rooms lead to the most common issues, because it is just creating a screen name and saying you are that person and impersonating becomes easy.

Outing and Trickery. Outing and trickery involves sharing personal or embarrassing information about another person electronically (Kowalski, 2009). Outing can take place when an individual purposely exposes information about another individual without permission. The information can

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be passed on to other individuals through emails, text messages, chat rooms, or the information can be posted on web pages, Facebook or on blogs. Trickery takes place when an individual is purposely tricked into sharing private information and then that information is then shared with others without permission.

Exclusion and Ostracism. Exclusion and ostracism through usage of computer can take place by removing or blocking someone from buddy lists, chat rooms, Internet groups, or gaming websites (Kowalski, 2009). Exclusion and ostracism have been found to be very powerful acts of cyberbullying. Studies have found that individuals who have been exposed to exclusion and ostracism for a short period of time report worsened moods and lower levels of belonging, control, self-concept, and meaningful existence. (Williams, 1997, 2001).

Bullying in Children with Learning Disabilities

Research on bullying and more recently cyberbullying has caught the national attention of the media. The 1999 Columbine tragedy is one well known incident where victims of bullying lashed out and went on a killing spree. It is important to understand the literature regarding susceptibility to bullying in order to best understand how to prevent it and the negative outcomes it produces. One group of individuals that appear be more prone to bullying are children with learning disabilities. Evidence suggests that children with learning disabilities have poor social abilities, which has been shown to be a major contributing factor in bullying. McConaughy, Kay, & Fitzgerald, (2000) found that children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) scored lower on six measures of social behavior. Additionally, children with ADHD were less likely to be involved in group activities. Another study found that girls with ADHD were at a

higher risk for anti-social disorders (Biederman, 2010). Unnever (2004) found that children with ADHD were significantly more likely to be both victims of bullying and offenders of bullying. Results of their study show that approximately 1/3 of their participants with ADHD were victimized by bullying as compared to approximately 1/5 of students without ADHD. Moreover, 13% of students with ADHD reported being a bully as compared to 8% of students without ADHD. Cosden (2003) states that children with learning disabilities have social issues. Research has indicated that victims of bullying tend to be insecure along with a tendency to not be able to assert themselves. (Olweus, 1993). Sabornie (1994) found that victims of bullying tend to be too passive and miss social cues that would avoid bullying. This link between bullying victims possessing poor social skills with children with learning disabilities having social deficits appears to be the major contributing factor in children with learning disabilities susceptibility to bullying.

Laws Protecting Children with Learning Disabilities

Law protecting children with learning disabilities are protected by federal laws from discrimination. Two main laws that protect children with learning disabilities are section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA. Section 504 can be summarized as "Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (www2.ed.gov). Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . ." (www2.edu.gov). Furthermore, Section 504 specifically relates to a child with a learning disability in the following manner: "To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits

one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities". (www2.edu.gov) children with learning disabilities are classified and have more protection under: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). According to (www2.edu.gov) "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) (http://www2.ed.gov/policy) aims to ensure that students with disabilities in public K-12 schools receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE)." Under IDEA each child has to be evaluated in determining if they are eligible. IEP, or Individual Education Plans (IEP) are used to guide the education of the child. (www2.ed.gov/policy).

Bullying Laws for Children Classified with Learning Disabilities
Under Federal Law

Bullying is not specifically mentioned in IDEA. However, a letter written by

Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education during the summer of 2000 were made aware of concerns about disability harassment. (www2.ed.gov). The letter stated "Disability harassment can have a profound impact on students, raise safety concerns, and erode efforts to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the myriad benefits that an education offers". (www2.ed.gov). Furthermore, the letter reminded schools and other institutions of learning about their responsibility to provide equal opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities.

State

Federal laws on bullying target anti-discrimination laws already in existence, but may not be specific enough to adequately protect children. States are starting to pass anti-bullying legislation as a result of the attention bullying has garnered in the media, along with the focus in school systems. In response to the 1999 Columbine incident, Georgia became the first state to enact anti-bullying laws. (www2ed.gov). According to this report, as of April 2011 only four states do not have anti-bullying laws. This same report indicated that 36 of the 46 states which have anti-bullying laws have language in regards to cyberbullying. Thirteen of these states have language that increases their authority to deal with cyberbullying outside school grounds. This is a particular challenge due to the legal implications of school system authority reaching beyond their normal jurisdiction.

NJ has had an anti-bullying law since 2002 (www2.ed.gov). The United States Department of education study is a comprehensive look at anti-bullying laws, components of laws, and information on which states meet certain criteria. (www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills). According to this report, there are 16 key components that need to be met for a comprehensive anti-bullying law. For example, one key component is purpose defined as "Outlines the range of detrimental effects bullying has on students, including the impact on student learning, school safety, student engagement, and the school environment. It also declares that any form, type, or level of bullying is unacceptable, and that every incident needs to be taken seriously by school administrators, school staff (including teachers), students, and students' families. (www2.ed.gov). Report states that New Jersey and Maryland are the only two states to have provisions in their laws that cover all of the components and sub-components. NJ anti-bullying laws have evolved since its inception in 2002. In 2007, it was updated to include cyberbullying. In 2008 it was updated to require school

districts to post their anti-bullying laws on the district web page and hand out materials to parents and students yearly. (www.state.nj.us).

In 2011, Governor Chris Christie signed into law an addition to current NJ anti-bullying laws. This addition is called Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying or (HIB). One of the main components of this new law is to require school districts to respond to bullying and cyberbullying off school grounds. Additionally, investigations into bullying incidents must be performed by an anti-bullying specialist. (www.state.nj.us). New Jersey's new law has been noted by several sources to be the toughest in the nation. New York Times answered: "The law, known as the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, is considered the toughest legislation against bullying in the nation. Propelled by public outcry over the suicide of a Rutgers University freshman, Tyler Clementi, nearly a year ago, it demands that all public schools adopt comprehensive antibullying policies." (www.nytimes.com). An article written in, Time Magazine entitled "Why New Jersey's Antibullying Law Should Be a Model for Other States," discusses how the new law puts bullies on notice and helps victims of bullying. (www.time.com).

Research on traditional bullying is more extensive than cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon which evolves as technology changes and grows. While all aspects of cyberbullying are yet to be understood, research indicates that cyberbullying presents many of the same issues as traditional bullying. Research also shows that children with learning disabilities are especially prone to the harmful effects of bullying, however literature on how cyberbullying affects children with learning disabilities is extremely lacking. Parents play a key role in the lives of their children. The decisions parents make for a child with a learning disability can greatly affect their life. Therefore, it is important to understand how parents of children with learning disabilities view, perceive, and understand cyberbullying of their children compared to parents without children with

learning disabilities. This research will gain valuable insight into these questions and build upon the small amount of research that has been done in this area.

Chapter 3

Method

This study examined the relationship between cyberbullying and the parental concern of school age children. The study used a survey design to quantify the results and the data was collected through an online website. The study sampled 24 parents of students who are classified under IDEA and 31 parents of students who are not classified under IDEA in New Jersey. Parents answered questions on a questionnaire assessing their experiences and concerns on cyberbullying regarding their children. The survey was designed to gather data on parental concerns, awareness, reported experiences, and action taken in regards to cyberbullying related to their children. Study assessment in these areas looked at the differences between parents with children that have learning disabilities and those parents who do not have a child with learning disabilities. Data collection was done anonymously.

Preparation

In preparation, information was gathered from online sources. These sources explored a variety of concerns that parents today face. Information and clinical Websites about Cyberbullying were found on the web. A few sites used for this research were:

(www.aftab.com/cyberbullyingpage.htm, www.cyberbullying.ca, www.bullying.org,

www.cyberbully.org, www.cyberbullying.us, www.pewinternet.org), were informative and clinical sites about Cyberbullying. These are some sites were used to create the surveys for this thesis. Questions were then formulated to assess all five research questions.

Sample questions used for the survey were: "How often do you check your child's email?", "How often does your child use social networking sites like MySpace, Skype, or Facebook?", "Are

you concerned the information your child posts online could lead to them being victims of cyberbullying?", "What level of concern do you have in regards to your child being a victim of cyberbullying?" Questions were also included to determine the level of parental involvement in relation to a child being protected from cyberbullying. Questions about concern of preventing victimization such as, "Has your child ever been contacted by a stranger online which led to your child conversing with that stranger?" "Has your child been threatened or cyberbullied by a student or a friend online?" "Have you discussed with your child what to do if they are contacted by someone they did not know?"

Out of thirty research questions on the questionnaire, only twenty questions that assessed parental input of cyberbullying were used in this study. The remaining questions were used to gather sampling information. Five questions were used to address if the concerns of parents of classified and non-classified children were the same. Three questions addressed if parents of children classified and not classified children differ in their awareness of cyberbullying. Four questions concerning parental experiences of children who are classified and non-classified were used to investigate if the outcome reported the same cyberbullying experiences. Six questions addressed the extent that parents of classified and non-classified children protect their children by monitoring online activity. Two questions in the survey addressed gender differences between classified and non-classified children.

Surveys were administered online to parents of both classified and non-classified children. All measures were administered to participating parents. Information was presented to all parents through an online webpage interface. An introductory paragraph was presented to all parents on the rationale of the survey. The survey consisted of thirty questions designed to address the five

research questions. A sample of 55 parents was sampled. All participants were familiar with cell phones, internet, and/or computers.

Participants were drawn from the New Jersey area, parents who currently have a non-classified child and those who have a child who is classified (IDEA) in the New Jersey public schools. All participants had access to electronic media through home or work.

Cyberbullying Questionnaire

A thirty item cyberbullying questionnaire was developed to measure cyberbullying behavior addressed by parental concerns in this study. Questionnaires were distributed on Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is an online website geared to constructing surveys for various research methods.

Participants

Parents completed the questionnaires online. They were asked whether their child had a learning disability, and the current grade range their child fell under. Parents were asked descriptive questions which addressed concerns about cyberbullying. They were also asked about their awareness of cyberbullying with regards to their children. In addition survey questions focused on the parents' ability to monitor their child's technology usage. Parents were reminded of the definition of cyberbullying. The questionnaires were geared towards how parents currently assess their child's use of the internet, and their concerns of cyberbullying. On completion, the questionnaires were then analyzed and imputed into an electronic spreadsheet created by Survey Monkey. The next step was to analyze the data from the survey. This was done by breaking down each of the five research questions into categories and evaluating the data. Each of the five research questions was analyzed and some of the information was synthesized. Following the analysis of the data a summary report was constructed. This summary included a breakdown of five research

questions then separated results of the online survey of parents who have children who are classified (IDEA) and children who do not qualify for IDEA classification.

Chapter 4

Results

This study examined differences between parents having and not having a classified child (IDEA) regarding cyberbullying. Participants were asked a series of questions related to their concern, awareness, experience, online monitoring, and gender differences about cyberbullying. Five main research questions were explored to as outlined below.

Question 1- Do parents of classified children (under IDEA) have different concerns about cyberbullying than those whose children are not classified and in the general education population?

Tables 1 and 2 show responses of parents on their opinions on what schools should do about cyberbullying. Of the parents having a child not classified (IDEA), 93.3% responded that schools should have more education about cyberbullying. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 72.7% responded that schools should have more education about cyberbullying.

Table 1
Parent Opinion on Cyberbullying Involvement, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

In your opinion, what should schools do about Cyberbullying:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Have more education about Cyberbullying	93.3%	28
Have less education about Cyberbullying	0.0%	0
Currently has just the right amount of education	6.7%	2
	answered question	30
	skipped question	1

Table 2
Parent Opinion on Cyberbullying Involvement, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

In your opinion, what should schools do about Cyberbullying:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Have more education about Cyberbullying	72.7%	16
Have less education about Cyberbullying	9.1%	2
Currently has just the right amount of education	18.2%	4
	answered question	22
	skipped question	2
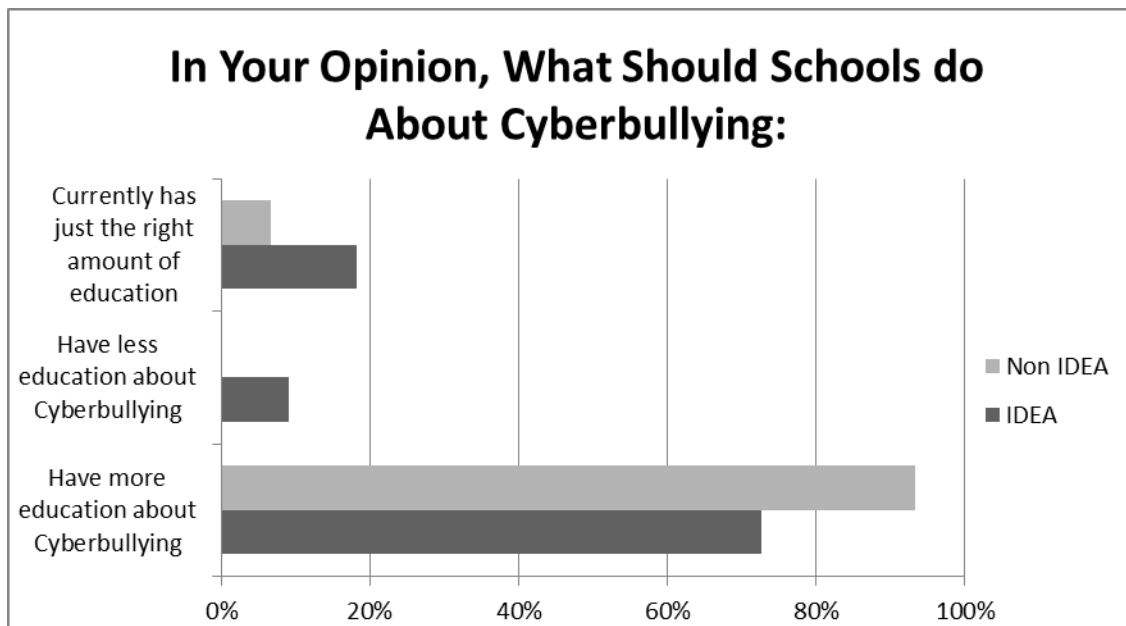
Figure 1. Results of Both Parental Groups Involving what Schools Should do about Cyberbullying.

Figure 1 illustrates that 93.3% of parents having a non-classified child (IDEA) think there should be more education about cyberbullying in schools as compared to 72.7% of parents having a child classified under IDEA. Results show that 9.1% of parents having a child classified under

IDEA believe schools should have less education; however, none of the parents having a child not classified (IDEA) answered there should be less education.

Tables 3 and 4 display the results for parental concerns about the possibility of their child becoming a victim of cyberbullying. Using a Likert scale (Likert, 1932) from one to ten, where one is the lowest concern and 10 is the highest concern, parents in both groups rated their concern. Parents having a child not classified under IDEA reported a 5 value in 11 instances, or 36.7% of parents. Five parents reported a 10 value, or 16.7% had the highest level of concern. Four parents answered with a value of 1, or 13.3% of parents had the least concern. Parents having a child classified under IDEA reported a 3 value in 4 instances, or 18.2% of parents. Three parents reported a 10 value, or 13.6% had the highest level of concern. Three parents answered with a value of 1, or 13.3% of parents had the least concern.

Table 3
Parental Concern on Victim of Cyberbullying , having a Child Who is not Classified under IDEA.

From a scale 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest concern and 10 being the highest, how concerned are you that your child will be the victim of Cyberbullying?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	13.3%	4
2	0.0%	0
3	16.7%	5
4	0.0%	0
5	36.7%	11
6	6.7%	2
7	3.3%	1
8	3.3%	1
9	3.3%	1
10	16.7%	5
	answered question	30
	skipped question	1

Table 4
Parental Concern on Victim of Cyberbullying, having a Child classified under IDEA.

From a scale 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest concern and 10 being the highest, how concerned are you that your child will be the victim of Cyberbullying?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	13.6%	3
2	4.5%	1
3	18.2%	4
4	0.0%	0
5	9.1%	2
6	9.1%	2
7	9.1%	2
8	22.7%	5
9	0.0%	0
10	13.6%	3
	answered question	22
	skipped question	2
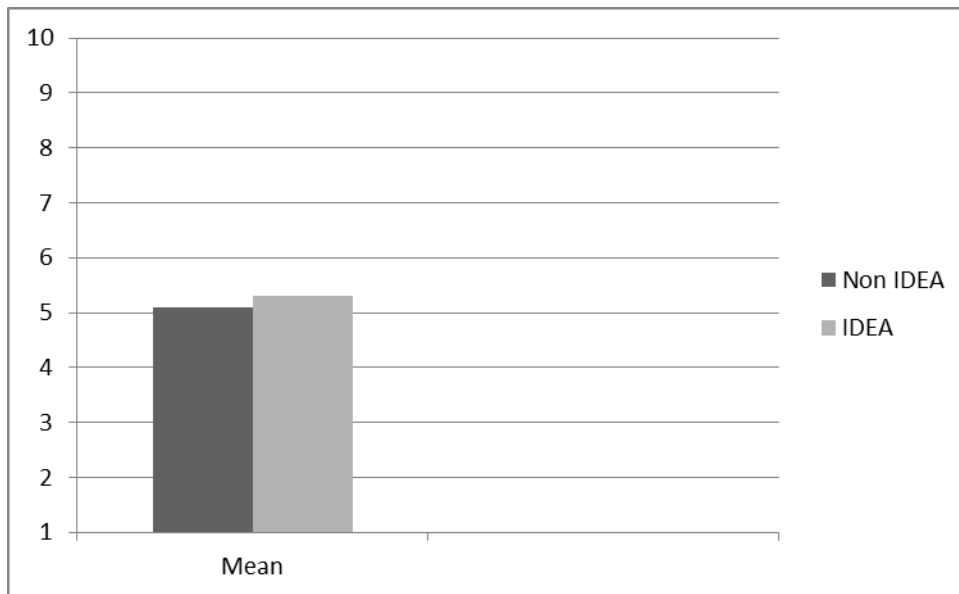
Figure 2. Mean of Both Groups on Concern that Their Child will be the Victim of Cyberbullying.

Figure 2 shows the results of the comparison of the mean scores on questions 3 (concerns about becoming a victim of cyberbullying) of parents having a child classified under IDEA compared to parents having a child not classified under IDEA. The results indicate that the group of parents having a classified child (IDEA) had a mean score of 5.1, whereas the parents having a

child not classified under IDEA had a mean score of 5.3. Parents having a child not classified under IDEA were slightly more concerned about their children being victims of cyberbullying.

Table 5 and Table 6 present the results on the question of the extent to which parents are concerned that information their child posts online could lead them to becoming victims of cyberbullying. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 42.9% responded with "Yes" to being concerned the information their child posts online could lead to them becoming victims of cyberbullying. Out of 31 parents, three or roughly 9% did not answer the question. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA answered, 36.4% responded with "Yes" to being concerned the information their child posts online could lead to them becoming victims of cyberbullying. Out of 24 parents, two or 8% did not answer the question.

Table 5
Parental Concern about Information their Child Post Online, having a Child Not Classified Under IDEA.

Are you concerned the information your child posts online could lead to them being victims of cyberbullying?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	42.9%	12
No	57.1%	16
answered question		28
skipped question		3

Table 6

Parental Concern about Information their Child Post Online, having a Child Classified Under IDEA.

Are you concerned the information your child posts online could lead to them being victims of cyberbullying?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	36.4%	8
No	63.6%	14
	answered question	22
	skipped question	2
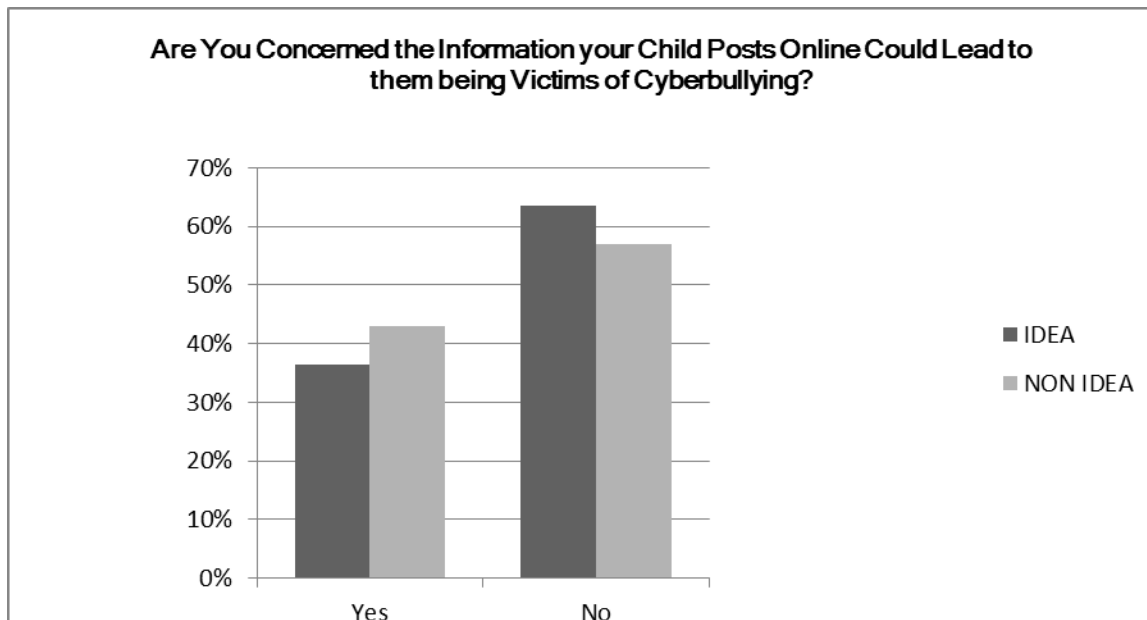
Figure 3. Results comparing concerns on online postings between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA.

Table 7 and Table 8 contain the results of answers that show the effect of cyberbullying, and what the parental concerns were. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 65.5% responded that their child would lose confidence in themselves, while 20.7% of parents had no concern. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 77.3% responded that that their child would lose confidence in themselves and 9.1% of parents had no concern.

Table 7
Parental Concern of Specific Effects of Cyberbullying, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Which effect of Cyberbullying would concern you the most? Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Your child would lose confidence in themselves	65.5%	19
Your child would act out towards others	10.3%	3
Your child's grade would suffer	3.4%	1
I have no concern	20.7%	6
answered question		29
skipped question		2

Table 8
Parental Concern of Specific Effects of Cyberbullying, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Which effect of Cyberbullying would concern you the most?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Your child would lose confidence in themselves	77.3%	17
Your child would act out towards others	9.1%	2
Your child's grade would suffer	4.5%	1
I have no concern	9.1%	2
answered question		22
skipped question		2
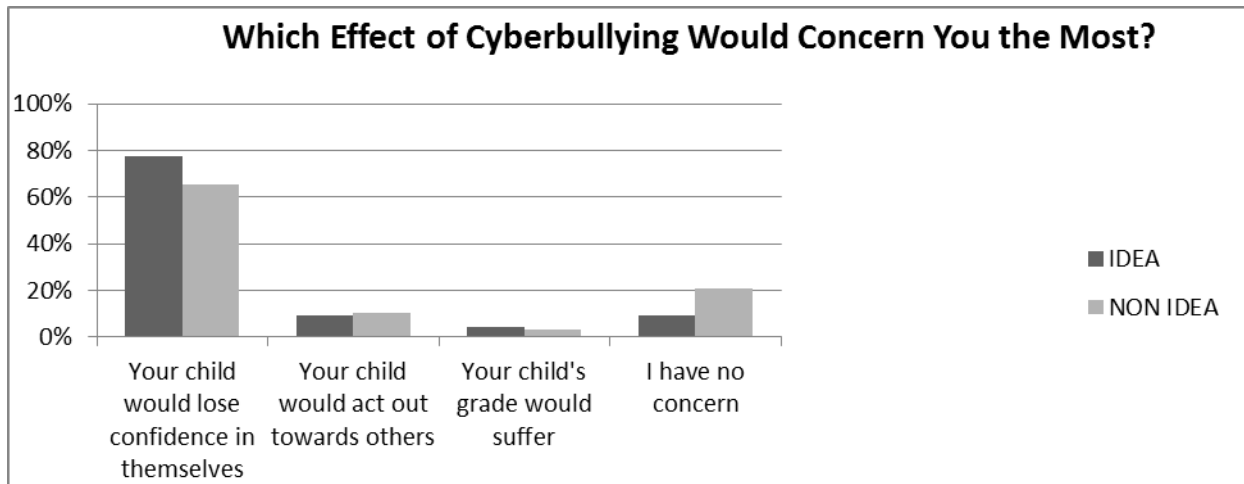
Figure 4. Specific Effect of Cyberbullying concerning Parents having a Child not Classified under IDEA and Parents having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Figure 4 shows that 65.5% of parents having a child not classified under IDEA were concerned that their child would lose confidence in themselves. This was compared to 77.3% of the parents having a child classified under IDEA. 20.7%. The parents having a child not classified under IDEA had no concern about losing confidence. This was compared to 9.1% of the parents having a child classified under IDEA.

Tables 9 and 10 report parental responses on whether changes would be considered based on taking the survey. The parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 37.9% responded that they would make changes, 10.3% of parents were not sure, and 51.7% responded that they would not make changes. Of the parents who were surveyed two or 6.4% did not answer the question. A continued look at the responses from the parents, who had a child classified under IDEA, showed that 45.5% responded they would make changes, and 45.5% responded they would not make changes. Two of the parents or 8.3% did not answer the question.

Table 9

Parental Responses on Online Awareness, having a Child Not Classified under IDEA.

Cyberbullying affects children in many ways. Based on your survey answers, are you considering making changes to your online awareness?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	37.9%	11
No	51.7%	15
Not sure	10.3%	3
	answered question	29
	skipped question	2

Table 10

Parental Responses on Online Awareness, having a Child Classified Under IDEA.

Cyberbullying affects children in many ways. Based on your survey answers, are you considering making changes to your online awareness?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	45.5%	10
No	45.5%	10
Not sure	9.1%	2
	answered question	22
	skipped question	2
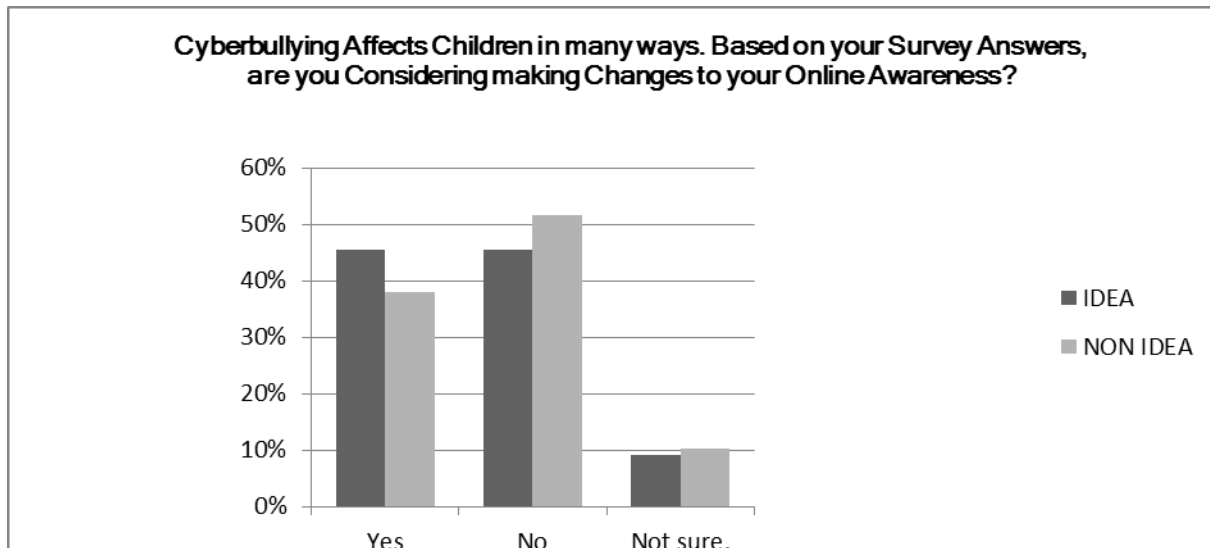
Figure 5. Comparison of Combined Groups on Online Awareness.

Figure 5 presents a comparison of both groups of parents on the question of making changes to online awareness. Of the parents not classified under IDEA, 37.9% responded that they would make changes to their online awareness. In addition, 45.5% of the parents having a classified child (IDEA) responded that they would make changes to their online awareness.

Question 2- Do parents who have a child classified (under IDEA) and parents whose children arnot classified differ in their awareness of cyberbullying?

Tables 11 and 12 detail responses on awareness of cell phone software that tracks a person's location. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 55% reported their child did not have a smart phone, 10.3% responded that they were aware and disabled the software, 3.4% responded they were aware, disabled it, but should check if their child re-enabled it, 24.1% responded they were not aware of the software, and 6.9% did not answer the question. Two parents responded with "Other" and wrote they were aware of the software and that it was enabled.

Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 75% reported their child does not have a smart phone, 15% responded they were aware and disabled the software, 5.0% responded they were aware, disabled it, but should check if their child enabled it, 5% responded they were not aware of the software and 16.6% did not answer the question. Four parents responded with "Other", two of whom wrote they were aware and it was enabled, one parent wrote their child used their phone for the internet, and another parent wrote their child does not have a cell phone.

Table 11

Geo Tagging Software/Smartphone, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Are you aware that many smart phones have geo tagging software on the device that will automatically store data that will reveal your child's exact location?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
My child does not have a Smart phone.	55.2%	16
Yes-disabled	10.3%	3
No-No idea it was loaded on the phone.	24.1%	7
I disabled, but should check to assure my child did not turn it on.	3.4%	1
Unsure.	6.9%	2
Other (please specify)		2
	answered question	29
	skipped question	2

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)	Categories
1	Feb 29, 2012 5:25 PM	Yes, we use it	
2	Feb 14, 2012 2:18 PM	yes enabled	

Table 12

Geo Tagging Software/Smartphone, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Are you aware that many smart phones have geo tagging software on the device that will automatically store data that will reveal your child's exact location?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
My child does not have a Smart phone.	75.0%	15
Yes-disabled	15.0%	3
No-No idea it was loaded on the phone.	5.0%	1
I disabled, but should check to assure my child did not turn it on.	5.0%	1
Unsure.	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		4
	answered question	20
	skipped question	4

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)	Categories
1	Apr 5, 2012 2:30 AM	They use their phone for internet	
2	Apr 5, 2012 2:26 AM	child does not have cellphone	
3	Apr 5, 2012 2:23 AM	yes, enabled	
4	Feb 12, 2012 7:11 PM	yes- enabled.	
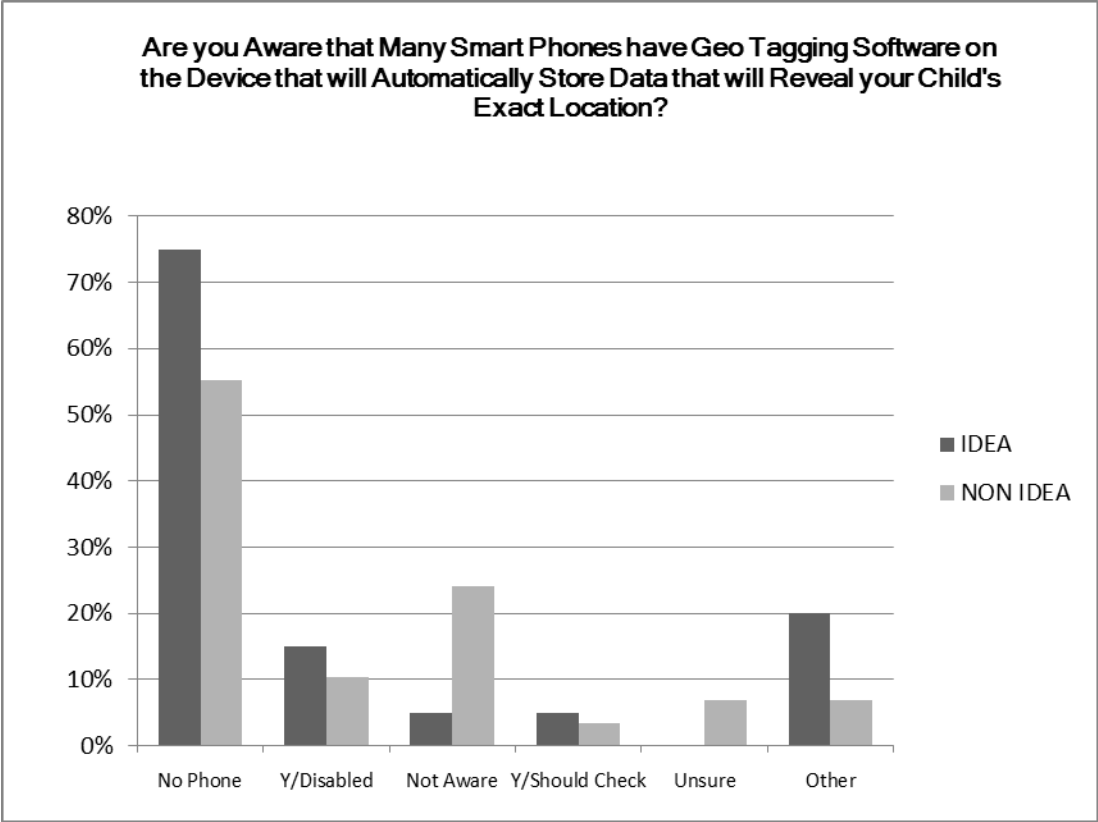
Figure 6. Awareness about Geo Tagging Software/Smartphone.

Figure 6 displays a comparison between the parents having a child classified under IDEA group and the parents having a child not classified under IDEA group. In both groups more than 50% reported their child did not have a smart phone. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 10.3% were aware of the software, and 24.1% reported they were unaware of the software. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 15% reported being aware of the software, and only 5.0% reported not being aware of the software.

Tables 13 and 14 reports the results of questions on parental awareness and whether their child's friend's parents monitor online usage when their child is staying with a friend. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 82.8% responded they were "Not Sure", 10.3% responded with "Yes", and 10.3% responded with "No". Of the parents having a child classified

under IDEA, 56.5% responded they were "Not Sure", 34.8% responded with "Yes", and 8.7%

responded with "No".

Table 13
Parental Awareness on Monitoring, having a Child not under IDEA.

When your child stays with a friend, do their parents monitor what they do online?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	10.3%	3
No	10.3%	3
Not Sure	82.8%	24
answered question		29
skipped question		2

Table 14
Parental Awareness on Monitoring, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

When your child stays with a friend, do their parents monitor what they do online?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	34.8%	8
No	8.7%	2
Not Sure	56.5%	13
answered question		23
skipped question		1

When your child stays with a friend, do their parents monitor what they do online?
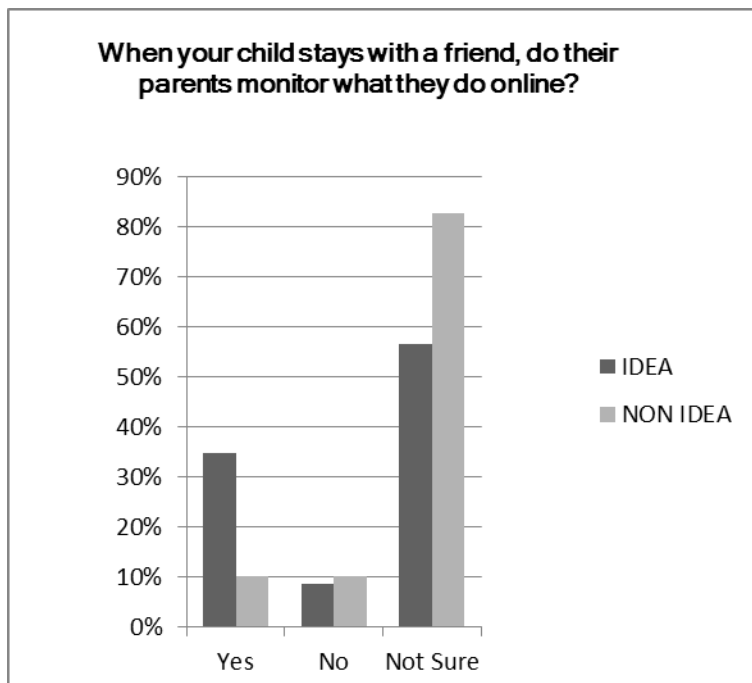
Figure 7. Parental Monitoring of Online Usage.

Figure 7 presents the results of a comparison of results for monitoring online usage by parents having a child classified under IDEA and between parents having a child not classified under IDEA. Results show that 26.3% more parents that have a child not classified under IDEA were unaware on parental monitoring than the parents that have a child classified under IDEA. Comparing "Yes" responses between the two groups, 24.5% more of parents that have a child classified under IDEA responded with "Yes" then parents that have a child not classified under IDEA.

Tables 15 and 16 display responses on whether parents are aware if their child had been contacted by a stranger. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 3.7% responded that their child had been contacted by a stranger online, while 11.1% responded they were not sure. In comparison, 9.1% of parents having a child classified under IDEA responded their child had been contacted by a stranger, and 4.5 responded they were not sure.

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Table 15

Parental Knowledge of Child Contacted Online by Stranger, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been contacted by a stranger online which led to your child chatting with that stranger?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	3.7%	1
No	85.2%	23
Unsure	11.1%	3
answered question		27
skipped question		4

Table 16

Parental Knowledge of Child Contacted Online by Stranger, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been contacted by a stranger online which led to your child chatting with that stranger?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	9.1%	2
No	86.4%	19
unsure	4.5%	1
answered question		22
skipped question		2
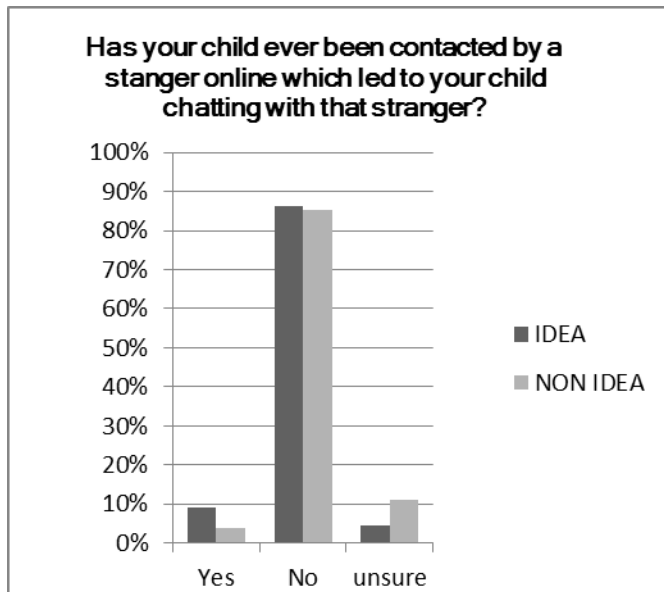
Figure 8. Percentages of Parental Response on Child being Contacted by Stranger.

Figure 8 presents a comparison of the results for contact by strangers online by parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA on parental knowledge on whether or not their child has ever been contacted by a stranger online. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA group, 11.1% reported being unsure, as compared to 4.5% of the parents having a child classified under IDEA. In both groups over 80% reported their child had not been contacted by a stranger.

Question 3- According to parents; are the experiences of classified children (IDEA) the same as children who are not classified in regards to cyberbullying?

Tables 17 and 18 reports on parental responses on whether their child has been bullied in an email. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 12.9% responded that their child has been bullied in an email, while 64.5% responded they had not been bullied in an email and 22.6% indicated they were not sure. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 13. 6%

responded that their child has been bullied in an email, while 81.8% answered they had not been

bullied in an email, and 4.5% indicated they were not sure.

Table 17
Parental Responses on Whether Their Child has been Bullied via E-mail, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been bullied in an email?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	12.9%	4
No	64.5%	20
Not sure	22.6%	7
answered question		31
skipped question		0

Table 18
Parental Responses on Whether Their Child has been Bullied via E-mail, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been bullied in an email?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	13.6%	3
No	81.8%	18
Not sure	4.5%	1
answered question		22
skipped question		2
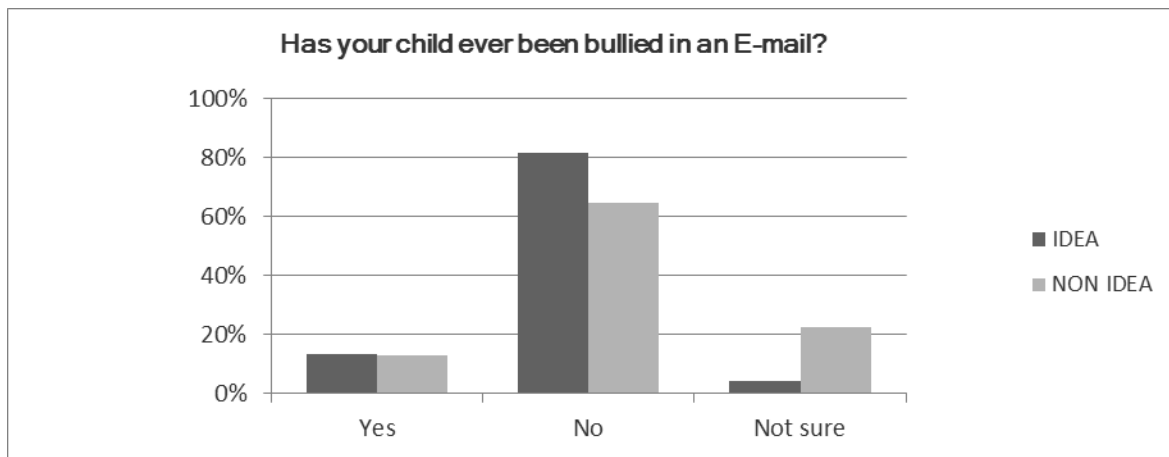
Figure 9. Parental Responses on Child Bullying via E-mail.

Figure 9 compares the responses between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and having a child classified under IDEA. "Yes" responses were similar between the two groups. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA 81.8%, responded that their child had not been bullied via email as compared to 64.5% of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA group. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 22.6% responded they were unsure if their child had been bullied in an email as compared to 4.5% of the parents having a child classified under IDEA.

Tables 19 and 20 reports the results of parental responses on whether their child has written a mean text message or Instant Message. Of parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 3.2% responded that their child had written a mean text message or Instant Message, 3.2% of parents responded that it happened one time but it was corrected, while 25.8% were unsure. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 3.2% responded that their child had written a mean text message or Instant Message, 8.3% stated it happened once but was corrected, 79.2% responded by answering "No", while 4.2% answered they were unsure.

Table 19

Parental Response on Whether Their Child has Written a Mean Text or Instant Message, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever written a mean text or instant message to anyone? (Cyberbullying)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	3.2%	1
No	67.7%	21
Not sure.	25.8%	8
Once, but I corrected the issue.	3.2%	1
	answered question	31
	skipped question	0

Table 20

Parental Response on Whether Their Child has Written a Mean Text or Instant Message, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever written a mean text or instant message to anyone? (Cyberbullying)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	8.3%	2
No	79.2%	19
Not sure.	4.2%	1
Once, but I corrected the issue.	8.3%	2
	answered question	24
	skipped question	0
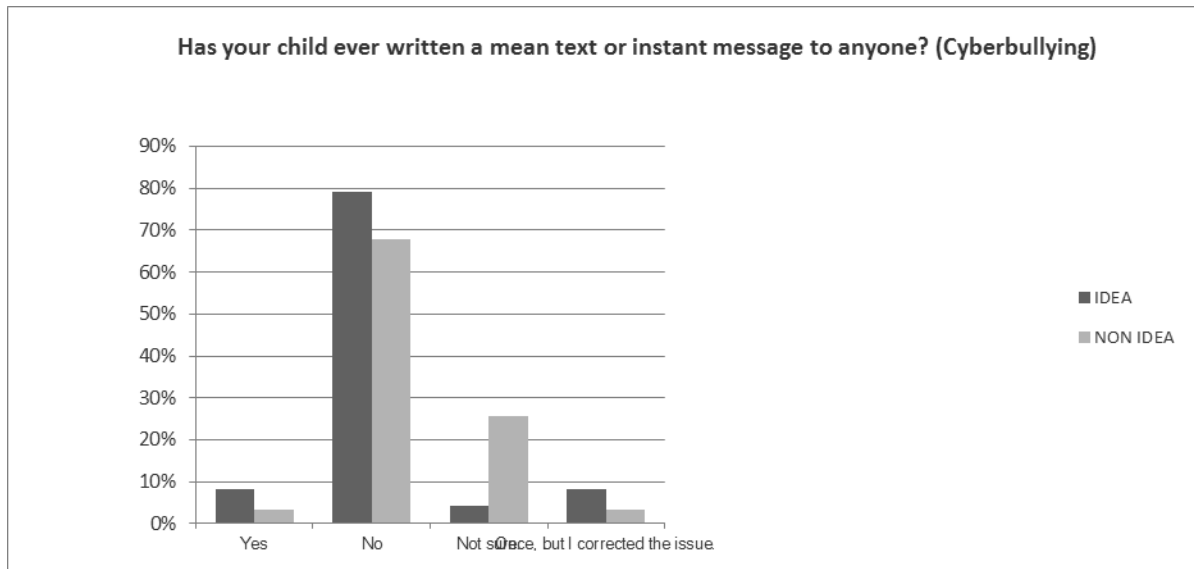
Figure 10. Percentage of Parental Response on Whether their Child Sent a Mean Text or Instant Message.

Figure 10 shows the results of comparison between parents having a child classified under IDEA and parents having a child not classified under IDEA. The results show if their child had written a mean text or instant message. Parents having a child classified under IDEA reported more "Yes" responses as well as "No" responses. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 25.8% were unsure as compared to 4.2% of parents having a child classified under IDEA.

Tables 21 and 22 details responses from parents on whether their child has been threatened online. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 10.3% responded that their child has been threatened online and 89.7% responded that they had not been threatened online. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 18.2% responded that their child has been threatened online and 81.8% responded that they had not been threatened online.

Table 21

Parental Responses to Whether Child has been Threatened Online, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been threatened online? (Includes MySpace, Skype, Facebook, Instant Messaging, and texting).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	10.3%	3
No	89.7%	26
if yes (please specify frequency)		0
	answered question	29
	skipped question	2

Table 22

Parental Responses to Whether Child has been Threatened Online, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been threatened online? (Includes MySpace, Skype, Facebook, Instant Messaging, and texting).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	18.2%	4
No	81.8%	18
if yes (please specify frequency)		3
	answered question	22
	skipped question	2

Number	Response Date	if yes (please specify frequency)	Categories
1	Feb 15, 2012 2:20 AM	a couple of kids from his old school. we pursued with the board of ed	
2	Feb 12, 2012 7:13 PM	on MySpace	
3	Feb 11, 2012 11:19 PM	Teasing	
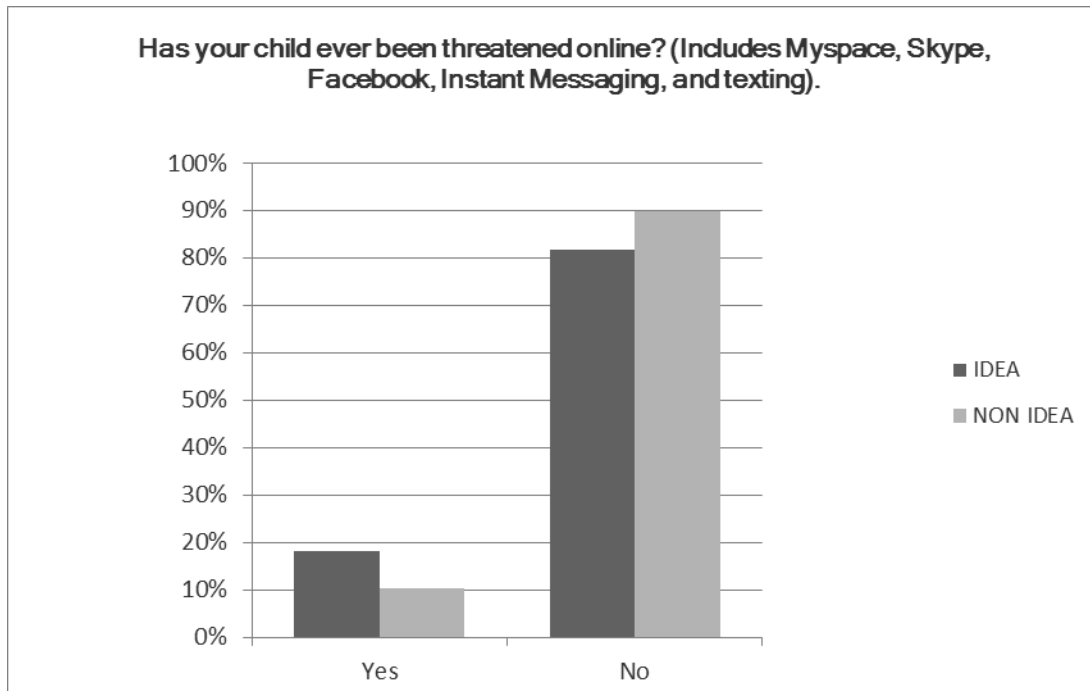
Figure 11. Parental responses on their child being threatened online

Figure 11 shows the results of a comparison between parents having a child not classified under IDEA to parents having a child classified under IDEA. The comparison shows if their child has been threatened online. The online tools included: MySpace, Skype, Facebook, Instant Messaging, and texting. Results show that 7.9% more of the parents having a child classified under IDEA reported their child had been threatened online.

Tables 23 and 24 detail parental responses on whether their child has been threatened or cyberbullied online by a friend or a student. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 10.7% responded "Yes", and 10.7% responded "Not sure" of the answer. Of parents having a child classified under IDEA, 18.2% responded "Yes", while no parents responded "Not sure".

Table 23

Parental Response on Whether Child has Been Threatened Online, having a Child Not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child been threatened or Cyberbullied by a student or a friend online?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	10.7%	3
No	78.6%	22
Not sure.	10.7%	3
answered question		28
skipped question		3

Table 24

Parental Response on Whether Child has been Threatened Online, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Has your child been threatened or Cyberbullied by a student or a friend online?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	18.2%	4
No	81.8%	18
Not sure.	0.0%	0
answered question		22
skipped question		2
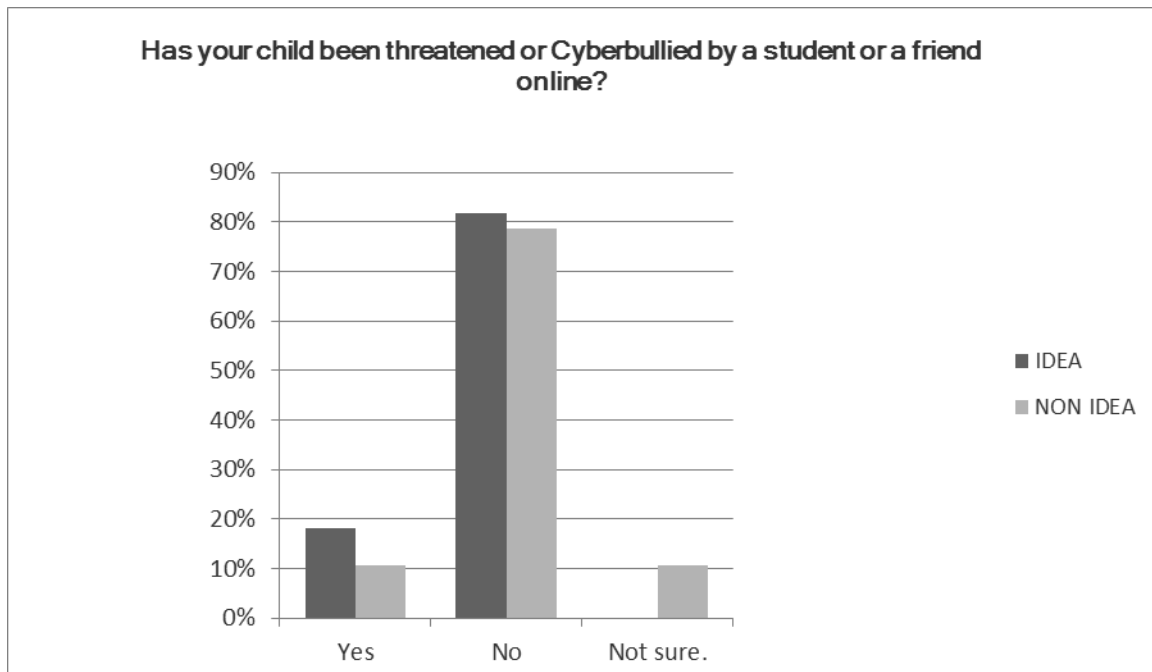
Figure 12. Comparison of the Two Groups, Being Threatened or Cyberbullied.

Figure 12 displays comparisons between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA. Compared to the parents having a child not classified under IDEA group, 7.5% more of the parents having a child classified under IDEA group reported their child had been threatened.

Question 4-To what extent do parents of children with and without classification protect their children by monitoring their online activity?

Tables 25 and 26 display responses on whether parents know all their child's email passwords. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 76% responded that they knew their child's password for all their email accounts, 12% of parents answered "No", and 12% responded that they knew some of their email account password. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 85% responded that they knew their child's password for all their email accounts, 10% of parents answered "No", and 5% responded they knew some of their email account passwords.

Table 25

Parental Responses on Whether They Know Passwords to Email Accounts, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Do you know your child's passwords for all their email accounts?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	76.0%	19
No	12.0%	3
Some	12.0%	3
Not sure how many email accounts they have	0.0%	0
	answered question	25
	skipped question	6

Table 26

Parental Responses on Whether They Know Passwords Email Accounts, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Do you know your child's passwords for all their email accounts?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85.0%	17
No	10.0%	2
Some	5.0%	1
Not sure how many email accounts they have	0.0%	0
	answered question	20
	skipped question	4
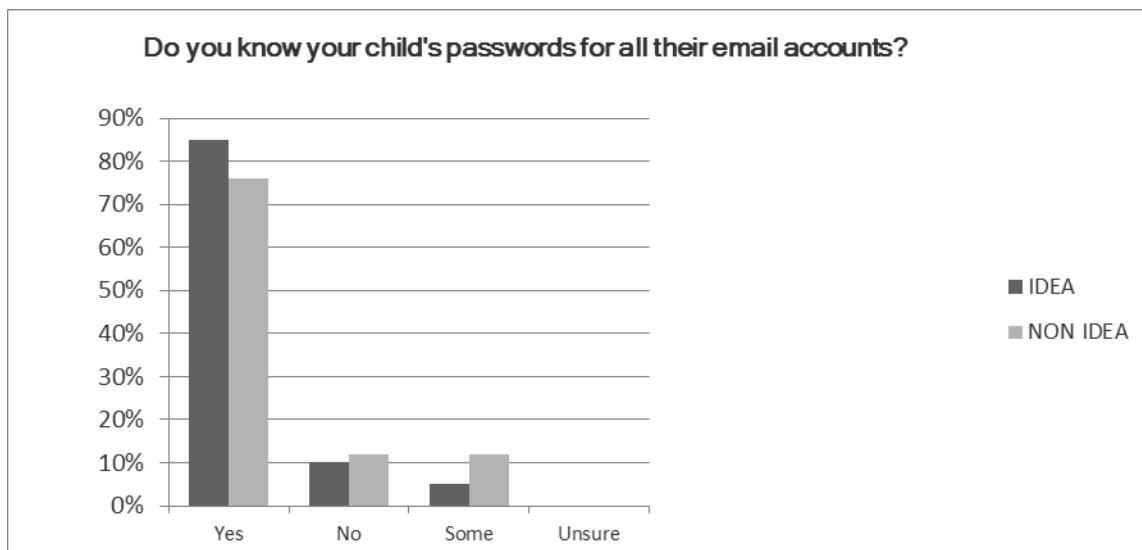
Figure 13. Parents Knowledge of Child's E-mail Passwords

Figure 13 compares the results for parents having a child not classified under IDEA to parents having a child classified under IDEA. The results show that 9.5% more parents having a child classified under IDEA know the password to all email accounts than parents having a child not classified under IDEA. However, 12% of parents having a child not classified under IDEA knew some email passwords, as opposed to 5% of parents having a child classified under IDEA group.

Tables 27 and 28 show responses of parents and how often they check their child's email. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 32% responded that they always check their child's email account, 40% of parents responded with either "most of the time," "half the time", or "sometimes" while 28% of parents responded that they never check and 19.3% of parents did not respond to the question. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 50% responded that they always check their child's email account, 30% of parents responded with either "most of the time", "half the time", or "sometimes", while 20% of parents responded that they never check and 16.6% of parents did not respond to the question.

Table 27
Parental Responses on Frequency Checking Email, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

How often do you check your child's email?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	32.0%	8
Most of the time	12.0%	3
About half of the time	12.0%	3
Once in a while	16.0%	4
Never	28.0%	7
answered question		25
skipped question		6

Table 28
Parental Response on Frequency Checking Email, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

How often do you check your child's email?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	50.0%	10
Most of the time	10.0%	2
About half of the time	5.0%	1
Once in a while	15.0%	3
Never	20.0%	4
answered question		20
skipped question		4
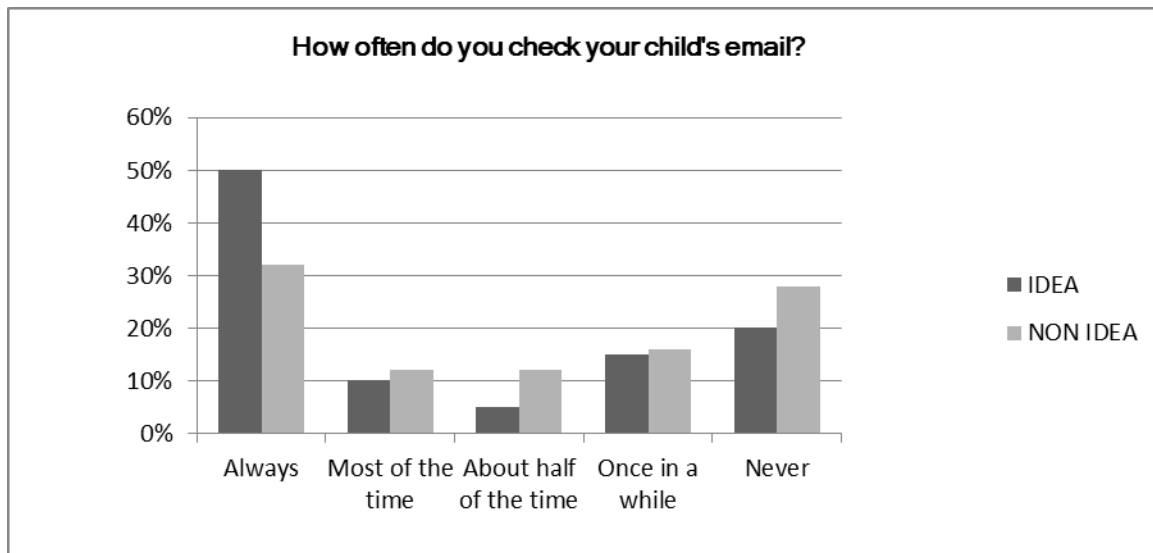
Figure 14. Parental Responses on Frequency of Checking Child's Email.

Figure 14 illustrates a comparison of the results found when parents were checking their children's emails. The comparisons again were between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA. Compared to parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 18% more of the parents having a child classified under IDEA reported that they always check their child's email. Compared to parents having a child classified under IDEA, 8% more of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA reported that they never check their child's email.

Tables 29 and 30 show responses from parents when addressing the issue of giving out identifying information to others. The parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 83.3% discussed the issue of giving out their passwords and other identifying information to others. There was also 10% of parents who responded they had not. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 78.3% discussed the issue of giving out their passwords and other identifying information to others, and 4.3% responded they had not.

Table 29
Parental Responses on Identifying Information, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Have you discussed with your child the issue of giving their password and other identifying information to others?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	83.3%	25
No	10.0%	3
Not sure	0.0%	0
Never discussed email usage	6.7%	2
Assumed they know	0.0%	0
answered question		30
skipped question		1

Table 30
Parental Responses on Identifying Information, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Have you discussed with your child the issue of giving their password and other identifying information to others?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	78.3%	18
No	4.3%	1
Not sure	0.0%	0
Never discussed email usage	17.4%	4
Assumed they know	0.0%	0
answered question		23
skipped question		1
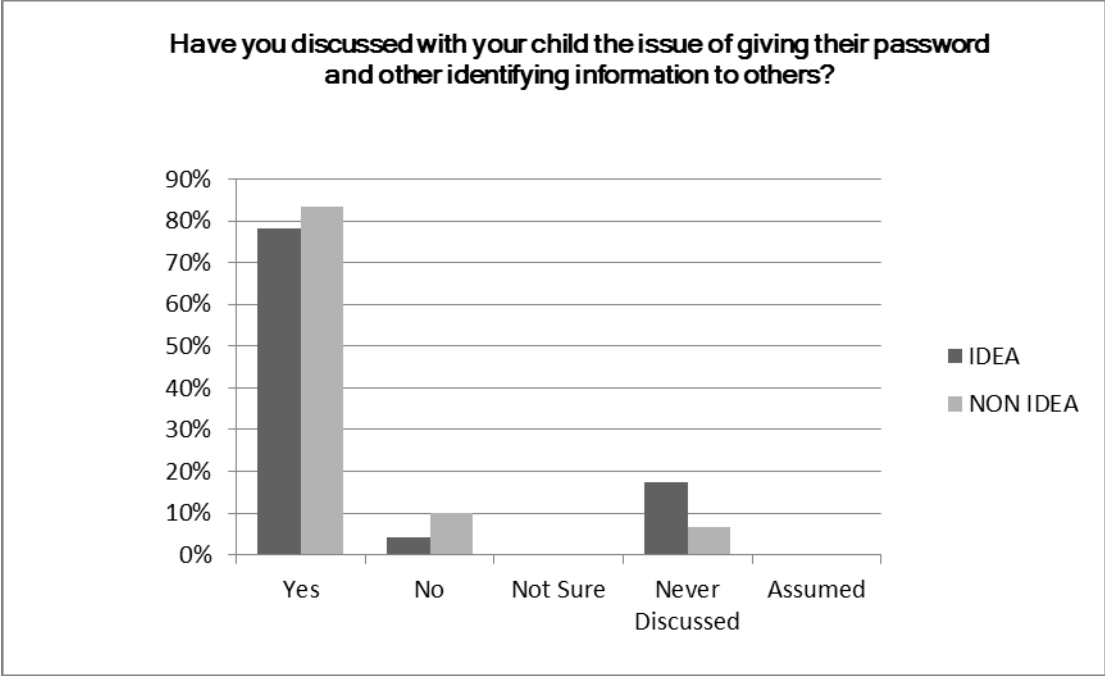
Figure 15. Combined Parental Responses on Identifying Information.

Figure 15 depicts differences between responses that gave out identifying information between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA. This information was compared to the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, and 5% more parents having a child not classified under IDEA discussed giving out passwords and other identifying information.

Tables 31 and 32 display responses about the importance of monitoring internet usage. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 83.9% responded that they felt it was extremely important to monitor their child's internet usage, none of the parents responded with "Slightly important" or "Not at all important". Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 66.7% felt it was extremely important to monitor their child's internet usage, 4.2% of parents responded with "slightly important". No parents responded with "Not at all important".

Table 31
Parental Importance on Monitoring their Child's Internet Usage, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

How important do you think it is to monitor their internet usage? (Includes: Email, texting and phone)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely important	83.9%	26
Very important	9.7%	3
Moderately important	6.5%	2
Slightly important	0.0%	0
Not at all important	0.0%	0
answered question		31
skipped question		0

Table 32
Parental Importance on Monitoring their Child's Internet Usage, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

How important do you think it is to monitor their internet usage? (Includes: Email, texting and phone)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely important	66.7%	16
Very important	25.0%	6
Moderately important	4.2%	1
Slightly important	4.2%	1
Not at all important	0.0%	0
answered question		24
skipped question		0
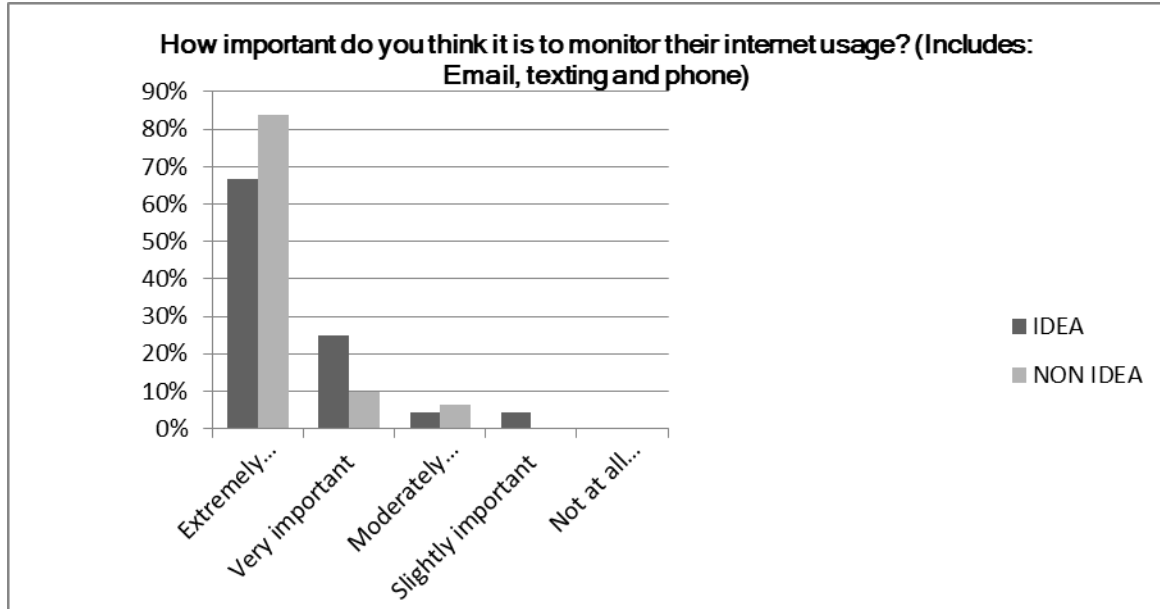
Figure 16. Parental Importance on Monitoring Child's Internet Usage

Figure 16 shows the results of a comparison between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA and the importance of monitoring their child's internet usage. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 83.9% responded that it was "Extremely Important" as compared to 66.7% of parents having a child classified under IDEA.

Tables 33 and 34 report the results of parental responses and if they established online rules for their children. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 80.6% responded they established online rules for their child on internet usage as compared to 82.6% of parents having a child classified under IDEA. However, 8.6% more of the parents having a child classified under IDEA responded that they did not feel the need to establish online rules than the parents having a child not classified under IDEA.

Table 33

Responses on Whether Parents Established Online Rules, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Have you established online rules and an agreement with your child about Internet usage at home and outside of the home?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	80.6%	25
No	6.5%	2
I don't feel the need to	12.9%	4
answered question		31
skipped question		0

Table 34

Responses on Whether Parents Established Online Rules, having a Child Classified under IDEA

Have you established online rules and an agreement with your child about Internet usage at home and outside of the home?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	82.6%	19
No	17.4%	4
I don't feel the need to	4.3%	1
answered question		23
skipped question		1
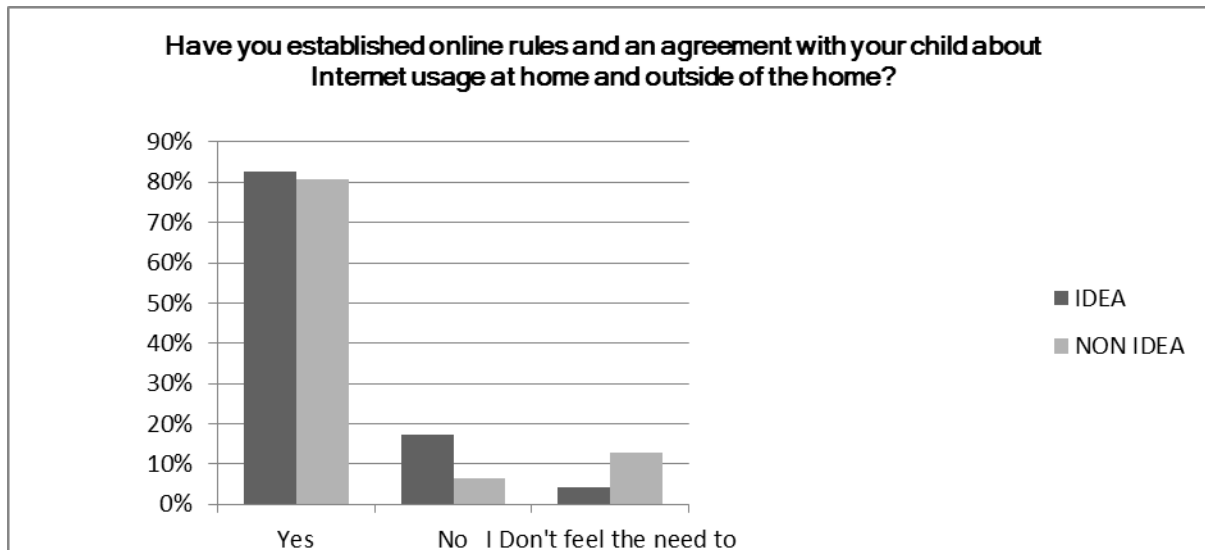
Figure 17. Establishment of Online Rules

Figure 17 shows the results of a comparison between parents having a child classified under IDEA and parents having a child not classified under IDEA and whether they have established online rules. "Yes" responses were similar between the two groups. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 8.6% more responded that they did not feel the need to establish online rules than the parents having a child not classified under IDEA.

Tables 35 and 36 display responses about parents who have or would consider using monitoring software to see who their child talks to online. Of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, 70% responded that they would consider using software to monitor their child online; while 30% of parents responded they would not, or have not considered using software. None of the parents installed monitoring software. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 59.1% responded that they would consider using software to monitor their child online, while 31.8% of parents responded that they would not, or have not considered installing the software and 18.2% responded that they have installed monitoring software.

Table 35

Parental Considerations on using Monitoring Software, having a Child not Classified under IDEA.

Would you or have you considered using software to monitor who your child is talking to online?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	70.0%	21
No	30.0%	9
Have installed monitoring software	0.0%	0
	answered question	30
	skipped question	1

Table 36
Parental Considerations on using Monitoring Software, having a Child Classified under IDEA.

Would you or have you considered using software to monitor who your child is talking to online?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	59.1%	13
No	31.8%	7
Have installed monitoring software	18.2%	4
	answered question	22
	skipped question	2
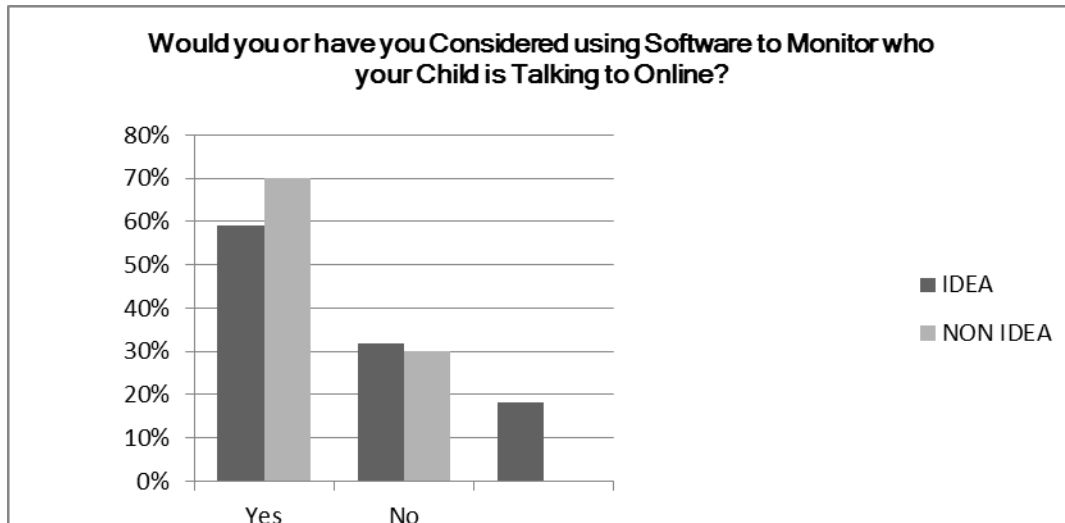
Figure 18. Parental Considerations on Installing Monitoring Software.

Figure 18 shows the results of a comparison of parents having a child not classified under IDEA with parents having a child classified under IDEA. The comparison is whether they have or do not have installed software to monitor their child online. Of the parents having a child classified under IDEA, 18.2% responded they have installed monitoring software. None of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA installed monitoring software.

Question 5-Does gender make a difference, with regards to cyberbullying experiences, for children who are and who are not classified?

Tables 37 and 38 detail parental responses to whether their child has ever been bullied in an email. Of the parents having a male child that is not classified under IDEA, 12.5 % responded "Yes". Of the parents having a female child that is not classified under IDEA, 13% responded "Yes".

Table 37
Parental Responses on Whether their Child has been Bullied via E-mail, Boys who are not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been bullied in an email?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	12.5%	1
No	50.0%	4
Not sure	37.5%	3
answered question		8
skipped question		0

Table 38
Parental Responses on Whether their Child has been Bullied via E-mail, Girls who are not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been bullied in an email?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	13.0%	3
No	69.6%	16
Not sure	17.4%	4
answered question		23
skipped question		0
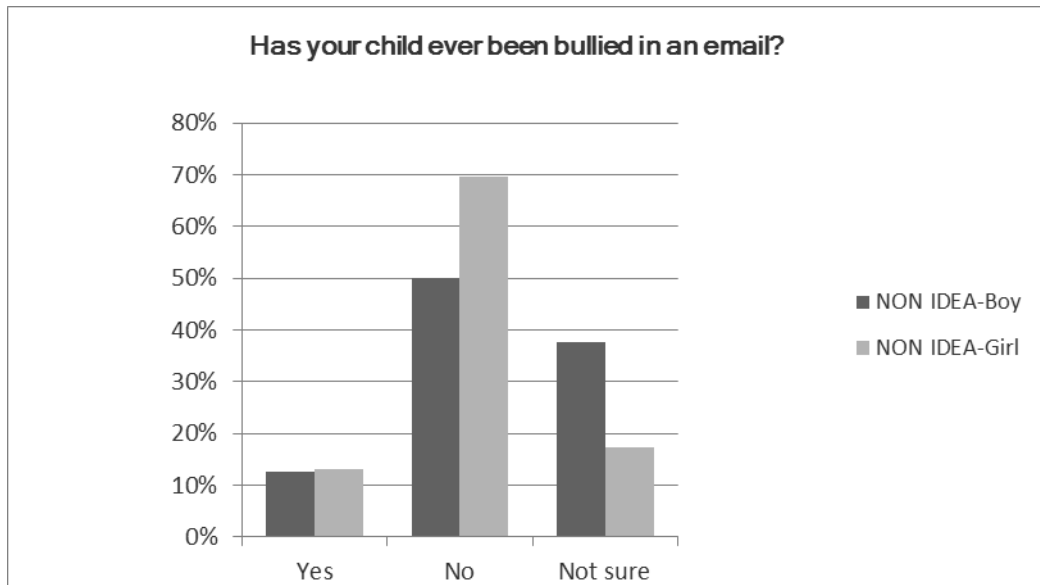
Figure 19. Responses to Whether Child has been Bullied in E-mail

Figure 19 compares the results found for parents having a male child not classified under IDEA, with parents having a child classified under IDEA. The comparison looks at whether or not their child has been bullied in an email. Of the parents having a male child not classified under IDEA, 37.5% responded that they were not sure as compared to 17.4% of parents having a female child not classified under IDEA.

Tables 39 and 40 reports the results of parental responses and examines to see if their child has ever been bullied in an email. Of the parents having a male child that is classified under IDEA, 11.8% responded "Yes". Of parents having a female child that is classified under IDEA, 20% responded "Yes".

Table 39
Parental Responses on Whether their Child has been Bullied via E-mail, Boys who are Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been bullied in an email?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	11.8%	2
No	82.4%	14
Not sure	5.9%	1
answered question		17
skipped question		2

Table 40
Parental Responses on Whether their Child has been Bullied via E-mail, Girls who are Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been bullied in an email? Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	20.0%	1
No	80.0%	4
Not sure	0.0%	0
answered question		5
skipped question		0
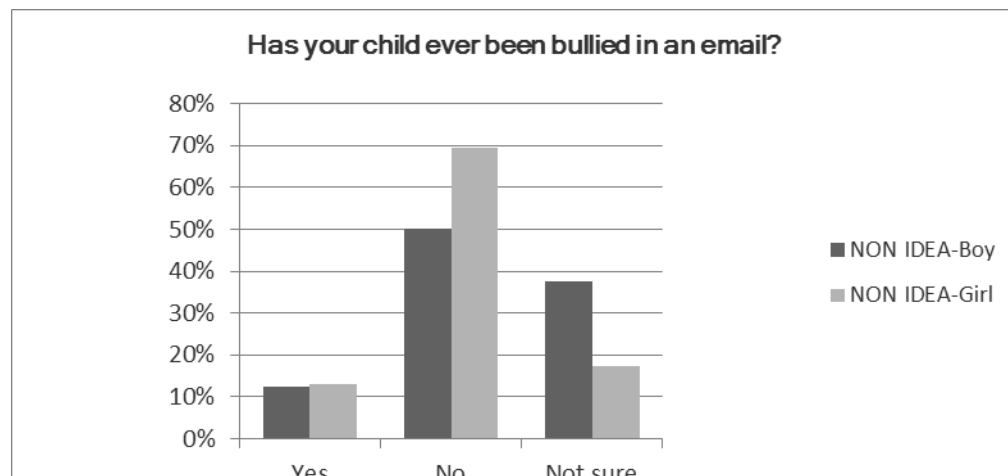
Figure 20. Responses to Whether Child has been Bullied in E-mail

Figure 20 depicts parental responses regarding whether their child has been bullied in an email. Of the parents having a female child not classified under IDEA, 20.0% responded that their child has been bullied in an email as compared to 11.8% of parents having a male child not classified under IDEA.

Tables 41 and 42 contain parental responses comparing if their child has or has not been threatened online. Male child classified not under IDEA, 12.5% of their parents responded "Yes". Comparably, 9.5% of parents having a female child not classified under IDEA responded "Yes".

Table 41
Parental Responses to Whether Child has been Threatened Online, Boys who are not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been threatened online? (Includes MySpace, Skype, Facebook, Instant Messaging, and texting).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	12.5%	1
No	87.5%	7
if yes (please specify frequency)		0
answered question		8
skipped question		0

Table 42
Parental Responses to Whether Child has been Threatened Online, Girls who are not Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been threatened online? (Includes MySpace, Skype, Facebook, Instant Messaging, and texting).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	9.5%	2
No	90.5%	19
if yes (please specify frequency)		0
answered question		21
skipped question		2

Figure 21. Parental Responses regarding their Child being Threatened Online.

Figure 21 depicts a comparison between parental responses and whether their child has been threatened online. The responses between parents having a male child not classified under IDEA and parents having a female child classified under IDEA were similar.

Tables 41 and 42 contain parental responses on whether their child has been threatened online. Of the parents having a male child classified under IDEA, 17.6% responded "Yes". Comparably, 20.0% of parents having a female child classified under IDEA responded "Yes".

Table 43
Parental Responses to Whether Child has been Threatened Online, Boys who are Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been threatened online? (Includes MySpace, Skype, Facebook, Instant Messaging, and texting).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	17.6%	3
No	82.4%	14
if yes (please specify frequency)		2
	answered question	17
	skipped question	2

Number	Response Date	if yes (please specify frequency)	Categories

	Feb 15, 2012 2:20	a couple of kids from his old school. we pursued with the
1	AM	board of education
	Feb 12, 2012 7:13	
2	PM	on MySpace

Table 44

Parental Responses to Whether Child has been Threatened Online, Girl who are Classified under IDEA.

Has your child ever been threatened online? (Includes MySpace, Skype, Facebook, Instant Messaging, and texting).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	20.0%	1
No	80.0%	4
if yes (please specify frequency)		1
	answered question	5
	skipped question	0

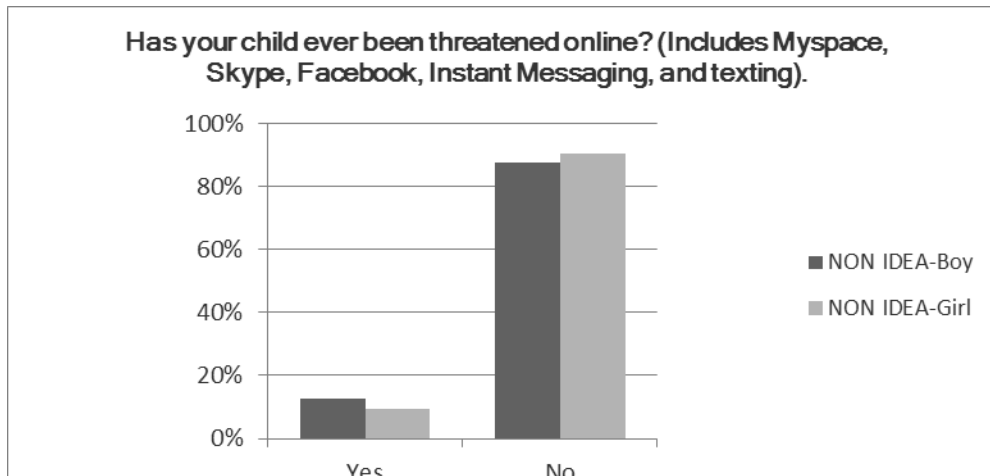| Number	Response Date	if yes (please specify frequency)	Categories
1	Feb 11, 2012 11:19 PM	Teasing	
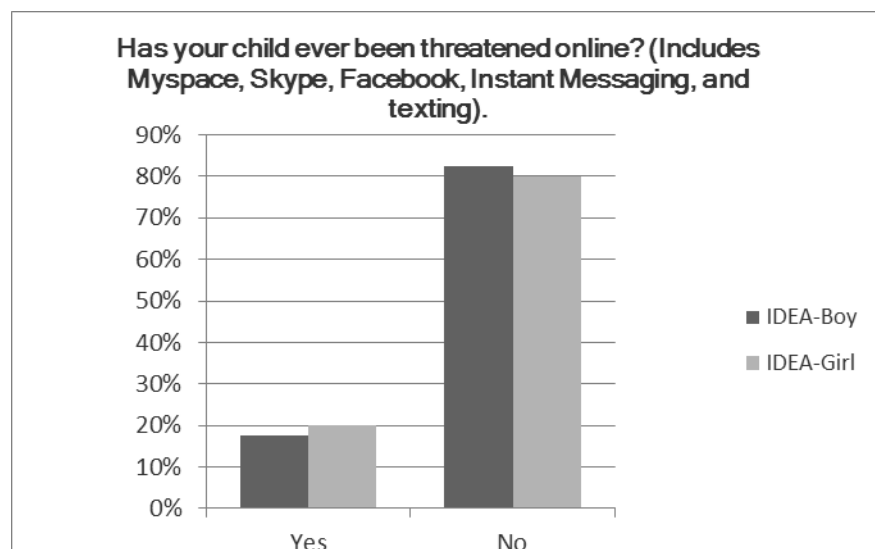
Figure 22. Parental Responses on their Child being Threatened Online.

Figure 22 depicts a comparison between parental responses and whether their child has been threatened online. The responses between parents having a male child classified under IDEA and parents having a female child classified under IDEA were similar.

Chapter 5

Discussion/Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine parental differences between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA with regard to cyberbullying. In order to accomplish this, 55 parents participated in the study. Results of the analyses used to test the hypothesis were mixed, with support provided for some of the hypotheses.

The first research question asked whether there were differences in cyberbullying concerns between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA. The hypothesis was that parents having a child classified under IDEA would be more concerned in regards to cyberbullying as opposed to parents having a child not classified under IDEA. Five questions were asked regarding parental concerns of cyberbullying. Surprisingly, three of the five questions revealed that parents having a child not classified under IDEA were more concerned about cyberbullying. Parents having a child not classified under IDEA thought there should be more education in schools about cyberbullying, were more concerned that their child would become victims of cyberbullies and were more concerned that information their child posts online could lead them to become a victim of cyberbullying. The question regarding concerns that their child would become a victim of cyberbullying, resulted in a mean score of 5.3 for parents with a child not classified under IDEA as opposed to a mean score of 5.1 for the parents having a child classified under IDEA. While the results of those three questions were not expected, when parents were given a choice of answers which related to commonly known academic and social problems and asked the question "Which effect of Cyberbullying would concern you the most?",

more parents having a child classified under IDEA chose among the list of problems, while more parents having a child not classified under IDEA chose "I have no concern". Another question asked parents if they were willing to make changes to their online awareness based on taking the survey. More parents having a child classified under IDEA answered they would be willing to make changes. Of the five survey questions regarding cyberbullying concerns, parents having a child not classified under IDEA had more concern on three of the questions. Moreover, these three questions appear to be the most relevant questions addressing cyberbullying concerns. The findings of this research question are interesting; a couple possible reasons why the results did not support the initial expectation might be that parents having a child not classified under IDEA may be less educated about the topic of cyberbullying, or they may have less experience dealing with issues that involve cyberbullying and hence more concern as to how to deal with cyberbullying.

The second research question focused on whether parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA differ in their awareness of cyberbullying. The hypothesis was that parents having a child classified under IDEA would be more aware in regard to activities that could lead to cyberbullying as opposed to parents having a child not classified under IDEA. The data, which consisted of three questions regarding parental awareness of cyberbullying, clearly supported the hypothesis. The questions asked included knowledge of "geo tagging" software on smart phones, monitoring of online activity by the parents of their child's friends and whether a stranger contacted their child while online. Analysis of the data reveals a clear relationship between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and a lack of awareness on activities that could lead to cyberbullying. When analyzing the data, on all three questions, parents having a child not classified under IDEA answered they were "unsure" significantly more than parents having a child classified under IDEA. Parents having a child

classified under IDEA were more aware that "geo tagging" software exists on cell phones, whether the parents of their child's friends monitored their online activity while their child was over their house and whether a stranger had or had not contacted their child online. Although the results were clear and supported the hypothesis, more questions targeting awareness may have been beneficial.

The third research question explored whether, according to parents are the experiences of children classified under IDEA the same as children not classified under IDEA in regard to cyberbullying? Due to extensive research over the course of decades, it has been shown that children that have disabilities exhibit a lack of social skills and are more prone to traditional bullying than children without disabilities. (Baker & Donelly, 2001). The hypothesis of this question was that more parents having a child classified under IDEA would report their child was a victim of cyberbullying than parents having a child not classified under IDEA. Data analyzed involved four questions; three of the questions directly reported on parental knowledge as to whether their children were victims of cyberbullying. The results showed that, as expected, more parents having a child classified under IDEA reported their child had been a victim of cyberbullying opposed to parents having a child not classified under IDEA. When asked if their child had been bullied in an email, .7% more of the parents having a child classified under IDEA answered yes as compared to the parents having a child not classified under IDEA. The second question asked the parents to identify if their child had been threatened online. The results show that 7.9% more of the parents having a child classified under IDEA answered their child had been threatened online than the parents having a child not classified online. The third question revealed that 7.5% more of the parents having a child classified under IDEA answered yes to whether their child had been threatened online by a student or a friend than the parents having a child not classified under IDEA. Although the hypothesis was supported that more parents having a child

classified under IDEA would report their child was a victim of cyberbullying, it should be noted that on the question regarding whether their child had been bullied an in email, 18.1% more of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA responded they were unsure. In addition, 10.7% of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA responded that they were unsure to whether their child had been threatened online by a student or friend as compared to none of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA.

The forth question this study analyzed was to what extent do parents having a child not classified under IDEA and parents having a child classified under IDEA protect their children by monitoring their online activity. The hypothesis of this question was that parents having a child classified under IDEA would do more to protect their children by monitoring their online activity. This hypothesis was supported, as the results indicated more parents having a child classified under IDEA monitored their children's online activity than parents having a child not classified under IDEA. The parents were asked four questions regarding online monitoring activities. When asked if they knew their child's passwords, checked their child's emails, established online rules and have or would install monitoring software, more parents having a child classified under IDEA responded "yes". In fact, the question regarding installing monitoring software resulted in 18.2% of the parents having a child classified under IDEA responding that they have installed monitoring software compared to zero percent of parents having a child not classified under IDEA. Two additional questions were asked. One question asked the parents if they had discussed with their child the issue of giving out identifying information to others. The results revealed that more parents having a child not classified under IDEA discussed this than the parents having a child classified under IDEA. Interestingly, the result of another question which asked parents the importance of monitoring their child's online activity found that more parents having a child not

classified under IDEA thought it was more important than parents having a child classified under IDEA. Despite the findings of these two questions, the rest of the data for this question reveals parents having a child classified under IDEA were more proactive in actually monitoring their children's online activity. An important issue to consider is the depth of knowledge on technical ability of the parents in the study. Perhaps, parents having a child classified under IDEA happen to be more technically capable. While this is a possibility to consider, it appears more likely the results confirm the expectation that parents having a child classified under IDEA would go to a greater extent to protect their children. Moreover, perhaps these results further support why fewer parents having a child classified under IDEA are concerned about cyberbullying. If a parent is monitoring their child's online activity, they may feel more in control, and thus, less concerned.

The last question examined if there are gender differences in children, with regards to cyberbullying experiences of children who are classified and not classified under IDEA. Research has shown that girls are more prone to social bullying than boys. (Coyne, S. M., Archer, J., & Eslea, M., 2006). The hypothesis was that in both groups, parents of girls would report more cyberbullying than parents of boys. The results were mixed, as neither the girls nor boys were reported to be significantly more bullied. Parents in both groups were asked if their child had been threatened online. Of the parents having a male child not classified under IDEA, 3% percent more said their child had been bullied in an email than parents that have a female child not classified under IDEA. In comparison, of the parents having a female child classified under IDEA, 2.4% more responded their child had been threatened online than the male parents with a child classified. One explanation the hypothesis was not supported might be that unlike regular bullying, cyberbullying may not affect girls more than boys. Gender differences are

important to understand; additional studies would be beneficial to understand what these differences may be.

Implications/Limitations

As all research projects do, this study had several limitations. First, the sampling technique did not produce a large sample group. It appears that online surveys do not generate as many responses as other survey techniques. In addition to sample size, the data collected was from parents living in New Jersey. A larger geographical area may produce different results. Another important limitation to consider is in regard to the fact that research in cyberbullying is relatively new. In fact, research in parental knowledge regarding cyberbullying is virtually non-existent. While this presents great opportunities to investigate, the current study cannot build on previous research.

Future Research

After a thorough search of published literature, and on the internet in various forms, such as news reports, newspapers, websites and general information geared to cyberbullying, there has not been any studies similar to this topic   Consequently, with technology expanding and more children at younger ages having access to the internet; concerns regarding cyberbullying are growing rapidly. This study provides insight into parental concerns, knowledge and action taken by parents regarding cyberbullying. It would be beneficial for future research to evaluate how closely the perceptions of parents match what their children report concerning cyberbullying. Future studies might build on this study by researching why more parents having a child classified under IDEA were found to have installed monitoring software. Additionally, it was a surprise that more parents having a child not classified under IDEA thought schools should have more education about cyberbullying. One possible explanation to why parents having a child not classified under IDEA believe schools should have more education regarding cyberbullying may be a lack of awareness

on their part. The data from this study suggests a link between parents having a child not classified under IDEA and a lack of awareness on cyberbullying topics. As with any research, repeating this study, and designing similar studies, will be beneficial in determining its long term validity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the results of the study, it appears that parents of both classified children and non-classified children have concerns about cyberbullying. Parents having a child not classified appeared to be more concerned about cyberbullying. From the time children are born until they become adults, parents play a key role in protecting their children. While it is expected that all parents would be concerned about cyberbullying, since children with disabilities are bullied more (Didden, R., Scholte, R.H.J., Korzilius, H., De Moor, J.M.H., Vermeulen, A., O'Reilly, M., Lang, R., & Lancioni, G.E., 2009), it was expected that parents having a child classified under IDEA would have more concern about cyberbullying. Surprisingly, parents having a child not classified under IDEA wanted more education about cyberbullying and were more concerned information their child posts online could potentially lead their child to become a victim of cyberbullying. Additionally, regarding concern that their child could become a victim of cyberbullying, parents having a child not classified under IDEA had a higher mean score on a scale from 1 to 10.

The data regarding questions which involved cyberbullying awareness, experiences, and the extent of monitoring suggest, at least in part, that the hypothesis for each were supported. On all three questions that measured cyberbullying awareness, more parents having a child classified under IDEA responded they were aware of activities that could lead to cyberbullying. The result of one particular question, which asked parents about their awareness of "geo tagging" software, showed that more parents having a child classified under IDEA were aware of the software. This

type of software is relatively new as compared to technologies such as E-mail. It may be worth investigating whether more parents having a child classified under IDEA knew about the software because it was used to bully their child. Regarding cyberbullying experiences, there was less than 1% of a difference between groups on whether their child had been bullied in an email. However, roughly 7% more parents having a child classified under IDEA reported their child had been threatened online as opposed to parents having a child not classified under IDEA. This result regarding cyberbullying experiences is important as research has found that parental perceptions are vital to bullying interventions. (Jami-Leigh Sawyer, Faye Mishna, Debra Pepler, Judith Wiener, 2011). If in fact what the parents reported match what is actually happening, schools could use that information to educate parents that have a child classified under IDEA on techniques to mitigate cyberbullying. Schools may want to focus extra attention on educating parents who have a child classified under IDEA, since they are victimized by cyberbullies more. The results of this study also show that parents having a child classified under IDEA went to greater extents to protect their children by monitoring their online activity. It was no surprise that more parents having a child classified under IDEA installed software to monitor their child's online activities. Almost 20% of parents in this group responded that they installed the software. What was a bit of a surprise was that none of the parents that have a child not classified under IDEA installed monitoring software, despite the fact that more parents in this group responded that it was "extremely important" to monitor their children's online activities. In either case, the results of this study show that parents are concerned about monitoring their children's online activity. Future research may want to evaluate if monitoring software is effective in preventing cyberbullying.

Findings found in chapter 2 that girls tend to be socially bullied more than boys, it was expected that in both group parents of girls would report more cyberbullying than parents of boys.

The results suggest that gender was not factor in whether or not children were cyberbullied. When asked if their child had been threatened online, more of the parents having a female child classified under IDEA reported their child had been threatened. However when the same question was asked of the parents having a child not classified under IDEA, more of the parents with a male stated that their child had been threatened online. Further research is needed to study gender differences in cyberbullying.

Additional studies are critical to further support these findings or challenge them. As mentioned earlier, cyberbullying is a relative new area of research. Education and information will help assist parents and their children to make appropriate decisions. Cyberbullying does not only affect children at school. The safe haven of the home has is diminishing. Having computers in children's bedrooms make it difficult to know who they are talking to, and have made parenting more difficult. The days of mom's looking out of a window to see who their children are socializing with are gone. It is important to learn how cyberbullying is impacting children and what can be done about it.

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