

Researcher Melissa Gebbia, Ph.D. and Senior Psychology Major at Molloy College, Tara Donlon, recently analyzed survey responses collected by Girl Scouts of Nassau County. Eighty three female students in the fourth and fifth grade responded to an anonymous survey on friendship. Their answers were compiled and analyzed with the following results:

- 75% of all girls denied telling someone they would not be their friend unless the child did what she wanted.
  - Almost 9 out of 10 fourth graders reported never doing that.
  - 6 out of 10 fifth graders reported never doing that.
  
- 77% of all girls said they had never started a fist fight or shoving match.
  - Almost 9 out of 10 fourth graders reported never using physical violence.
  - Almost 7 out of 10 fifth graders reported never using physical violence.
  
- 74% of all girls said they had not told lies about someone.
  - 6 out of 10 fourth graders denied telling lies about their friends.
  - Almost 9 out of 10 fifth graders denied telling lies about their friends.
  
- 52% of all girls reported excluding someone in order to hurt their feelings.
  - Almost 7 out of 10 fourth graders admitted purposely excluding someone.
  - Almost 4 out of 10 fifth graders admitted purposely excluding someone.
  
- 60% of all girls reported they had been left out by other kids in school.
  - Almost 8 out of 10 fourth graders reported being excluded in school.
  - Less than half of the fifth graders (45%) reported being excluded in school.
  - Almost 7 out of 10 fourth graders reported kids in school had tried to get other kids to stop hanging around with them or to stop liking them.
  - 4 out of 10 fifth graders reported kids in school had tried to get other kids to stop hanging around with them or to stop liking them.
  
- 80% of all girls reported they had supported a target of bullying.
  - More than 9 out of 10 fourth graders reported they had supported a target of bullying.
  - Almost 7 out of 10 of the fifth grade girls reported supporting the target of bullying.

Regardless of their grade, girls expressed their worries about being harassed in school. Girls who were more worried about someone hurting their feelings were more likely to feel it was wrong to intentionally leave someone out. They also responded at higher levels for feeling mad, being ignored and teased. However, the more worried they were about being harassed in school, the less likely they were to stick up for those they saw being bullied. They also were less likely to feel close to other people and less likely to feel like they were part of the school. The survey was funded by the Jewish Women's Foundation of NY as part of a program supporting healthy girl friendships. Results of

this survey highlight the importance of working with girls of all ages to develop healthy, pro-social, relationship skills. For girls (and boys,) it's not enough to just know the right thing to do; it's about developing the skills and confidence to actually do the right thing, something Girl Scouts has been doing for nearly 100 years.