



NATIONAL CENTRE AGAINST BULLYING
CONFERENCE 2010
April 9-10, Melbourne



MEDIA CONFERENCE UPDATE RELEASE

9th April 2010

**Event: National Centre Against Bullying Conference 2010:
Navigating the Maze**
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Bill Belsey, founder of www.bullying.org, told today's National Centre Against Bullying Conference that most teachers have not been trained to deal with cyberbullying, but it's the number one non-academic issue in the classroom.

"We have one primary responsibility in the classroom, to create a safe place for kids to reach their potential," Mr Belsey, from Alberta, Canada, said.

Children understand these technologies, but they don't understand the consequences, he told the conference.

"We have given our kids the most powerful tools in the history of time. We need to give our skills to kids because most cyberbullying is happening when adults are not around," Mr Belsey said.

"Teachers need to support parents to become more engaged. Have online activity take place in a central place in the home, not hidden away in the bedroom. Get kids to share their blogs or online profiles with you, but be aware they may have more than one," he said.

Meanwhile children don't want to report bullying, and if they do and adults don't handle it well, it gets worse, Mr Belsey said.

"They don't want to be called a rat and they don't want to lose their mobile and internet.

"Zero-tolerance is the wrong approach but showing kids positive uses of technology instead is a better way to help combat cyberbullying.

"The emphasis to fight cybersafety has to be on prevention. We should not chase the technology."

Children today are the "me" generation, he told the conference. "They are growing up in a time when the internet is part of the atmosphere. It's like part of the air that they breath," Mr Belsey said.

Young people have a sense of entitlement when using technology.

"We need to teach our kids to think before they click. We need to trust and empower our kids not ban and block," he advised.

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