

October, 2005

Chicago Dept of Public Health



OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Violence Prevention E-Brief

October is Violence Prevention Awareness Month

PARENT ALERT!!!! MEDIA VIOLENCE

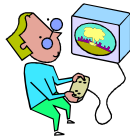
Maker of Grand Theft Auto Video Game Delays Release of "Bully"

Take-Two interactive/Rockstar games has delayed the release of a controversial new video game called **Bully** until 2006, though some critics doubt the game will be released at all. The game focuses on a year in the life of Jimmy Hopkins, a picked-on kid who in turn becomes the bully by flushing a classmate's head down a toilet, getting into fights, and taunting peers.

The APA's Jeffrey McIntyre said, "Children no longer are just passive witnesses to violence that may happen in the media. But now they're actually becoming involved in the scenarios, being rewarded." If children can learn aggressive behavior from watching it on television, think how much more their behavior can be influenced by playing an interactive video game.

Known as **griefers, snerts, cheese players, twinks, or just plain cyberbullies**, chances are that a kid near you has been bothered by one of these ne'er-do-wells at least once while playing online multiplayer video games such as *Halo 2*, *EverQuest*, *The Sims Online*, *SOCOM*, and *Star Wars Galaxies*.

Griefers are the Internet equivalent of playground bullies, who find fun in embarrassing and pushing around others.



CYBER DANGERS ARE MAKING OUR CHILDREN VULNERABLE TO EXPOSURE TO HIGH TEC FORMS OF VIOLENCE !



Tool Box for **Helping Children Deal with Griefers/Cyberbullies**

- **Ignore them.** If your child doesn't react to them, most griefers will eventually get bored and go away.
- **Change game options.** Have your kids play games with changeable rules or options that prevent certain griefer tactics, such as eliminating teammates.
- **Create a private game.** Most newer, multiplayer video games and related sites allow players to form their own exclusive games that permit only their friends to play.
- **Play on sites with strict rules.** Play on game sites with enforceable codes of conduct or terms of service and live game administrators who can ban serial griefers.
- **Do something else.** If a griefer won't stop bothering your child, have them try a different game, or take a break and come back later.
- **Report game glitches.** Work with your child to identify exploitable glitches in the game or new methods of cheating. Report these to the game site administrator.
- **Don't fight fire with fire.** Make sure your child isn't using griefers' own tactics against them, as this will likely encourage more bad behavior, or worse, label your child as a griefer.