

# PREVENTING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



**PREVENTION**  
WORKS!



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To help children make good choices they need to be supported in their efforts. They need to feel loved and respected, valued, capable of resolving problems and finding solutions. They need to be comfortable in their milieus and develop harmoniously, be appreciated by those around them, and feel safe.

– Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *École en santé, Guide à l'intention du milieu scolaire et de ses partenaires, 2005, page 16, our translation.*

## MESSAGE FROM OUR PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION The Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec (ROEQ)

At one time or another in their lives, children can be confronted with different forms of violence on the part of an adult, an adolescent or a peer. Whether it takes the form of verbal, psychological, physical or sexual violence, negligence or bullying, we know that these abuses of power can negatively affect children's development and well-being.

Too many episodes of violence go undetected or are poorly handled. Is it due to a lack of information? A fear of the consequences of disclosure? Children need to learn prevention strategies in order to know how to handle violence. Evolving in a healthy, violence-free environment throughout their lives is essential for every person.

Our children are our most precious resource and we must do prevention in order to adequately protect them. By providing them with the necessary tools, we help them keep their rights to be safe, strong and free, and to have a safe childhood free from violence.

Thank you for sharing our mission and helping ever more children to have a safe childhood free from violence.





## WHAT IS ESPACE?

### INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS DEDICATED TO PREVENTING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN.

Since 1985, **ESPACE** organizations have been working to ensure that ever more children in Quebec will have a safe childhood free from violence. This is their reason for being, their daily commitment, which gives preventing all forms of violence against children true meaning.

Preventing violence means giving children the means to protect themselves against all forms of assault, but also working to sensitize adults to their role in prevention and giving them the tools to help children in need.

### AN EDUCATIVE PROGRAM TO EQUIP CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The method favoured by **ESPACE** organizations is the **CAP-ESPACE** program. It uses an effective approach and pedagogical methods that stimulate children's participation via interactive workshops, role-playing and exercises adapted to the different age groups.

The program is also used to raise awareness, aimed at involving the various actors in the children's entourage so as to develop a better and common understanding of the phenomenon of violence and reinforce what the children learn in the workshops.

## WHY CHOOSE ESPACE?

So that the children can be successful in their endeavours, because **CAP-ESPACE** contributes to:

- ◆ Reinforcing self-esteem
- ◆ Learning to find solutions
- ◆ Problem solving
- ◆ Self-assertion, learning to set one's limits
- ◆ Developing autonomy
- ◆ Quality social relationships
- ◆ Learning to communicate and cooperate
- ◆ Adopting healthy and safe behaviours
- ◆ Evolving in a safe environment
- ◆ Equipping parents, adults in their entourage, school and daycare personnel, etc.

TO OFFER THEM THE CHANCE TO ENJOY  
A CHILDHOOD FREE FROM VIOLENCE.

**ESPACE** maintains that all prevention strategies must reinforce children. This is why our approach fosters independence, self-confidence, self-assertion, courage and peer support.

– Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec

**ESPACE** brings together and mobilizes parents, adults, school and daycare personnel, as well as social and community intervenors to reinforce support networks and combat violence.

– Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec

[...] The action plan emphasizes the importance of prevention with regard to the actions to be put into place to contribute to establishing a safe and healthy climate favourable to students' success.

– Ministère de l'éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Plan d'action pour prévenir et traiter la violence à l'école 2008-2011, À l'intention des écoles publiques et des établissements d'enseignement privé de l'éducation préscolaire et primaire, our translation.



## DYNAMIC AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

**ESPACE** organizations count on dynamic and professional teams able to respond to the needs of each community. All personnel receive training in violence prevention and participate regularly in continuing education activities.

### PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

- ◆ **CAP-ESPACE** educative program, offered to elementary schools, daycare centres, recreation and sports groups and others, including post-workshop one-on-one meetings with the children who so desire;
- ◆ Raising awareness and supporting the general public, community organizations and associations, local intervenors and others;
- ◆ Collaboration with various groups – organizations, universities, cegeps, the media, working groups, etc.;
- ◆ Telephone consultations and referrals.

## CAP-ESPACE OBJECTIVES

- 1 **REDUCE CHILDREN'S VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE**
- 2 **TEACH CHILDREN EFFECTIVE PREVENTION STRATEGIES**
- 3 **OFFER THE POSSIBILITY OF HELP TO CHILDREN IN NEED**
- 4 **SENSITIZE ADULTS TO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND THEIR ROLE IN PREVENTION**
- 5 **PREPARE ADULTS TO DEAL WITH DISCLOSURES**
- 6 **CREATE SELF-HELP NETWORKS**
- 7 **MAKE CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION A PUBLIC ISSUE**

**ESPACE** organizations advocate for prevention. The ultimate goal is to reach the greatest number of children and adults across Quebec in order to unite our forces to create support networks and take concrete measures to prevent violence.

By addressing children's needs with respect to violence prevention we help them to develop in a healthy manner and proceed with confidence on the pathway to adulthood.



## VIOLENCE

When someone uses their power or authority to put down, manipulate or control a child, be it with words or actions that hurt the child, that frighten or humiliate them, that person is abusing their power, they are subjecting the child to violence. This violence can take various forms.

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- ◆ Verbal
- ◆ Psychological
- ◆ Physical
- ◆ Sexual
- ◆ Negligence
- ◆ Bullying

### CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENT

- ◆ Behaviours problems
- ◆ Learning problems and difficulty concentrating
- ◆ Problems with authority
- ◆ Difficulties with relationships
- ◆ Repeated victimization
- ◆ Reproduction of violent behaviours
- ◆ Substance abuse
- ◆ Mental health problems
- ◆ Suicide

### FACTORS OF VULNERABILITY

Three important factors make children vulnerable to violence: their lack of information, their dependence on adults and their social isolation. The **CAP-ESPACE** program proposes ways to counter these vulnerability factors.

## ADULTS' ROLE IN PREVENTION

For you, for whom children's well-being and healthy development are essential, **ESPACE** is the perfect partner. Parents, family members, school personnel, members of the community, all have a role to play in preventing violence against children.

Empowering children is not enough. The adults around them are indispensable for effective violence prevention.

ONCE SENSITIZED AND WELL INFORMED,  
THEY CAN CONTINUE REINFORCING  
PREVENTION STRATEGIES LEARNED  
IN THE WORKSHOPS.

What's more, parents and other adults have the capacity to positively influence children's development. With **ESPACE**, they receive significant support and discover how they can get involved in preventing violence and dealing with it.

[...] particular attention should be afforded to parents, as they are the masters of their children's development. The interventions should enable the creation of links between parents and schools, and offer opportunities for improving the interactions between them and their children and help them in assisting their children with their schooling .

– Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ),  
Analyse des interventions de promotion de la santé et de  
prévention en contexte scolaire québécois : cohérence avec les  
meilleures pratiques selon l'approche École en santé,  
our translation.

One dollar invested in prevention can save three to seven dollars later on; however, one must be willing to invest the dollar!

– Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Direction des  
communications, Un Québec fou de ses enfants, Rapport du  
Groupe de travail pour les jeunes, Québec, our translation.





## CAP-ESPACE PROGRAM

The CAP-ESPACE program has three inseparable components:

- 1 A workshop for the staff where the program is being offered
- 2 A workshop for adults and parents of the children who will be receiving the program
- 3 A workshop for all the children who frequent the establishment

The children's workshops are adapted for the various age groups according to five levels:

- ◆ Daycare
- ◆ Kindergarten
- ◆ Elementary Cycle 1
- ◆ Elementary Cycle 2
- ◆ Elementary Cycle 3

The workshops all use the same vocabulary with regard to the basic notions and strategies taught. However, they differ in the role-play situations presented, and offer more specific information for certain concepts according to the children's level of cognitive development.

### SUBJECTS BROACHED WITH ADULTS BEFORE PRESENTING THE CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

- ◆ Causes of violence and how to prevent it
- ◆ An outline of the **CAP-ESPACE** children's workshop
- ◆ Daily prevention and positive discipline
- ◆ How to know if a child is a victim of violence
- ◆ How to deal with a disclosure when a child confides in you
- ◆ Available resources for children and adults

A *Practical Guide for Parents* provides adults with useful information for continuing their children's violence prevention education.

## SUBJECTS BROACHED IN THE CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP

- ◆ Rights that everyone has and rules to be respected
- ◆ Bullying between children
- ◆ Assaults committed by someone known or strangers
- ◆ Aggressors' tricks and strategies
- ◆ Various aspects of violence
- ◆ Problem solving
- ◆ Effective prevention strategies
- ◆ Local resources

During the workshop a team of facilitators encourages the children's active participation, enabling them to practice the prevention strategies discussed and ensure their comprehension.

By participating in the **CAP-ESPACE** workshop, the children come to develop an assertive attitude, leading to safer behaviours. What's more, they learn concrete strategies for staying safe. Children are less vulnerable to violence if they can:

- ◆ Identify their rights and those of others;
- ◆ Assert themselves, say no to protect their rights or when they feel they are in danger;
- ◆ Turn to friends for support;
- ◆ Ask trusted adults for help;
- ◆ Use self-defence when necessary.

All staff receive the booklet *Activity book* to complement the **CAP-ESPACE** program, which is useful for continuing the children's violence prevention education.

## UNIQUE EXPERTISE

In Quebec, with regard to child assault prevention, the public is fortunate to be able to count on the unique expertise of **ESPACE** organizations and their provincial association. Their intervention is one of the few dealing directly with the subject of violence against children in all its forms, and the program is one of the rare ones that targets adults as well as preschool and elementary school-age children.

The impact of the **CAP-ESPACE** workshops has been evaluated and the results of the research are conclusive. They were the subject of various scientific publications in Quebec and elsewhere.

The ROEQ shares its expertise with research projects, provincial intersectorial working groups, symposiums and congresses, as well as offering consultations to organizations from outside Quebec interested in its prevention approach.

THANKS TO THE EXPERTISE OF **ESPACE** ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR PREVENTION PROGRAM, TEACHERS, EDUCATORS, AND ALL THOSE WHO INTERACT WITH CHILDREN RECEIVE SUPPORT AND BACKING IN THEIR GOAL TO PREVENT AND DEAL WITH VIOLENCE.

A workshop helps them better understand the phenomenon and prepares them to carry on prevention work in continuity with the education program offered to children.

## RECOGNITION

The ROEQ's expertise is based on its excellent work and that of its members. The association has received several awards over the years.



The Rights and Freedoms Prize emphasizes the excellent work done in Quebec by persons or groups working to defend human and youth rights.



The Marie-Vincent Foundation underscores the exceptional contribution and excellence in the struggle against child abuse and negligence or in the prevention of these situations.



Le Prix d'excellence Persillier-Lachapelle in the category of promotion-prevention, awarded by the Minister of Health and Social Services, highlights the excellence of community groups.



The Prix annuel Desjardins de l'éducation was awarded to the ROEQ for the excellence of its educative program in preventing violence against children.



## CONCLUSIVE RESEARCH

HERE ARE SOME OF THE RESULTS OF THE  
RESEARCH ON THE **CAP-ESPACE** PROGRAM.

Research funded by the Conseil québécois de la  
recherche sociale evaluating gains made by first and  
third graders after participating in the **CAP-ESPACE**  
program showed that:

**95%** of the children enjoyed the workshop.

**96%** of the children would like **ESPACE** to come back  
again.

**76%** of the children said that following the workshop  
they spoke a little or a lot about the program with  
their parents, thus creating an interesting opening  
to further discussions.

◆ Students who participated in the **CAP-ESPACE** work-  
shop acquired knowledge and preventive skills compared  
to children who had not participated in the workshop.

◆ Children whose parents had participated in the adult  
workshop tended to demonstrate better preventive skills.

◆ Following the workshop, close to half the parents re-  
ported an increase in the frequency of the following  
behaviours: the child appears to have greater self-  
confidence, expresses their likes and dislikes, resolves  
conflicts, is more assertive and independent.

◆ A majority of parents made no mention of negative  
reactions following their child's participation in the  
**CAP-ESPACE** workshop.

◆ No parent mentioned major fear reactions to known  
adults, nor sleep problems, nor isolationist behaviour  
by their child after participating in the workshop.

Research funded by the Chaudière-Appalaches Regional  
Health Board analyzing the outcomes of the **CAP-ESPACE**  
parent workshop showed:

◆ Parents who participated in the adult workshop ac-  
quired knowledge. As for their ability to intervene when  
faced with disclosures (using hypothetical situations),  
the parents who participated in the workshop more  
often identified interventions aimed at supporting the  
child who reported sexual assault than parents who  
had not participated.

◆ The vast majority of parents felt that their participation  
in the workshop helped them communicate with their  
children on the subject of assault.

**98,1%** of parents who participated specified that  
the workshop met their expectations and  
that the information received was useful.

[...] **ESPACE** organizations' approach is effective. It  
does not frighten children any more than it incites them  
to make false accusations.

– Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec, Le  
Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec : 20 ans  
d'implication en prévention de la violence faite aux enfants.

[...] violence is not unique to the underprivileged, mar-  
ginalized or less educated. The tendency to label must  
be avoided.

– Arlène Gaudreault, présidente de l'Association québécoise  
Plaidoyer-Victimes, Enfants victimes : quand la vie n'est pas un  
conte, our translation.



FOR INFORMATION  
FOR SUPPORT  
TO GET INVOLVED  
TO MAKE A DONATION

**ESPACESANSVIOLENCE.ORG**