

CAP-ESPACE WORKSHOP FOR DAYCARE AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PERSONNEL¹

Length: 2 hours



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Obligatory and uniform document

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1. INTRODUCTION

Objective:

Welcome participants and introduce the team of facilitators, the goal of the CAP-ESPACE program, the documents provided and the agenda of the meeting.

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils », Part 1.

1.1 Facilitation Team and ESPACE Organization

Introduce the team of facilitators and explain that this workshop is linked to the one in which the children will soon be participating. Emphasize that their presence today is very important in order to continue violence prevention after the intervention by CAP-ESPACE.

Present your organization: years in existence, territory served, number of individuals reached, etc.

State that our goal is not to judge, but to speak openly about violence. With children, CAP-ESPACE discusses violence between children, as well as adults' violence against children. With adults, we wish to encourage reflection about our own behaviours.

Although rare, when the facilitation of this workshop is executed by only one individual, give the following information:

*“This workshop is usually facilitated by two of us. Contrary to usual practice, I am the only facilitator today, but other resource people are available at the ESPACE _____ office to respond to specific needs. I will be available during the break and at the end of the workshop, but at any other time, you can reach us during office hours. Our telephone number appears at the end of the **Practical Guide for Parents** that you received. My colleagues are: X _____; Y _____; Z _____.”*

1.2 Goal of the Program

- The CAP-ESPACE program focuses on the prevention of all forms of violence, be it verbal, psychological, physical, sexual or neglect. There are three components: a staff workshop, a parents' conference and a workshop for children aged 3 to 12.
- The main objectives are to equip adults and children to identify violence, provide concrete measures to deal with it, and develop a support network. ESPACE needs you and the participation of the entire school (or daycare) to achieve these objectives.
- CAP-ESPACE encourages the development of self-confidence and autonomy.

CAP-ESPACE's approach sets itself apart from more traditional approaches that aim to control potential victims or aggressors. Traditional approaches often convey "do not" messages: do not accept candy from a stranger, do not speak to strangers, do not get into a stranger's car, in short, do not do this or that, without providing possible solutions. In addition, being based on myths and biases (only 15 % of sexual assaults are by a stranger), these approaches promote fear. They breed helplessness and maintain vulnerability. Furthermore, the responsibility for the assault is thus easily transferred to the victim, who has not followed the "do not" rules.

Approaches that attempt to control aggressors promote a false sense of security, since we cannot put all of them in jail and for a very long time. When they are caught, there have already been many victims.

1.3 Presentation of ROEQ Documents

❖ Pamphlet *For a Safe Childhood*

Focus on:

- ⇒ your organization being one of the 11 members of the ROEQ;
- ⇒ the Web site;
- ⇒ the awards received that are listed inside (add the *Rights and Freedoms Award* given by the Commission des droits de la personne et de la jeunesse in 2009);
- ❖ the ***Practical Guide for Parents*** complementing the adult workshop;
- ❖ the list of local resources for adults and children;
- ❖ the evaluation form;
- ❖ the conference agenda;
- ❖ the questionnaire on different forms of violence against children (optional);
- ❖ ***Prevention activities to complement the CAP-ESPACE program.***

This workshop lasts two hours, including a 10-minute break. Invite participants to ask questions during the workshop.

1.4 Personal Situations

Given that the workshop deals with violence prevention, it is possible that some participants may feel the need to speak about a personal situation concerning their own child or one in their milieu. Suggest they come see you after the meeting or contact you at the office in the coming days. You can also refer to the local resources listed in the handout.

IF NECESSARY:

If an individual says something that could hurt a person that has been a victim of violence, you could say something like: "Given the possibility that some of us may have been a victim of violence, it is important to choose our comments carefully out of respect for others."

2. ANALYSIS

Objective:

Make participants aware of:

- the abuse of power dynamic that underlies assaults;
- the different forms of violence;
- the analysis of vulnerability factors and the means to counter them.

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils », Part 2.

2.1 *Abuse of Power Dynamic*

Over and above the dramatic situations portrayed in the media, there is violence that affects us all, violence over which we have power.

Violence against children is the expression of an abuse of power by an adult over a child or by a child over a more vulnerable one. This is why our analysis questions the inequalities of power between individuals, and our approach aims to empower children, adults and their milieus.

Our status as adults, your status as educators, gives us power over children. This power accompanies our responsibility towards children to offer them structure and guidance, transmit values, and provide affection, etc. This power is therefore not negative in itself. It depends on how we use it. Most of the time we use it correctly to guide children. The problem arises when we use our power in a way that does not contribute to the child's well-being and that humiliates him or her rather than raising or enhancing their self-esteem. These abuses of power thus translate into acts of aggression.

IF NECESSARY:

If you think it is relevant or to respond to questions, you can explain that ESPACE organizations operate according to feminist and community values. Here are some of the key aspects:

- The feminist movement establishes links between assaults against children and those against women by recognizing that all assaults against children are first and foremost acts of domination and oppression by an individual that holds power over the child. Thus, rather than being seen as an individual problem, violence against children is considered a social problem.
- The action of independent community organizations is characterized by the quest for social justice, the promotion of individual and collective autonomy, democratic functioning, and an active commitment to social change.

2.2 Violence Against Children

Let's take a few minutes to discuss violence against children.

Does losing one's patience, yelling at a child, or squeezing their arm constitute violence? The boundary line is often unclear. **There is a difference between a one-time gesture and repeated acts that affect the physical or psychological health of a child²; the impact is not the same.**

It is difficult as an adult to never abuse your power over children. It requires constant vigilance and good management of our emotions. To help us in times of stress:

- Instead of asking: "What should I do?" Ask yourself: "What does the child need?"
- Ask yourself if you are helping or humiliating the child?
- For more complex situations, ask other people for advice: colleagues, other specialists, the child's parents, etc.

If you wish to discuss different forms of violence during the workshop, you can do so with the help of the ***Practical Guide for Parents*** or the document entitled *Different forms of violence* in the Complément d'information section. You can also refer parents to pages 4 and 5 of the ***Guide*** or simply supply the *Different forms of violence* as a handout.

To liven up this section, see La Boîte à outils, Part 2.

² *Visage de la violence, La violence contre les enfants*, Department of Health and Social Services of Quebec, 2001-2002

2.3 Children's Vulnerability and Empowerment

Three major factors make children vulnerable to assault:

- 1) a lack of information;
- 2) their dependence on adults;
- 3) social isolation.

Children lack information about assaults

Children generally have little or misleading information about assaults and even less about their rights. Adults often have difficulty with the subject; they do not want to scare the child, or they are misinformed. They could, for example, not know that the “mean stranger with candy” does not roam the streets, as opposed to the known and often loved aggressor that lives with or around the child. The following actions can help.

To counter the lack of information:

- Provide children with information that will help them identify and recognize violence and how to deal with it;
- Foster adult awareness of this problem, and equip them to identify violence and to handle disclosures.

Children are dependent on adults

It is natural for children to depend on adults to be fed, educated, loved and socialized. This dependence should incite adults to be protective, but some use it against the child by inflicting psychological or physical wounds. From children's point of view, they see themselves as adults see them, that is to say, needing adults to solve their problems and protect them. The following actions can help.

To counter dependency:

- Inform children of their rights;
- Provide them with ways to deal with danger;
- Develop their assertiveness (saying no);
- Develop their ability to use critical judgement rather than asking for blind obedience.

IF NECESSARY:

If questions arise about developing their ability to use critical judgement rather than asking for blind obedience, emphasize that children who blindly obey will generally have more difficulty asserting themselves and facing up to an aggressor.

Children are vulnerable to assaults because they are isolated

Being unaware of resources available and of their rights, children will not seek help from a service worker within their daycare or school, file a complaint with the police, call the CLSC or Youth Protection. With friends, children often consider themselves buddies and not as individuals that can help each other. The situation is more complex for children who are victims of violence when the aggressor has told them to keep it a secret. The following actions can help.

To counter isolation:

- Develop peer support between children and with adults;
- Ensure that adults and children are aware of the resources that are available to them;
- Help children identify adults that they can trust in their entourage.

3. CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP: STRATEGIES TO COUNTER VULNERABILITY

Objective: Inform adults on how the subject is broached with children in order to reassure them, and enable them to continue doing prevention in the same way, using similar language. Make sure they understand the importance of empowering children to prevent abuse.

The CAP-ESPACE program was designed to reduce children's vulnerability and empower them.

CAP-ESPACE focuses on **assertiveness**, **peer support** and **internal strength** to prevent violence. Let's see how this is done by taking a look at the children's workshop.

Present the workshop in which the children will soon participate.

3.1 Description of Children's Workshop

General information for all levels

- CAP-ESPACE visits the milieu (daycare or school) as a whole, including all children and adults.
- The workshops are adapted to different age groups, but their content is the same.
- Three individuals will facilitate the workshop for each group (or class).
- When children give us their answers we try as much as possible to valorize their answers to reinforce that they already have solutions.
- Role-plays and discussion: in one version the child has his or her rights taken away; then a version in which the child keeps his or her rights.
- Self defense: at the end, « self defense moves, the yell, it's serious, it's important to use them only when we are in danger and we want to get away to get help. If we are in the school yard, at home or anywhere else, it is not a game. »
- The victim in the role-plays alternates between a girl and a boy.
- At the end of the workshop, rather than being afraid, the children generally feel stronger, with solutions to be used as needed.
- The classroom teacher's participation is appreciated for the last role-play.

Since the staff has the possibility of participating in the children's workshops it isn't necessary to spend as much time as with parents, but they do appreciate knowing how the workshop will unfold. If we want teachers to continue doing prevention work we need to emphasize our approach, which aims to empower children.

3.1.1 For PRESCHOOL staff

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils », Part 3.

Main components of the workshop for preschoolers

- ❖ The workshop is held over three consecutive days: 20 to 30 minutes of facilitation, followed by a free activity period on day one, and individual meetings with the children on days 2 and 3, for up to a maximum of one hour per day.
- ❖ During the individual meetings, a transitional activity should be planned: drawing or an activity from the prevention activities booklet, to help the children feel disposed to going and meeting with a facilitator, as well as allowing time to switch from an emotional subject to academic material. This helps the children manage their emotions and integrate the subject matter.

Content

Day 1

- The rights to be safe, strong and free, using photos;
- Bullying between children;
- Review and problem solving: saying “no”, asking friends for help, confiding in a trusted adult;
- Free period at the end of day 1, with the facilitation team interacting with the children.

Day 2

- Presentation using dolls: safety rules, self-defence and the yell;
- Confidential post-workshop individual meetings on a voluntary basis on days 2 and 3, to get feedback from the children, to review, and refer if necessary to other resources (parents, staff, etc.);
- The children are invited to draw a picture for the facilitators.

Day 3

- Song: “Head and shoulders, knees and toes”;
- Accurately naming body parts with the help of a poster;
- Three role-plays: between a brother and sister, sexual violence by an uncle, a child disclosing to the teacher;
- Certificates, individual meetings, and drawing.

3.1.2 For *ELEMENTARY SCHOOL* staff

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils », Part 3.

Main components of elementary school workshop

- ❖ The classroom workshop lasts between one hour and one hour and fifteen minutes, followed by individual meetings;
- ❖ The three rights: safe, strong, free;
- ❖ Rules are necessary to protect my rights and the rights of others;
- ❖ Four role-plays:
 - A child is bullied by another child
 - A child's rights are taken away by someone they know (neighbour, coach , uncle)
 - **Cycles 1 and 2:** sexual violence by someone close (uncle)
 - **Cycle 3:** romantic relationships between youngsters (exploitation)
 - David is in a difficult situation and wants to tell someone he trusts.
- ❖ We also talk about strangers met on the internet;
- ❖ Simple solutions: saying “no”, asking friends for help, confiding in a trusted adult, using self-defence when needed;
- ❖ Identifying three trusted adults, continuing to tell until someone believes you;
- ❖ Certificate;
- ❖ Individual meetings so the children can share their comments, to review, and refer if needed to parents, a staff member or other resources;
- ❖ Activity period: the children are invited to draw or write, or do an activity from the activities booklet. This helps the children feel disposed to going and meeting with a facilitator and allows for time to switch from an emotional subject to academic material. This helps the children manage their emotions and fosters individual integration of the subject matter.

3.2 Possible Reactions

Adults sometimes fear that a program like ours will have a negative impact on children: fear, aggressiveness, etc. We looked at these issues, and the results of our research show that these fears are unfounded. The results are from research³ done with parents of children in grades 1 and 3 who had participated in CAP-ESPACE workshops.

The research results are available, and you can ask questions at the end of the presentation. (See La Boite à outils, reference documents, the page entitled *Addition to adult workshop, research on the CAP-ESPACE program, May 2001*).

IF NECESSARY:

Depending on reactions, questions and time available, the following information can be given to equip adults to deal with certain reactions by children.

Children may change their behaviour after the workshop; they are most likely testing their new-found knowledge. For example, children could use their self-defence tips even if they are not in danger. Should this occur, tell them that you are happy to know that they are able to defend themselves and to say no if need be. Then, you can reiterate the information received in the workshop by bringing up others' rights, which are just as important as their own, and remind them of the rules at home, at school and when playing sports. Self-defence is useful when we are in danger, when somebody is trying to hurt us and we are stuck. We use it to get away and go get help.

³ HÉBERT, MARTINE; GAGNON, FRANCINE. “Analyse des retombées du programme ESPACE, *Enfant victimes : quand la vie n’est pas un conte*”, Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes, 2001, pages 25 to 31.

4. EVERYDAY PREVENTION AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Objective: Make adults aware of the everyday gestures and attitudes that make children stronger and that underlie effective prevention.

Each day we can provide our children with most of the skills they require to deal with various situations that can arise throughout their lives, including violence.

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils » Part 4.

4.1 Prevention is More than Simply Talking About Violence... (See **A Practical Guide for Parents**, pages 8 to 10.)

It is also:

- Helping a child develop their self-confidence, independence, strength and assertiveness, for example, when you highlight their good behaviour;
- Creating moments of collaboration, for example, when you offer rewards and privileges, etc;
- Building relationships based on respect, for example, when you describe the behaviour and not the child, when you avoid labels (preconceived ideas).

Through positive discipline, which comprises educating and guiding (rather than demanding blind obedience), children develop their self-confidence and judgement. At the same time they develop their capacity to react. This is the basis of prevention, because assertive children are less vulnerable to assault.

We make children strong when we show them their importance as people deserving attention and respect. You do so each time you:

- Show them that you appreciate their presence, for example, by welcoming them with a smile;
- Take the time to listen to them, for example, by looking at them when they are talking to you;
- Show them that you trust them, for example, by allowing them their trials and errors;
- Help them become responsible, for example, by applying logical consequences, asking them to make restitution;
- Allow them to see that you are not perfect, for example, by admitting your mistakes, by apologizing.

Every opportunity to increase their self-esteem should be used.

For more information on the subject of positive discipline see Complément d'information, *La discipline positive*, *Quand discipline rime avec estime*, and the *Bibliography*. Suggest to the staff for parents, ***YES YOU CAN! Positive discipline ideas for you and your child.***

4.2 Prevention activities to complement the program

Present each section of the booklet and highlight certain activities. Suggest making a photocopy of the activity page for each child, as needed.

CAP-ESPACE educational games

Here are some examples of activities for each cycle

- Preschool \Kindergarten, page 9, Connect the matching words (4 to 6 years)
- Cycle 1, page 13, Crossword puzzle (6 to 8 years)
- Cycle 2, page 6, Unscramble the letters (8 years and up)
- Cycle 3, page 14, Seek'n' find (10 to 12 years)

General activities for the whole school, page 17

Classroom activities

- Preschool\ Kindergarten, page 20, The mouse game (4 years and up)
- Cycles 1,2,3. page 21
- Cycle 2, page 21, The gift of happiness (8 years and up)

Intervention tools

- All ages, page 24, I.D.E.A.

Cooperative games

- All cycles, page 26, Finding Max

5. CLUES TO FIND OUT IF A CHILD IS A VICTIM OF VIOLENCE

Objective: Make adults aware of stress indicators and of the possibility that a child has been a victim of violence.

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils », Part 5.

5.1 *How to Know If...*

Bruises or marks can be signs of violence. However, not all violence leaves visible traces.

We intuitively sense when a child we are close to is in a stressful situation. Sudden and persistent changes in a child's behaviour are often a sign that something is wrong: sudden anger, fatigue, apathy, nightmares, aggressiveness, starting to wet the bed again, withdrawal, etc. It is our role as adults to find out what is happening and to offer help.

Stress in children is usually caused by:

- **A new situation:** moving, starting school, arrival of a newborn in the family, etc.;
- **Difficult moments:** exams, divorce, loss of a loved one, arguments, etc.

However, it is possible that the reason for the stress is that they are the victim of violence.

Conclusions should not be drawn without checking first with the child. Not all children react the same way to violence. It depends on:

- ✓ their age and personality;
- ✓ the type of violence;
- ✓ the frequency and how long it has been going on;
- ✓ the relationship between victim and aggressor;
- ✓ the presence or absence of significant people in the child's entourage.
- ✓ It is easy for some children to reveal things, while others remain silent or lie for different reasons, such as:
 - fear of not being believed;
 - fear of punishment;
 - guilt;
 - wanting to protect their aggressor.

Beware of labels. Children who lie often need help and become easy prey for aggressors, convinced they will not be believed if they ask for help.

IF NECESSARY:

For those interested in the list of stress indicators in children, the organization can offer copies (see Complément d'information) or refer them to the guide: *"Filing a report with the DYP is already protecting a child. When and how to file a report?"* Abandonment: page 9; Negligence: pages 9 and 11; Psychological ill-treatment: page 12; Sexual abuse: page 13; Physical abuse: page 15; Serious behavioural disturbance: page 16.

For those wishing to receive further information on lying, see Complément d'information.

5.2 How to Verify Your Suspicions

Take the first step by sharing your suspicions and worries, while respecting the child's pace and needs.

Example of a situation in which an adult explores his or her doubts

"Listen, it seems like something is wrong and I am worried. Would you like to talk about it? We might be able to find a solution together."

Despite our concerns, it is better to avoid harassing the child and instead create a climate of trust and openness. The child will feel respected and will be more inclined to open up.

If the child does not open up, it may be because the problem can be solved without our help. However, if the situation persists, we can express our concern once more.

6. WHEN A CHILD CONFIDES IN YOU

Objective: Demystify an intervention by offering guidelines.

Some problems that children share can seem relatively small. No matter what the problem is, for the child it is important. Every disclosure requires our attention in order to help the child to the best of our ability.

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils », Part 6, for staff

You will find further information for this section in the *Practical Guide for Parents*, pages 22 to 27. Invite staff members to supplement the following by reading chapter 4.

Guidelines for empowering children

- Start by putting the child at ease by listening to her/him in a quiet and discrete setting;
- Place yourself physically and verbally at the child's level;
- Believe what she or he is saying without judging, for example, labelling them liars or manipulators. Look further to see what is behind the lie.
- Control your reactions as best as possible. This will help calm the child. If you are angry tell the child that it is not directed at them;
- Reassure the child. For example, "It is good that you decided to talk about this, it took courage, you have the right to feel safe, what is happening is not your fault";
- Validate their emotions, without imposing your own;
- Ask the child how you can help, and if she or he has any ideas to solve the problem. This restores their control over the situation;
- Let the child share their version of the facts, without influencing them. As their confidence grows, you will learn more;
- Respect their pace, ask simple and open questions (who, what, when, where);
- Respect the confidentiality of the child's disclosure; however, do not make promises that you cannot keep.

If the problem is easy to solve

- Establish an action plan with the child;
- Provide support throughout the process.

If the problem is more complex

- Determine if the child is safe. Do you have considerable or little time to act?
- If the child is in danger, explain what is to come, that other people will probably become involved;
- During this difficult time, the child will need comforting;
- Let the child know that you won't abandon them, that he or she will receive the necessary help, if not from you, then from someone else.

7. LOCAL RESOURCES

Objective: Inform the adults of the existing resources within their community, give them a sense of the importance of seeking help when necessary, and demystify certain resources like Youth Protection.

Seeking help from those around us or from outside organizations, when necessary, is important. It is possible to do this without divulging the child's name so as to respect confidentiality and the right to privacy. Who can help us if a child confides in us?

To liven up this section, see « La Boîte à outils », Part 7.

People close to us: Sharing our concerns with them can help.

The child's daycare or school setting: Very often, there are individuals within the daycare or school that can advise us.

Community organizations and support groups: They are there to respond to different needs. To find them, you can contact ESPACE or your CLSC. They can help you or refer you to other resources.

Health and Social Service Centers (CSSS): hospitals, CLSC, etc. Find out what services are offered.

The Youth Protection Act stipulates:

If you suspect that a child or a youngster in your entourage is a victim of physical or sexual violence you must immediately report it to Youth Protection in your area, even if you judge that the parents are taking steps to put an end to the situation. It is up to Youth Protection to evaluate whether their measures are adequate.

If you believe that a child or youngster in your entourage is experiencing severe negligence, abandonment, psychological ill-treatment (denigrating, threats, emotional rejection, isolation, exploitation, exposure to conjugal violence, etc) or has serious behaviour problems (drug abuse, suicide attempts, running away, etc) you can report this to Youth Protection in your area.

In performing their jobs, all professionals working with children, in daycare centres, schools, health and social services establishments and police, must signal Youth Protection for all situations stipulated in the Youth Protection Act.

As well, every adult is obligated to give the necessary help to a child who wants to report their own situation or that of their sister or brother, or that of another child they know (article 42).

Youth Centre: Director of Youth Protection

- **If you have doubts** about whether or not a situation must be reported, contact DYP at the same number as for reporting a case.
- **When reporting** you will be asked for a description of the facts, what the situation is (not an interpretation of events), the exact words the child used when disclosing, the names and addresses of the people involved.
- **If you choose to identify yourself**, your name will not be divulged without your consent.
- **The Director of Youth Protection** must advise you of the decision not to retain your report.
- **The information** you provided is kept for two years.
- **It is useful** to take down the name of the person you spoke to when reporting.

IF NECESSARY:

If individuals bring up bad experiences with Youth Protection, explain that there have been some unfortunate experiences with reporting; but it is important not to ‘boycott’ this resource, because it is by using the services that we confirm the public’s need for these services.

Police Services

If we want the aggressor to be arrested, we must contact the police. This will help protect other children. Even when you do not want to file a complaint, it is recommended to contact the police; they may be looking for information.

Multisectoral agreement

This agreement requires Youth Protection and all other concerned parties (police, judicial system, as well as employees of other partners like schools and daycare centres) to work together in cases where there is reasonable suspicion that a child’s safety or development is being compromised. This refers to children who are victims of sexual assault, physical ill-treatment or an absence of care that threatens their health.

For further information on the Youth Protection Act and reporting, refer adults to the guide for reporting entitled: *Filing a report with the DYP is already protecting a child, When and how to file a report?*⁴ It is also available online at: <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2008/08-838-01A.pdf>.

Resources Within Your Milieu

Depending on the time left, present a few important regional or provincial resources: for example, resources for children that are financially accessible, etc.

⁴ This guide takes into account the July 9, 2007, amendments to the YPA. This document is edited by the communications services of the Department of Health and Social Services of Quebec.

8. CONCLUSION

Objective: Sensitize adults to the importance of getting involved.

Adults can ensure that children are:

- better informed about violence and know how to react;
- more independent in dealing with dangerous situations;
- better informed about the resources available to them.

Adults have the power to change things through what are often simple words and actions. Simply being attentive can make us an important person in a child's life and make a difference.

This paragraph refers to resiliency or the ability to overcome an obstacle, which is often linked to a person being present in the child's life that they know they can turn to and count on. For more on resiliency see the Complément d'information for the facilitators.

For educators and classroom teachers plan for time to distribute the memo on the smooth functioning of the workshop. (Boîte à outils, Part 8, for staff.)

Draw their attention to the aspects you consider most important.

9. WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Objective: To receive feedback from workshop participants in order to make changes, if necessary.

For this part use your organization's choice of questionnaire (14 or 16 questions). You can find it in the Complément d'information.

Ask staff members to take a few minutes to fill out the evaluation sheet. Their comments are highly appreciated. They allow us to make adjustments to the workshop, if necessary.

Thank participants for their participation.

Remind them of your availability to answer any questions, as well as the possibility of reaching you at the office for support for any situation involving children and violence prevention.

END OF WORKSHOP