

# COMPLÉMENT D'INFORMATION POUR L'ÉQUIPE D'ANIMATION

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## VERSION ANGLAISE



**Document uniforme et facultatif**

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**NOTE :** certaines pages n'ont pas été traduites en anglais, soit parce que le ROEQ n'a pas de droit d'auteur concernant un texte et ne peut donc en faire la traduction, soit parce qu'un texte n'est pas pertinent pour une clientèle anglophone (par exemple, la bibliographie).  
Toutefois, l'équipe d'animation peut utiliser le texte français, si elle le désire.

## ***DEFINITIONS FOR VOCABULARY USED IN RELATION TO CHILD ABUSE***

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### **ABUSE\***

Wrong or improper use or treatment of.

### **ASSAULT\***

1. A violent physical or verbal attack; To make an assault on.
2. An attempt to do or immediate threat of doing unlawful personal violence.

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT<sup>1</sup>**

« Considering the complexity of the subject as well as the numerous myths, stereotypes and biases that surround it, it is essential to adopt a definition of sexual assault that recognizes it as an act of power and domination of a criminal nature. The definition of sexual assault is:

... a gesture of a sexual nature, with or without physical contact, committed by an individual without the consent of the person targeted, or in certain cases, particularly those involving children, through emotional manipulation or blackmail. It is an act aiming to subject another person to one's own desires through an abuse of power, the use of force or constraint, or implicit or explicit threats. A sexual assault attacks one's fundamental rights, notably a person's physical and psychological integrity and their safety.

This definition applies regardless of age, sex, culture, religion or sexual orientation of the victim or the aggressor, regardless of the type of gesture of a sexual nature, or where the assault took place, and regardless of the nature of the relationship existing between the victim and the aggressor. A sexual assault can take different forms : rape, molestation, sexual offences, sexual contact, incest, juvenile prostitution or pornography. »

### **NEGLECTANCE\***

Inadequate or dangerous way to care for a child. A chronic lack of care with regard to health, bodily hygiene, nutrition, education, or supervision, a lack of attention or affection, or indifference.

It is considered negligence when parents or other caretakers of a child do not ensure the basic conditions essential for the child's emotional, physical and psychological development (National Clearing House on Family Violence, Health Canada, 1996).

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\* The Penguin English Dictionary

<sup>1</sup> Orientations gouvernementales en matière d'agression sexuelle, gouvernement du Québec, Édition produite par : La Direction des communications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 2001, our translation.

## **PEDOPHILIA**

A social behaviour problem expressing itself by an abuse of power through sexuality and manifested by a person who sexually assaults children (ROEQ, April 2006).

## **VIOLENCE**

Exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse, unnecessary or unlawful force (Dictionary).

## **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**

Any action ranging from attacking someone's personal integrity to putting their life in danger. The many possible forms of physical violence include beating, striking, biting, burning or wounding, choking, strangling, punching or kicking, striking with an object, shoving, knocking down, shaking violently, sequestering or tying up. Bodily or genital mutilation, cultural norms aside, are also included. The most extreme form of physical violence is obviously homicide or assassination.

Physical violence against children is unique among the various forms of family violence in that it is often associated with or confused with punishment (National Clearing House on Family Violence, Health Canada).

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE**

Psychological violence refers to persistent attacks against a person's sense of self-worth. It translates into attitudes, words or behaviours that aim to show contempt for someone, reduce their self-esteem, or undermine their self-confidence. This takes various forms.



**Rejection** : Refusing to recognize a child's worth and needs, infantilizing. Constant exclusion, reflecting a negative image to the child, continuous criticism and belittling, humiliation, threats of throwing them out or giving them away, or simply ignoring them.



**Terrorizing** : Using gestures or statements to intimidate, manipulate, exercise emotional blackmail, making repeated excessive demands, punishing and maintaining a climate of fear, exposing a child to conjugal or familial violence.



**Isolating** : Forbidding contact with others, behaviour that leads the child to believe that they are alone in the world.



**Corrupting** : Inciting a child to violence, precocious sexuality, or the consumption of drugs or alcohol.

## **VERBAL VIOLENCE**

Words used to humiliate or insult a person. This can take the form of belittling, insulting, threatening, mocking, jeering, sarcasm, harassment in the form of orders, incessant criticism, malicious insinuations, yelling and screaming.

## **BULLYING<sup>2</sup>**

Bullying is the term used to describe the behaviour of a person who mistreats another person using physical force, their authority, or a social or intellectual advantage. Not limited to children, the term bully applies as well to adults who mistreat children or other adults, including partners and spouses.

Bullying is a form of aggression exercised in the context of a relationship. A child that commits acts of bullying is using aggressivity and control to maintain a position of power with regard to their victim. With time the inequality of power within the relationship and its dynamic are strengthened. The victim becomes trapped in a violent relationship. This problem can also occur between groups of children. The main elements of bullying are :

- 1) an inequality of power;
- 2) direct or indirect (behind their back) physical or psychological injurious actions;
- 3) repetitious behaviour.

Friendly teasing and shoving and even pretending to fight are not considered bullying when both children are enjoying themselves (*Centre national pour la prévention du crime, 2006, our translation*).

## **EXPOSURE TO CONJUGAL VIOLENCE**

Children exposed to conjugal violence are intimately linked to both the victim and the aggressor. This places them in a position of helplessness with regard to the aggressor's behaviour, and creates a sense of responsibility toward the victim (Lessard, G. and Paradis, F., our translation).

Some children are terrified, fearful of death or of seeing their mother die, or they experience anger and a feeling of guilt and responsibility for the violence (McAlister et Groves in Maillé, 1999, our translation from French). These feelings are justified as children are often subjected to violence following the violence inflicted upon their mothers (Eisikovits et al., 1998, our translation).

Children exposed to conjugal violence live in a « toxic environment » which affects their development.

## **EFFECT OF CONJUGAL VIOLENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FAMILY<sup>3</sup>**

When conjugal violence is present in a family, the parents do not positively influence one another. They are not able to help each other as in the case of a couple where there is no violence. The violence imposes a hierarchy, and the children feel it. When the mother is in charge the child does not feel safe. «*Should I listen to daddy? Yes, because he's the boss. Should I listen to mommy? No, because she is never right. If I do what she wants, I will also be wrong. So I shouldn't listen to mommy.*»

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<sup>2</sup> William Voors : *L'intimidation : changer le cours de la vie de votre enfant*, 2003, our translation from French

<sup>3</sup> Excerpt from Turgeon, Joane, Comité Priorité Violence Conjugale, (2005), « Les enfants exposés à la violence conjugale : Dépistage et intervention », our translation.

## ***PEDOPHILIA: AN INDIVIDUAL OR SOCIAL AILMENT***

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How pedophilia is defined depends on one's field of intervention and experience, and the angle from which one looks at the problem. With a view to treatment, pedophilia will be defined as an illness. From a perspective of social change in preventing child abuse, it will more likely be defined as an abuse of power.

### **Pedophilia viewed as an illness**

There are several definitions of pedophilia. One of the most commonly used comes from the *American Psychiatric Association*, which categorizes pedophilia among the "paraphilic mental disorders" and describes it as: "Over a period of at least six months, recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger); the person has acted on these sexual urges, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty; the person is at least age 16 years and at least 5 years older than the victim."

Considering the difficulty in combining theory and practice, description and hypothesis, there are numerous other classifications. These classifications attempt to take our thinking beyond the question of sexual preference alone. They take into account the perpetrator's quest for power, and the various behavioural and relational forms this takes (Knight, Carter and Prently), the intention, the aggressor's social competence, the level of physical and relational violence (Groth), or object relation (Van Gijsegheem).

André McKibben has done an exhaustive review of the various classifications. He points out that their principal failing is the absence of operational diagnostic criteria and inter-judge reliability (Dr. Sophie Baron-Laforêt, our translation). Another difficulty in defining pedophilia resides in its dual status: a 'legal' one when seen as an infraction; a 'medical' one when considered a problem of sexual preference<sup>4</sup>

### **Pedophilia or the sexual assault of children seen as a societal problem**

97% of child molesters have a 'normal' psychological profile<sup>5</sup>. They are generally well-looked-upon and respected individuals, until they are denounced for sexual assault. Just think of the public's shock when the media released the information surrounding producer Guy Cloutier's behavior with his young protégée, or the actions of well-known boxer Dave Hilton with his two daughters. Think of all the uncles with 'wandering hands'.

ESPACE's approach is based on a feminist analysis, which considers acts of violence as the expression of one's power over someone more vulnerable. The problem of child abuse, be it sexual, physical, verbal or psychological, is thus also analyzed as a social problem and not simply an individual one.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.droitsenfants/internet.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Badgley Report 1984 : *Sexual offences Against Children, Cross-Canada study*.

The following is the definition of pedophilia used by the ROEQ and its members:

**« Pedophilia is a social behavior problem expressed by an abuse of power via sexuality, manifested by an individual who sexually assaults children. »**

**RESEARCH CARRIED OUT ON THE CAP-ESPACE PROGRAM**  
**SECONDARY EFFECTS ON CHILDREN**

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Adults sometimes worry that a program like ours will have a negative effect on children, for example, making them fearful or aggressive. We wanted to verify that, and the results clearly show that we don't need to worry about that. Our results come from research carried out by Martine Hébert<sup>6</sup>, who surveyed parents of children in grades 1 and 3 who had participated in the CAP-ESPACE workshop.

After the workshop:

- ❑ **Close to 50 % of parents noticed their children showed more confidence in themselves.** They spoke more about their likes and dislikes. They used a wider range of solutions to resolve conflicts and showed greater self-assertion.
- ❑ **A majority of parents did not observe negative reactions by their children following the workshop.** However, some parents noticed that:
  - their children were slightly more fearful around strangers (25 %). (This might be an indication that the child had taken the messages conveyed seriously.)
  - their children might have shown aggressive behaviour toward their peers (15 %) or siblings (30 %). (This could be a positive thing if, formerly, the child was passive instead of reacting.)

However, the parents emphasized that the extent of these behaviours did not constitute a problem.

During the two weeks following the presentation of the program:

- ❑ **close to 30 % of parents noticed that their child refused to listen to them more often than previously.** But only 7 % said that this created a problem for them.

If this should happen to you, there are things that you can do. Remind your child of what was presented in the workshop that he/she has perhaps forgotten; the rights of others are as important as theirs, and that is why we have rules everywhere, at home, at school, in sports.

Lastly, the parents surveyed did not point out any major fear reactions with respect to known adults, nor sleep disturbances, nor isolationist behaviour among their children. The workshop itself does not create fear in children.

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<sup>6</sup> HÉBERT, Martine; GAGNON, Francine. « Analyse des retombées du programme Espace. Enfants victimes : quand la vie n'est pas un conte », Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes, 2001, pages 25-31, our translation.



## ***THE ROEQ'S POSITION ON SPANKING***

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Even if it is undoubtedly advisable to distinguish between an occasional tap on the bum and repeated corporal punishment;

Even if the impact and the consequences vary from one child to another depending on their age, personality, the quality of the relationship with their parents, the severity and frequency of the gestures, etc.;

ESPACE organizations base their actions on the following principles.

- Children are people in their own right, who are not just our future, but our present as well.
- Children have the right to be safe, strong and free.
- Children have the right to the respect of their physical, psychological and sexual integrity regardless of age, sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, etc., as promulgated in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Aggressors are solely to blame for the acts of violence they commit.

Consequently, the Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec :

- considers spanking to be an unacceptable method of discipline;
- considers resorting to spanking an improper use of power in order to control a child.

However, the ROEQ considers it important to reach out to adults who resort to spanking to get them thinking about the risks and impact on their children and to propose concrete alternative disciplinary measures. We think that these adults will thus be better equipped to deal with the challenge of educating children if we want them to be safe, strong and free.

***Position adopted by the ROEQ Collective on December 6, 2002***

### *ANY BENEFITS TO SPANKING?<sup>7</sup>*

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The debate on spanking is again on the agenda and is going off in all directions and taking on various tones. As organizations working to prevent child abuse, our position is clear. The members of the Regroupement des organismes Espace du Québec consider spanking to be an unacceptable disciplinary measure and an improper use of an adult's power in order to control a child.

However, making parents who resort to spanking feel guilty threatens to further isolate them, doing nothing to improve the outcome for children. We believe instead that it is important to reach out to adults to get them thinking about the risks and impact of spanking.

What do we really teach children when we hit them? That it is okay to hit? It is our role as parents to educate our children; do we want to do it with love or with violence? Do we want to establish healthy communication with our children based on mutual respect, or communication based on fear? Who trusts someone who hits them? Lastly, what are the positive benefits of being hit?

These are just some of the questions that we need to ask as parents or people intervening with them. It is undoubtedly advisable to distinguish between an occasional tap on the bum and repeated corporal punishment. Assuredly, the impact and consequences on the child vary according to age, personality, the quality of the relationship with the parents, the severity and frequency of the gestures. These nuances are essential, but why retain spanking as a disciplinary measure when we now have numerous constructive and effective alternatives that are truly educational.

We can understand a parent who is overwhelmed and overloaded who strikes their child. Nonetheless parents need to use their authority and their power judiciously to ensure their child's well-being. They need to also remember that this same power, when misused, can lead to an abuse of power that translates into acts of physical, psychological, verbal or sexual violence.

The present debate around spanking and the interest shown for the subject by the parents who participate in CAP-ESPACE workshops confirm the importance of doing prevention. Making parents feel guilty does nothing to help the situation. Nor does excusing or trivializing their actions. Parents need to take responsibility and, if necessary, turn to resources that can help them get things under control. Parents are there to guide their children, and to do that, remaining calm and serene is better than using force and anger. A child needs clear and coherent guidelines as well as solid, loving adults to direct them. This can all be done without resorting to spanking.

Francine Gagnon  
Coordinator  
Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec

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<sup>7</sup> This text appeared in the *Journal de Québec*, April 13, 2007, entitled « *L'inacceptable fessée* »

## *INDICATORS OF STRESS IN CHILDREN*

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As outlined in chapter 3 of the « Practical Guide for Parents on Preventing Child Abuse », stress in a child is usually linked to a new situation or a difficult period. However, the stress can be linked to an assault (see pages 18 and 19).

The following is a list of stress indicators. For them to be significant, there should be two or three. They can appear simultaneously or one after the other. For a child who has not been living in an atmosphere of violence for a long time, we might notice an important change in their behaviour.

Ex. (1) A child who every Monday shows signs of stress, becoming calm between Wednesday and Friday, repeating the cycle the following Monday (time specific).

Ex. (2) A child who has a headache every afternoon when it is time to leave school and return home (daily).

Parents, knowing their children better than anyone, are generally the best placed to recognize signs of stress, which are expressed differently by each child. School and daycare staff who see the children daily are also well placed to notice worrisome behaviours.

### **Signs of stress fall into several categories.**

#### *Interpersonal relationships* (sociability, contact with others, etc.)

This refers to behaviours expressing withdrawal or, on the contrary, exaggerated behaviours in their interpersonal relationships, such as a child who : isolates her\himself or needs to be constantly surrounded; acts particularly submissive or constantly on guard;

- becomes irritable, aggressive, hyperactive, apathetic or indifferent;
- suddenly shows exaggerated affection for their entourage or cuts themselves off from all emotionalities.

#### *Physical problems*

- psychosomatic illnesses or chronic ailments
- stomach aches or headaches
- vomiting, nose bleeds
- obvious wounds, unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding

***Emotional problems***

- excessive anger
- hyperactivity
- various and sudden phobias
- sudden mood changes
- selective mutism (the child chooses not to speak)
- depression
- feelings of shame and guilt

***Changes in activities or habits***

- academic regression, absenteeism or an exaggerated need to succeed
- frequent lying
- excessive cleanliness or hygiene problems
- age inappropriate sexual games, excessive masturbation
- difficulty concentrating

***Self-destructive behaviours***

- suicide attempts
- automutilation
- prostitution, delinquency
- drug or alcohol use

***Regressive behaviour***

- urinating on the ground or deliberately beside the toilet
- starting to suck their thumb again or wet the bed, etc.

***Eating disorders***

- stuffing food into their mouths, spitting constantly
- bulimia, anorexia

***Sleeping problems***

- never wanting to go to bed, sleeping too much
- nightmares
- excessive fatigue





***Certain indicators speak for themselves***

- obvious signs of varied and repeated wounds such as burns or bruises, etc.
- sexually transmitted infections are also signs that call for immediate attention.

## ***RESILIENCY<sup>8</sup>***








*Resilient* : Capable of withstanding shock without permanent deformation or rupture; able to recover from or adjust to misfortune or change (The Penguin English Dictionary).

*Resiliency defined by other authors:*




-  A person's ability to return to a former or superior level of adaptation after undergoing a stress (Steinhauer, 1998, our translation from French).
-  The victory of adaptation processes over eventual imbalances resulting from more or less traumatic events (Frank Vitaro, our translation from French).
-  Being resilient does not mean being exempt of problems but rather being capable of returning to a level of functioning comparable to that preceding the traumatic event. Resiliency describes the processes, the capacities and levels of functioning linked to a successful adaptation despite adverse circumstances (Masten et al., 1990, our translation from French).
-  Maintaining adaptive functioning despite the presence of a threat in the environment (Rutter, 1987, our translation from French).

The factors for withstanding stress are not only tied to a person's makeup but also their environment (Rutter, 1985).

*With regard to personal characteristics:*

-  Good cognitive abilities (IQ, concentration, etc.)
-  A positive perception of self and a feeling of competence;
-  An easy-going disposition, sociable, adaptable, low reactivity and a capacity for self-control;
-  A positive attitude toward life;
-  The quality of the non-affected parent's presence;
-  Significant relationships with other competent and attentive adults;
-  Positive relationships with pro-social well-adjusted peers.

*With regard to the community:*

-  Attending a good quality school;
-  Links with well-structured and supervised social or recreational organizations;
-  Access to quality health and social services.

<sup>8</sup> Text based on a presentation by Magali Dufour to the ROEQ, April 7, 2005 entitled « *La résilience chez les victimes d'abus sexuel dans l'enfance* » and a document entitled « *Les facteurs de résilience chez les victimes d'abus sexuel : État de la question* », Magali H. Dufour, Louise Nadeau et Karine Bertrand, Université de Montréal, our translation.

Other variables appear to play a substantial role in victims' recovery. They can be grouped together under « coping » strategies : for example, avoidance, seeking support, disclosing, and cognitive reconstruction. However, considering current research, the only assertion that we can make is that « *coping* » strategies have different results depending on how and when they are used (Spaccarelli, 1994).

## ***LYING***

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Children who lie are sometimes victims of assault and lie in order to hide the truth. The consequences, if they reveal the assault, can be very costly. For example, they may be sent to a foster home, or daddy might go to jail. Moreover, the truth might be so awful that the child is afraid that no one will believe them.

### ***Lying to protect themselves***

Children sometimes lie to protect themselves. Anne might tell her mother that she no longer wants to go to her uncle's because there are rats in the basement. Sure that her mother would not want her to be in danger, Anne thinks she can thus avoid her uncle. Anne's mother knows there are no rats in the basement, but doesn't know what the uncle is doing to Anne, so she accuses her of lying.

A child assaulted on their way home from school who must keep it a secret under the threat of reprisals might tell their parents that they stayed after class to help the teacher. When the parents mention this to the teacher and she\he says that they never asked for the child's help, they automatically assume the child lied.

### ***Beware of labels!***

A child who discloses an assault may change their version of events because they are afraid of the adult's reactions or because they feel pressured by the adult's expectations. Children who are labelled liars are easy prey for predators, because they are convinced that no one will believe them.

Children do not always know how to describe what happened and will use whatever means is available to them. Lying can be a way to ask for help. They need adults to continue questioning them, to go beyond the obvious, especially in cases of assault. This requires patience so as not to judge nor harass but instead to be welcoming and to open the door.

### ***Needs attention?***

Adults often say, « it's just to get attention ». Well, even if it is « just » that, it still means that the child is not getting the attention they need. Giving them attention for good behaviour and their accomplishments, or for anything else that can be highlighted so as to valorize the child, can contribute to filling their need and reinforcing what the child is doing well.

## ***FALSE ACCUSATIONS***

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Yes, there are at times false accusations of sexual assault. However, the extensive coverage given to them is in no way representative of the actual low percentage of unfounded accusations. It is not easy to understand why children might make false accusations, but we contend that behind a false accusation lies a serious problem.

Using a few examples, we will attempt to explain how a false declaration might come about. At times, the bombarding of a child with questions by an anxious adult or one who is not satisfied with the child's answers can provoke a false accusation. The child changes their version of events and their responses in an attempt to please the dissatisfied adult. A child may do this in reaction to an adult's manipulation or for personal vengeance or in search of a solution. All of these situations show the importance of verifying the cause of such an accusation.

***For example :** One day a 7-year-old girl tells her mother that the 12-year-old boy next door sexually assaulted her. After checking into it, it is learned that the girl was afraid of the boy and was looking for a way to protect herself.*

### ***False accusations by children or errors in judgement by adults ?***

In a series of articles that appeared at the end of August, reporter Marc Thibodeau explored the phenomenon of false accusations of sexual assault against teachers. One cannot remain insensitive to the dramatic consequences for someone falsely accused of a crime, who, as a result, faces rejection, loss, and the need to reorganize their life? The series did a good job of bringing out the impact on someone falsely accused and, on a broader scale, on teachers in general. Fearful of finding themselves in a similar situation, many of them set up all kinds of barriers to protect themselves, at the same time cutting themselves off from spontaneous and caring relationships with children and youngsters, who so need them.

We cannot remain indifferent to this issue, we who have been daily in contact with teachers for close to 15 years now, precisely to discuss child abuse prevention with them. We sensitize them to the privileged role they play with children, we answer their questions and, at times, we help unravel certain delicate situations that could otherwise lead to what is referred to as a false accusation.

Why did these articles provoke anger and a need to respond? Because once again they opposed adults' misfortune to that of children. Because they present children as manipulative 'rulers of the roost', as if they were lucky to be that, and as though it was their fault! Without a doubt as well, because prevention, with no nuancing or asking the opinions of those who do it daily, is at times presented as the source of the problem, and silence as a solution.



Should we not once and for all place false accusations in the global context of the problem of sexual assault of children? How many are false accusations out of the total number of disclosures? How many false negatives (situations where proof isn't established but where nonetheless an assault has occurred) among the acquittals and the non-retained reports by youth protection? How many assaults that are never reported, kept secret at times until adulthood or even until death? How many children left to their lot, ill-informed, the adults around them not believing them or simply not knowing how to decipher their calls for help?

The first objective of the Quebec Health Minister's Policy on health and welfare (La Politique de la santé et du bien-être) says : « By the year 2002, reduce the number of cases of child sexual abuse, violence against children and negligence, and attenuate the consequences of these problems» (our translation). How is it then that after establishing this objective, the same department is dismantling the specialized sexual abuse teams in the youth centres, thus losing expertise it took years to acquire? How is it that piecemeal grants too often favor all kinds of improvised so-called preventive interventions, while proven programs, evaluated and recognized for their solidity and approach, are struggling to survive? How to explain this incoherency ?

Sexual assault of children is tragic, as are false accusations, for both those falsely accused and the children who make false accusations. We need to ask what could possibly be happening in the life of a child or an adolescent that would bring them to do something so serious? Whether they act under the influence of an adult's manipulation, or for their own purposes, or for personal vengeance, it is obvious that something is seriously wrong and requires solid and experienced adult intervention. Unfortunately, adults are often quicker to punish and blame than to seek to understand and help.

In one of the articles, an « expert » admitted not having solutions to resolve the problem. But solutions do exist; they include good prevention programs that have been evaluated, adequate training in prevention for intervenors in schools, at youth protection, in CLSCs and the judicial sector (police, lawyers, judges), and sensitizing parents and adults in general. However we look at it, silence is definitely not the solution. For that matter, who does silence serve? Assuredly not the children!

Francine Gagnon  
Coordinator  
Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec  
September 7, 1999

### ***RECOURSE FOR THOSE REPORTING***


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If you are not satisfied with the response received after filing a report you can refer to:

1. the immediate superior of the person spoken to, or the Director of Youth Protection;
2. the person responsible for complaints at the youth protection centre involved; you can file a complaint;
3. your regional health board.

If you are still not satisfied after this, you can turn to the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ) and explain your dissatisfaction or your demands.

**Here are some ways to reach the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse :**

 Telephone : 1-800-361-6477

 Email address: [webmestre@cdpdj.qc.ca](mailto:webmestre@cdpdj.qc.ca)

## ***PROVINCIAL RESOURCES***

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**[www.kidshelpphone](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)** / 1-800-668-6868

Kids Help Phone is a Canadian, anonymous phone and online counselling, referral and information service for children and youth operating 24\7.

**[www.teljeunes.com](http://www.teljeunes.com)** / 1-800-263-2266.

Internet help service for teenagers. Information, advice, help, chat with counsellors, frequently asked questions. Tel-jeunes is a free, confidential resource.

**[www.surete.qc.ca](http://www.surete.qc.ca)**

The site of the Quebec Provincial Police with an information section to guide you safely on the internet. You can also find advice on safety and prevention, as well as how to report a crime.

**[www.ligneparents.com](http://www.ligneparents.com)** / 1-800-361-5085

Free, confidential, bilingual telephone service for parents. Available 24\7. Web site offering information and help.

**[www.parentshelpline.com](http://www.parentshelpline.com)**

Help line for parents, caregivers or professionals helping families.

**[www.bewebaware.ca](http://www.bewebaware.ca)**

Information and tips for parents on how to help young people enjoy the benefits and manage the risks of being on the internet, including age-specific safety tips.

**[www.internet101.ca](http://www.internet101.ca)**

Site for parents, school personnel and youngsters, proposing resources for prevention on the internet. This site was created by the RCMP and various police corps.

## ***INTERNET : PARENT-CHILD AGREEMENT<sup>9</sup>***

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*BEFORE YOUR CHILD GOES ONLINE IT IS A VERY GOOD IDEA TO MAKE A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH THEM. THIS AGREEMENT IS A VERY GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT TERMS YOU MIGHT INCLUDE.*

*READ IT AND DISCUSS IT TOGETHER, THEN BOTH SIGN IT, AND POST A COPY UP BY THE COMPUTER. YOU WILL NOTICE THAT WHEN A CHILD GOES ONLINE, IT IS NOT ONLY THE CHILD THAT HAS TO PROMISE THINGS!*

### ***THE KID'S AGREEMENT***

*I, \_\_\_\_\_ AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING RULES FOR USING THE INTERNET:*

- 1) I WILL NOT HIDE THINGS THAT I AM DOING ONLINE FROM MY PARENTS.*
- 2) I WILL NEVER GIVE OUT MY FULL NAME, MY HOME ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER, OR MY SCHOOL NAME, TO ANYONE ONLINE WITHOUT MY PARENTS' PERMISSION*
- 3) MY PARENTS AND I ARE A TEAM. IF I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE INTERNET I WILL SHARE IT WITH THEM AND ASK FOR THEIR HELP.*
- 4) EVEN THOUGH I AM USING THE INTERNET I WILL CONTINUE TO SPEND TIME WITH SCHOOL FRIENDS OUTDOORS, AND WILL NOT ABANDON SCHOOL AND OTHER OFFLINE SOCIAL EVENTS.*
- 5) I AGREE THAT SCHOOLWORK COMES FIRST, BEFORE THE INTERNET.*
- 6) SOMETIMES I MIGHT NEED TO SAY NO TO A SUGGESTION FROM SOMEONE ONLINE. I WILL DO SO POLITELY.*
- 7) I UNDERSTAND THAT I CAN NEVER KNOW WHETHER THE PEOPLE I MEET ONLINE ARE WHO THEY SAY THEY ARE. I WILL THEREFORE BE CAREFUL WHEN CHATTING ONLINE.*
- 8) I WILL NEVER TRY TO MEET SOMEONE FROM ONLINE WITHOUT MY PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERMISSION.*
- 9) I WILL TREAT OTHERS ONLINE AS I WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED. I WILL NOT BECOME A TROUBLEMAKER OR A BULLY ONLINE.*

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<sup>9</sup> [www.internet101.ca](http://www.internet101.ca)

- 10) I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY AND DO ON THE INTERNET, THEREFORE IF SOMEONE SAYS OR DOES SOMETHING THAT MAKES ME FEEL UPSET OR DISTURBED, I WILL TELL MY PARENTS. I WILL NOT RESPOND TO ANY MESSAGES THAT MAKE ME FEEL UPSET, ANGRY OR SCARED.*
- 11) I WILL NEVER OPEN EMAIL FROM STRANGERS. INSTEAD, I WILL ASK MY PARENTS TO CHECK IT FIRST. I WILL ALSO NEVER ACCEPT A PICTURE OR A FILE FROM A PERSON ONLINE NOR SEND A PICTURE OF ME OR A FILE TO THEM WITHOUT ASKING MY PARENTS' PERMISSION FIRST, EVEN IF IT IS MY ONLINE FRIENDS.*
- 12) I WILL FOLLOW MY PARENTS' RULES FOR BEING ONLINE, INCLUDING HOW LONG I CAN BE ONLINE, WHERE I CAN GO AND WHAT I CAN DO.*

## THE PARENTS' AGREEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING RULES FOR  
USING THE INTERNET:

- 1) I WILL SET MY CHILD REASONABLE RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR USING THE INTERNET, AND I WILL EXPLAIN MY REASONS TO MY CHILD. I WILL SET REASONABLE AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR BREAKING MY RULES.
- 2) I WILL LEARN HOW TO USE THE COMPUTER AND THE INTERNET SO THAT I UNDERSTAND WHAT MY CHILD IS DOING, AND SO I KNOW WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT WHEN I ADVISE MY CHILD.
- 3) I WILL NOT BECOME SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THE INTERNET MYSELF AS TO NOT SPEND TIME WITH MY CHILD.
- 4) I WILL NOT USE THE INTERNET AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR ME SPENDING TIME WITH MY CHILD. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE COMPUTER IS NOT A BABYSITTER.
- 5) I WILL CONSIDER THE FRIENDS MY CHILD MAKES ONLINE TO BE FRIENDS JUST AS THOSE THEY HAVE OFFLINE AND I WILL ENCOURAGE MY CHILD TO TALK TO ME ABOUT THEIR FRIENDS AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING WITH THEM ONLINE.
- 6) IF MY CHILD HAS A PROBLEM CONCERNING THE INTERNET I ENCOURAGE THEM TO TELL ME ABOUT IT AND I WILL HELP THEM SOLVE IT, JUST AS I WOULD HELP WITH A PROBLEM AT SCHOOL.
- 7) I WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY BLAME MY CHILD FOR THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO THEM ONLINE THAT ARE NOT THEIR DOING. I UNDERSTAND THAT MY CHILD IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WORDS OR ACTIONS OF PEOPLE THEY INTERACT WITH ONLINE.
- 8) NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO MY CHILD ONLINE AND EVEN IF THEY BREAK MY RULES I WILL NOT PERMANENTLY BAN THE INTERNET. I RECOGNIZE THAT SKILL WITH THE INTERNET IS ESSENTIAL TO MY CHILD'S FUTURE.

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

KID'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

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## *THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE*

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

Does losing one's patience, spanking a child, or leaving him or her alone at home constitute violence or neglect? The boundary is often unclear. **There is a difference between a one-time gesture and repeated acts that affect the physical or psychological health of a child<sup>10</sup>; the impact is not the same.**

### ***Bullying***

An incident of bullying occurs every seven (7) minutes in a schoolyard in Canada<sup>11</sup>.

These behaviours range from physical violence to verbal violence, making faces or obscene gestures, or intentional exclusion from a group. Bullying is defined by three characteristics :

- ⇒ Aggressive or intentionally harmful behaviours;
- ⇒ Behaviour that is repetitive and sustained;
- ⇒ It occurs in a relationship characterized by an imbalance of power<sup>12</sup>.

In 85 % of cases of bullying between children, other children are present. When they intervene, the bullying stops in less than 10 seconds in more than half (57 %) the situations.

### ***Verbal Violence***

Verbal violence means using words that hurt: "You are good for nothing"; "You never understand anything "; "You're always messing up"; "You're useless"; etc.

Constantly hearing this, children end up believing what they are told, and their confidence is destroyed.

- ⇒ Denigrating a child does not teach them how to behave, it hurts them.
- ⇒ Using « always » and « never » leaves no room for improvement and are generally inaccurate.
- ⇒ Verbal violence is very common among children but is often trivialized.

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<sup>10</sup> *Visage de la violence, La violence contre les enfants*, Department of Health and Social Services of Quebec, 2001-2002, our translation.

<sup>11</sup> Excerpt : *Bâtir des communautés plus sûres*, Department of Justice, Canada, Spring 2003, # 7, our translation.

<sup>12</sup> Dossier intimidation, Association Québécoise des Psychologues Scolaires, october 2003, our translation

### ***Physical Violence***

Physical violence is most often associated with injuries that leave marks, like bruises, cuts or fractures. However, it is important to remember that although pushing, hitting, shaking, and locking up don't necessarily leave visible traces, they are nonetheless acts of physical violence.

Physical violence is unique among the various forms of violence against children in that it is often associated with or confused with punishment. (National Clearing House on Family Violence, Health Canada). But what do we really teach children when we hit them? That it is okay to hit?!

For those interested in the subject, the ROEQ made its position on spanking known in an article that appeared in 2007. You can also obtain the pamphlet by the Canadian Department of Justice and Health Canada entitled : *Why you should avoid spanking*.

### ***Psychological Violence***

Humiliating a child or endlessly comparing them using negative innuendos is **denigrating**. Not saying a word to them and sulking for hours on end or constantly pushing them away when they ask for a hug is **emotional rejection**. Keeping them from seeing their friends or their other parent (with the exception of a legal restraint or genuine danger) is **isolating**. **Threats** and **exposure to conjugal violence** are forms of psychological mistreatment that can affect a child's safety and development, just like **indifference** or **exploitation** (ex : work that is disproportionate to their ability).

### ***Exposure to Conjugal Violence***

In every classroom there are between two and six children who were exposed to a form of violence against their mothers in their homes during the previous year (Sudermann and Jaffe from Maillé, 1999).

Whether they are present or not during the violence, children are always affected by the climate created. They are victims of this violence even when it is not directed at them (Pâquet-Deehy, 2000).

More than half (56 %) of youngsters exposed to conjugal violence meet the criteria for post-traumatic stress syndrome (Suderman and Jaffe, 1999) and a majority of the rest present symptoms of it (Lehmann, 1997).

### ***Sexual Violence***

When we talk about sexual violence we often think first of rape with penetration. Sexual violence also includes molesting, incest, prostitution and juvenile pornography, pedophilia, sexual harassment, exhibitionism and voyeurism.



Just as with adult victims, females make up the majority of children who are victims of sexual assault (1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys)<sup>13</sup>, and they know their aggressor (85 %)<sup>14</sup>; the assaults are often committed by a family member or someone in a position of authority or in a trusting relationship with them<sup>15</sup>. Seventy-four per cent of sexual assaults against children under the age of 17 take place in a private residence, either in the aggressor or the victim's home<sup>16</sup>. This is a far cry from the stranger hiding in the bushes.

- Girls are most often victims of assault within the family, whereas boys are assaulted more often by someone outside the family<sup>17</sup>
- In 98 % of the cases of sexual assault, the perpetrator is male<sup>18</sup>, and more than half of them began to commit sexual assaults as adolescents.

### *Negligence*

Negligence is characterized by the absence of or shortage of acts essential to a child's development, or a chronic lack of care with regard to health, bodily hygiene, nutrition, education, supervision, or a lack of attention and affection. As with other forms of violence, negligence can be found in all socio-economic groups. It would be a mistake to systematically associate negligence with underprivileged milieus.

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<sup>13</sup> Orientation gouvernementales en matière d'agression sexuelle, Gouvernement du Québec, 2001, p.30, our translation

<sup>14</sup> Idem, p.31

<sup>15</sup> Idem, p.33

<sup>16</sup> Statistiques 2006 sur les agressions sexuelles au Québec, ministère de la Sécurité publique, décembre 2007, our translation

<sup>17</sup> Orientation gouvernementales en matière d'agression sexuelle, gouvernement du Québec, 2001, p.33, our translation

<sup>18</sup> Idem, p.31

## *POSITIVE DISCIPLINE*

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In order to develop, children need a predictable environment and significant affective relationships. These two elements are of crucial importance when it comes to teaching youngsters who have behaviour problems at school, as well as for raising all children.

### **The five “C”s**

#### **Establish rules that are...**

1. **Clear and reassuring.** Easy for children to understand, they convey the values that you wish to pass on, for example, self-respect, respect for others and for the environment, development of healthy lifestyles, etc.
2. **Concrete and realistic.** They reflect expected behaviours. They are formulated in a positive way. For example, instead of saying “Stop screaming”, say, “Let's talk softly, the baby is sleeping.”
3. **Consistent and predictable.** They do not fluctuate according to the adult's mood and are limited in number, because children aged 6 to 12 years old can integrate and apply five to six rules at once.
4. **Coherent.** It is essential that the adult practices what he or she preaches, demonstrating by example. If I expect my child to make his or her bed in the morning, I have to make mine!
5. **Consequences need to be logical.** Consequences provide opportunities to learn and grow. For children to learn to assume the consequences for their actions, there should be a logical relationship between the behaviour deemed inappropriate and the consequence.

For example:

The time the child keeps playing instead of getting ready for bed when they have been asked to do so is subtracted from the time for a fun activity before turning off the lights (reading, television, songs).

Given that rules can have exceptions, they must be firm, but not set in stone.

For example:

During the week, when homework is done, the child can play video games or on the computer or watch television for 20 minutes; on weekends, or on movie night you can be more lenient, or you can decide to offer a reward or a privilege, etc.

## **Highlight good behaviour**

Building on strengths and successes is more effective than trying to correct mistakes and failures. However, we sometimes forget to emphasize and appreciate behaviours that we would like to see repeated, focusing instead on what bothers us. A child might repeat a behaviour simply to get our attention. Stop paying too much attention to unwanted behaviours, and put the emphasis on wanted behaviours by regularly congratulating and showing approval. This communicates a clear and constructive message.

## **Describe the behaviour and not the child**

It is easier for children, as well as adults, to improve if they are presented with specifics such as:

- telling the child what they did wrong or was inappropriate, with compassion if necessary;
- telling them what you expect, repeating it often if necessary;
- sharing your feelings with the child, if useful.

For example:

- You got up from the table without permission. I know it is difficult for you, but the household rule is that you must remain seated during a meal.
- It is forbidden to throw a ball in the house. The ball must be rolled on the floor or else take it outside.
- When you do not tell me where you are, I worry. I want you to call me before going over to a friend's house.

## **Develop self-esteem...**

- By using logical consequences that take the form of making amends. This implies asking the child to make reparation through a constructive gesture. Fixing their mistake reduces the guilt while helping the child take responsibility. For example, when a child says mean things about another child, ask them to find three nice things to say about this person. A child who is physically violent can repair the damage by being kind, by carrying the school bag of the injured child, or by playing a game with his or her younger brother, etc. A child who plays or reads when it is time to get ready to leave, causing their parents to be late, can help put the dishes away or set the table to give time back to their parents.
- By giving the child the chance to win back a lost privilege through good behaviour over a predetermined period of time, you are showing them that mistakes are allowed and that wrongs can be righted, and that he or she is forgiven. The possibility of regaining the privilege helps the child see the adult as flexible and caring.
- By offering a supportive presence and encouraging the expression of feelings and emotions.
- By giving them responsibilities that are adapted to their age, temperament, and helping them, if necessary.
- By highlighting their strengths and successes, and by suggesting ways to confront difficulties.

## Offer choices

Encourage children's active participation by offering them simple choices. This gives them a sense of freedom with regard to activities needed for a healthy lifestyle. For example, for young children: "Remi, it is time to get washed, do you prefer a shower or a bath?" For older children: "Do you prefer judo or swimming lessons? Do you prefer lasagna or shepherd's pie for dinner?"

## Figuring things out on their own

In some cases, children learn better if they are left to their own devices. For example, if a child refuses to wear mittens to go outside, let them go without mittens for a few minutes. They will get cold and realize that it is better to wear mittens. Of course, you must ensure the child's safety.

## When the situation is too much for me

When my anger gets the better of me, I can use the three "B"s.

**Back away:** I am angry, I am aware of it and I back away.  
**Breathe:** I think about it and find an acceptable way to express my anger.  
**Behave positively:** I am calm, I can talk about it and find solutions.

**Important note:** Positive discipline is not magic since each child is different and each situation is unique. A technique could work very well with one child while not at all with another or on a given day. Many contextual elements are to be considered. A particular situation may represent greater difficulty and require exterior help.

## For example, in a context of domestic violence against the woman<sup>19</sup> :

- The children could refuse their mother's authority. Their perception being as follows : «Should I listen to Dad? Yes, because he is the boss! Should I listen to Mother? No, because she is never right and if I do what she wants, I will be punished as well.»
- Even with the best parental capacities, the mother cannot manage to have the authority on her children. It's not her or her children that are to blame; it's domestic violence;
- When there are several children, they adopt various positions, which generates relationships of power between them
- It is possible that the mother reestablishes her authority when the father is absent.

## In a context exempt of domestic violence:











- The decision making authority is divided equally between both parents;
- The children remain under parental authority until adulthood.
- The personal decision-making power increases gradually according to the age of the child.
- Parental supervision remains required.

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<sup>19</sup> Extrait de : Turgeon, Joan, *Les enfants exposés à la violence conjugale : dépistage et intervention*, La Gîtée, Maison d'aide et d'hébergement pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale et leurs enfants, 2005

## *WHEN DISCIPLINE RHYMES WITH ESTEE<sup>20</sup>*

***Here are some ideas for positive discipline that also reinforce self-esteem.***

-  Creating a moment of exclusive time for each child (ex: shaking each child's hand when they enter the classroom at the start of each week).
-  Giving the children surprises as often as possible, when they are succeeding.
-  Giving homework holidays one night a week and proposing instead 20 minutes of exclusive parent-child time (explaining the 20 minutes of exclusive time = 20 minutes to play together, read, laugh, etc. with no interruptions). The children can talk or write about it the next day in class.
-  Sending congratulations to parents of a child who did something good during the day or made an incredible effort to improve their behaviour (for a child with behaviour difficulties).
-  Once a week calling one of their student's parents to tell them something positive about their child, using the call as well to encourage and congratulate the parents on their parenting.
-  Setting up two jars, one empty and one with trinkets in it (marbles, coloured stones). The children are invited to take a trinket and place it in the empty jar each time they do something good for a fellow student (peer support).
-  Prepare a 'writer's corner' with the children, which is there for children who need to calm down and relax.
-  An 'appreciation chair' : The teacher picks the name of one child each week. During the week, the other children in the class are invited to write down a positive quality or strength about this classmate. (Make a list of qualities and strengths at the beginning of the year.) At the end of the week the chosen child sits on the chair (which can be decorated by the children). The teacher reads aloud what the other children wrote. Over the year each child gets a turn to sit on the 'appreciation chair'.
-  Offering two minutes of laughter every day (ex: having each student take a turn telling a joke).
-  Making sure to GIVE to parents. This 'giving' means establishing a positive connection with them, looking into their eyes, shaking their hand, telling them something positive about their child, putting oneself in their place, acknowledging their competence, etc.

<sup>20</sup> Based on courses given by Brigitte Racine entitled « La discipline un jeu d'enfant » and « Quand discipline rime avec estime »; *Comme un caméléon sur une jupe écossaise*, Égide Royers, Ph. D., 2005.











## *PARENTS AND BULLYING AT SCHOOL*

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As a parent, learning that your child is a victim of bullying can be extremely upsetting. At times parents can feel helpless, not knowing how to help their child get out of this vicious circle. Several questions arise: How can I tell if my child is a victim? How should I broach the subject with them? Should I encourage my child to fight back? Should I oblige her\him to denounce the aggressor? In this article, we will look at some of the behaviours and attitudes that can help identify victims of bullying and suggestions for parents and teachers on what actions to take.




### Is my child a victim of bullying?

Many children who are bullied don't dare talk to a grown-up, either because they are ashamed that they are not able to defend themselves or for fear of reprisals. A certain amount of time can pass before a parent or teacher is informed. The Quebec Order of Psychologists, in partnership with the Montreal School Board, has identified some of the typical behaviours of children who are victims of bullying.




-  Your child's attitude changes suddenly for no apparent reason.
-  Your child repeatedly refuses to go to school, complaining of headaches, stomach aches, nausea, etc.
-  Your child repeatedly asks the teacher to be sent home claiming that she\he doesn't feel well.
-  Your child comes home with bruises or other injuries that they refuse to explain.
-  Your child comes home with damage to their clothing or other possessions.
-  Your child takes detours to and from school.
-  Your child has few friends.
-  Your child steals or regularly asks you for money.
-  Your child has lost interest in school and in learning; their academic performance drops.
-  Your child has mood swings, seems sad and upset.

The question becomes what can I as a parent do if my child is being bullied, and what should I avoid doing? Parents can act on different levels.






-  It is essential to take your child's complaints seriously and ensure them of your support. Their distress is real, and they are suffering.
-  Create a climate of trust and encourage them to talk about what is happening.
-  Encourage them to denounce their aggressor.
-  Inform the school about the situation. Insist, if no action has been taken to resolve the problem.

-  Encourage your child to make new friends. Participate in friends' celebrations, register them for different activities, encourage them to invite their friends over.
-  Encourage them to join activities where they can develop their talents, self-confidence and self-esteem.
-  You can do role playing with your child. Practice with them to prepare them to face the bully (bullies) without crying or becoming aggressive.

According to the Quebec Parents' Committee (2002), parents can also intervene via the School Committee of the child's school. Parents can, in fact:

-  Demand that the school evaluate the phenomenon of bullying;
-  Demand that the school set up a specific project to counter bullying, not just an anti-violence program, because bullying is not always accompanied by violence (for example, rejecting or marginalizing certain students);
-  Ask that rules that deal specifically with bullying be included in the school's behaviour code; for example, no rejecting or participating in the rejection of another student.

If your child is being bullied, avoid :

-  Encouraging them to defend themselves with physical or verbal violence;
-  Overprotecting them. You can't solve all their problems for them;
-  Acting when you are emotional;
-  Intervening directly with your child's aggressor;
-  Contacting the bully's parents. First speak to the school principal. She\he can organize a meeting if needed.

In conclusion, it is never easy to find out that your child is being bullied. However, parents who find themselves in this situation must learn about the subject in order to find the necessary resources and know how to best help their child. Bullying is everyone's business, and more than ever before parents are being called upon to deal with the problem.

### ***Inspired by:***

FÉDÉRATION DES COMITÉS DE PARENTS AU QUÉBEC, L'intimidation de l'enfant : ce que le parent doit savoir, ce qu'il peut faire, janvier 2002,  
[http://www.fcppq.qc.ca/form\\_perf/aide\\_parents/2002\\_01.htm](http://www.fcppq.qc.ca/form_perf/aide_parents/2002_01.htm)

L'ORDRE DES PSYCHOLOGUES DU QUÉBEC et COMMISSION SCOLAIRE DE MONTRÉAL, L'intimidation entre enfants : C'est aussi l'affaire des parents.  
[http://www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/Public/pdf/Depl\\_intimidation.pdf](http://www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/Public/pdf/Depl_intimidation.pdf)

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGING CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR<sup>21</sup>***

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1. Establish a personal relationship with your students.
2. Emphasize the positive.
3. Only blame in private.
4. Stick to the following proverb: « Success breeds success».
5. Make your teaching motivating for the youngsters.
6. Don't take bad behaviour personally.
7. Never force a student to do something in front of the whole class.
8. Remember that every time you fail to carry out a predetermined consequence, you weaken your status as a teacher.
9. Start from students' strengths.
10. Avoid sarcasm.
11. Don't label kids (ex : «hypocrite»).
12. Help your group formulate a behaviour code for your class; favour self-discipline; set high goals.
13. Don't hope for miracles overnight.
14. Be consistent.
15. Remain calm.
16. Congratulate your students collectively and individually.
17. Remember an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
18. Try to resolve problems as they arise.
19. Ensure that students assume responsibility for their actions.
20. Inform parents of their children's good deeds as well as their difficulties.
21. Maintain a sense of humour.

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<sup>21</sup> Based on : BECK, M., COLEMAN, T., & WINEMAN, D. (1985). *Managing the unmanageable student*, Lexington, MA : Ginn Press.



***TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR THAT HAVE  
PROVEN TO BE INEFFECTIVE***

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1. Using force.
2. Ridiculing a student.
3. Forcing a student to admit their lies or errors.
4. Asking them to confess.
5. Confronting a student on an issue.
6. Asking them why they misbehaved.
7. Punishing.
8. Making derogatory comments.
9. Comparing their behaviour to someone else's.
10. Yelling.
11. Engaging in a verbal dispute.
12. Threatening a student unrealistically.

## *POSITION OF THE ROEQ ON EARLY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT*

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In our current society, children are more and more exposed to all kinds of messages related to sexuality. This regular exposure to sexual content proposes to young people models limited to stereotypes and leads to a bigger endorsement of sexual and sexist stereotypes. This phenomenon of hyper sexualisation of society, largely inspired by the world of pornography, maintains an imbalance in relations between men and women. The consequences resulting from this issue are problematic. The main concern for the Regroupement des organismes ESPACE du Québec (ROEQ) in this context is the early sexual development of children.

As an organisation working towards the prevention of violence against children, the ROEQ and its members wish to share their analogy, their position and their vision. Our actions are based on feminism and community values; we work to put forward the importance of respect and equality in all relations. These should be enriching, free of abuse of power and therefore equal. Our perspectives for the future aim at social changes seeking a common thought process on the consequences of early sexual development and its negative impacts on the development of children.

Hypersexualised messages conveyed by our society grant too much importance to appearances and propose unrealistic standards of beauty. Besides clearly going against the development of personal identity, full blooming and the diversity of different styles of personalities, the consequences are numerous on our girls and boys. By the valorization of the body, the appearance, charm and sex-appeal as a source of power, we deprive them of their childhood while developing a dependence to others judgements to exist.

With the hyper sexualisation that encourages youth to use their sexuality to exert power over the opposite sex, we transform them into objects of desire before they reach the age of autonomy and of maturity needed to be subjects of desire. We weaken the personality rather than reinforce it. Other consequences are added to that. For example: decrease in self-esteem, dissatisfaction towards their appearance, increase of violence in intimate relationships and the increase in the possibilities of suffering from psychological, physical or sexual violence.

The social consequences are also alarming. With easy access to different Medias and other sources of information such as Internet, many girls and boys get their sexual education through pornography. This evidently results in a degraded perception of sexuality in which emotional and relational aspects, free from abuse of power, are set aside while they should be at the heart of the sexual universe. Faced with such conclusions, it is of outmost importance to question ourselves, as adults, on the values that we wish to transmit to our youth as a society. Do we want appearances to prevail and physical perfection to exist under stereotyped models? Should sexual performance and availability be at the center of relations? Are we ready to accept that marketing companies aim our children directly by proposing very sexual models and products such as dolls, clothes, games, cartoons, TV-reality shows in prime time? Do we wish to expose our children to such messages without allowing them to put things in perspective?

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The ROEQ and its members propose some solutions on how to react when faced with the phenomenon of early sexualisation of children and the hyper sexualisation of our society:

- ✎ Raise adult awareness to the early sexualisation of children issued from the hyper sexualisation of society and equip them to recognise its influences in the day to day of these children (publicities, fashion, toys, stereotype roles given to men and women, etc.);
- ✎ Give children information that will help them recognise hyper sexualisation of our society in order to decrease their vulnerability and increase their empowerment.
- ✎ Encourage the parent-child and adult-child dialogue on all subjects including the sexualisation of society in order to develop a critical mind in youth and adults.
- ✎ Offer in Quebec schools sex education classes based on what is a healthy sexuality including all aspects of an individual.
- ✎ Draw the attention of our governments to the importance of their role as leaders in limiting the excess of capitalism and regulate industries to avoid children being targeted.
- ✎ Prioritise a real interest in violence prevention against children, based on a global analysis and approach which include all forms of violence and intimate relationships.
- ✎ Equip children to recognise potentially dangerous situations and teach them how to react.

## CONCLUSION

For its part, the ROEQ wishes that all children have access to information on what is a healthy sexuality adapted to their age in order to counter their vulnerability when faced with stereotypes and to develop a critical mind. It is also important that they hear about equality in intimate relations, the notion of consent and of the attention given to one another. Because, beyond the looks and the superficiality, as mentioned by Francine Duquet, sexologist: "...sexuality is at the heart of sexual identity, of relations with others, to the blossoming and wellbeing of a person."

As responsible adults, we can choose to counter early sexualisation in children and hyper sexualisation, starting with being aware of their existence. Rather than regard sexuality as an object of merchandising and meaningless consumption, let us be there for our children, to help them make choices and to give meaning to their lives.

As a society, let's offer our children the possibility to live their childhood.



## ***WHAT IS BULLYING?***

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Bullying is the abuse of a power imbalance with the intent to harm someone.

Generally, bullying is repeated behaviour; however, depending on the impact on the individual student, it could also be a single event. The person who is targeted usually fears or learns to fear the abuse of power of the person who is bullying.

People who bully may act alone or with accomplices against a single target or a series of individuals to inflict physical, emotional, or social damage. These bullying episodes may occur over a short period of time or go on indefinitely and are frequently organized and systematic. People who bully often rationalize their behaviour and feel justified in their actions. They rely on bystanders either to do nothing to aid the targets of bullying or to be an ally in their bullying behaviour.

Bullying includes such behaviors as physical assaults, unwanted sexual touching and assault, intimidation, threats, coercion, exclusion, rejection, gossip, spreading rumours and name-calling. It can be carried out in person or through text messaging, Internet sites or other parts of cyber space.

A child is generally targeted by an intimidator because of one or of several characteristics which distinguish him from others, make him different, envied or vulnerable.

In Quebec, here is how Bill n°56: An Act to prevent and stop bullying and violence in schools defines intimidation and violence:

**Bullying:** any direct or indirect behaviour, comment, act or gesture, including through the use of social media, intended to injure, hurt, oppress, intimidate or ostracize, and includes cyberbullying;

**Violence:** any intentional demonstration of verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual force which causes distress and injures, hurts or oppresses a person by attacking their psychological or physical integrity or well-being, or their rights or property.

An act of intimidation can constitute a criminal offence (in children 12 years and over) when:

- The act was committed deliberately; the act was committed or not in a repeated way where determining factors are present such as: the severity, the context and the level of violence.
- When there are disparities in the balance of power between the concerned individuals.

For more information, follow this link: [www.safeatschool.ca](http://www.safeatschool.ca)