

July 26, 2013

Hon. Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario  
Chair, Council of the Federation

Open Letter to the Premiers, acting as the Council of the Federation

As Canada's authority on research and resources for bullying prevention, PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network) applauds the Council of the Federation for addressing bullying and cyberbullying.

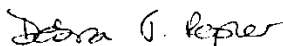
PREVNet's mission is to stop bullying in Canada and to promote safe and healthy relationships for all Canadian children and youth. This national Networks of Centres of Excellence of 71 researchers and 55 youth-serving organizations provides an opportunity to change the way we understand and deal with bullying problems. In collaboration with our national partners (such as Canadian Red Cross and UNICEF), PREVNet has co-created over 100 evidence-based tools and strategies that can be used to stop harmful behaviour before any damage is done. PREVNet believes evidence-based bullying prevention is a better choice than punishment.

Bullying can be prevented by showing children and youth the benefits of healthy relationships. This is the responsibility of the whole community. Parents or guardians have the responsibility to work with the adults in their child's life to educate children and youth that bullying is wrong and unacceptable. Within the educational system, schools, school boards, parents, teachers, and volunteers have the responsibility to create safe environments where everyone is treated with respect. This means parents, teachers, leaders and volunteers in community organizations, and all others who interact with children and youth must join together to help young people learn how to socially and emotionally develop healthy relationship skills that lead to respectful actions towards others.

Documented evidence shows the benefits of bullying prevention. When children feel safe they are ready to learn. Bullying prevention can reduce long-lasting emotional problems that can persist well into adulthood including clinical depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, eating problems, and substance abuse. Even those who chronically bully are at risk since they are more likely to become delinquents and to engage in physical and sexual harassment of partners as adults.

All Canadian children and youth from coast-to-coast-to-coast have the right to be safe in their homes, at school, in their communities, and online. Investing in bullying prevention today will lead to a healthier and more productive society for all Canadians.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Debra Pepler  
Scientific Co-Director



Dr. Wendy Craig  
Scientific Co-Director