



## Back to School Newsletter 2007

*Bullying is everyone's problem. Bullying is violent behaviour imposed by individuals who wish to intimidate, harass, alienate and isolate others they perceive as weaker, vulnerable and easy targets. Bullies pick on the weak, the poor, the oppressed, those perceived as different or a threat to their misplaced sense of status and power. Bullying is based on mistrust, hatred, suspicion and a desire to initiate power and control over others.*

*Raymond R. Chodzinski, Ph.D.*

As we slide into August and begin to ready ourselves and our children for the next school year, we thought an update, with some useful information, and lists of resources might assist in making the upcoming school year safe and productive.

As an organic, grass roots organization, the LABC keeps our thoughts firmly planted in the fact that we wish we didn't have to exist. Fueled by the calls, emails, and teary queries of parents, students and those who support our mandate, the LABC will continue to move forward with our vision of Many Voices . . . One Vision – to eliminate bullying.

We continue to take your stories to our school boards, our trustees, our local MPP's and will continue to advocate on your behalf towards bully free schools. We have discussed our communities concerns with the Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne, and have the following excerpt from her correspondence with us for your perusal.

“ . . . the amendments to the Education Act passed with unanimous consent in the Legislature. Bill 212, the Education Amendment Act (Progressive Discipline and School Safety), 2007, amends the safe schools provisions of the Education Act, and will strike a balance by more effectively combining, discipline with opportunities for students to continue their education. The changes would continue to make student safety the top priority while ensuring that there are strong consequences for inappropriate behaviour.”

“ This legislation adds bullying to the list of infractions for which suspension must be considered. It supports a progressive discipline approach in choosing the appropriate course of action in the case of inappropriate behaviour and provides programs so students can earn their way back into the classroom to complete their education.”



“With reference to your comments on training, sessions for all 7,450 principals and vice-principals on bullying prevention will now have been completed with the close of this school year. . . . . Training for teachers is being delivered in partnership with the Ontario Teachers’ Federation and it’s affiliates. Almost 25,000 teachers will receive training through workshops and an innovative e-learning program in the 2007/08 school year. “

“A Safe Schools Implementation Co-ordinator position has been established to provide one stop access to the Ministry for school boards and school based safe schools teams by providing ongoing support, resources, and expertise on bullying prevention and other issues pertaining to safe schools. Norman Stormes is the Ministry’s Safe Schools Implementation Coordinator. You may wish to address any specific implementation concerns to him. He can be reached by email at [norman.stormes@ontario.ca](mailto:norman.stormes@ontario.ca)”

Due, in part, to the Today’s Parent article, the LABC has been approached by a Toronto based, International Advertising agency who has adopted the LABC for a year to provide pro bono work to help amplify our voice. They have produced a 30 second public service announcement (please see PSA on website [www.londonabc.ca](http://www.londonabc.ca)).

TIPS: (taken directly from “Bullying – A Crisis in our schools and our communities, by Raymond T. Chodzinski, Ph. D.)

### **How do you know if your child or adolescent is being bullied?**

Unless they tell you, which in most cases it is highly unlikely, you will have to observe, ask and be ware.

There are signs:

- Victim may change routines and routes to school.
- They may not even want to go to school at all.
- Unusually late for school
- Nightmares
- Sick more often than normal
- Become distracted and start to underachieve in school
- May develop behaviour problem
- Be alert if parent starts missing money
- Torn clothing
- Bruises, swellings, scratches
- Loss of appetite, personality change
- Shyness, silence, tears
- Retreating to their bedroom or self-imposed alienation from regular friends
- Difficulty in groups, shy, reserved, exhibit signs of low self-esteem
- Behave in ways that suggest loneliness, sadness and anxiousness. Some victims prefer to play by themselves and are less likely to attract or make friends.



## **Victims Rights and Strategies to Protect against Bullying**

- All persons need to know and understand that reported and confirmed cases of bullying will not be tolerated and that appropriate consequences will follow acts of harassment, aggression and violence
- Potential victims must know and understand that bullies most likely do not hold true similar values as victims and that they seek out those who appear or are perceived to be weak and defenseless.
- Individuals need to know that they will be protected and that they will not be required to do the work of parents, teachers, caregivers and protectors when dealing with aggressors.
- While potential victims need to learn how to say no and to speak safe-life peacekeeping language they also need to learn that bullies may regard negotiation as an invitation to be more resourceful in their aggressiveness. Therefore individuals must also learn how to protect themselves physically and emotionally.
- Victims must accept that with chronic bullies negotiation does not usually work.
- The best defense against a bully in the playground, on the bus or to from school or play is an adult charged with the responsibility of keeping children safe including the bullies.
- No person should ever feel guilty about reporting the actions of a bully to persons in authority.
- Any individual, but particularly a child, should never be held accountable or made to feel guilty about “not” standing up to a bully.
- A child should never feel they could not turn to an adult or an older child for assistance.
- Adults need to intervene, children need to reconvene.

## **RESOURCES:**

The above excerpts were taken from the book, “Bullying” by Raymond T. Chodzinski. It is available at most book stores and is a comprehensive and valuable resource for all involved with children.

Check out Chatelaine’s Jan. 2007 magazine entitled “Murder and Mercy”. A decade after the brutal death of Victoria teen, Reena Virk, her parents, are doing the unthinkable: They’re forgiving one of her killers. An exclusive journey into the controversial world of restorative justice.”

The Ministry of Education has produced a new pamphlet (distributed locally September of 2006) entitled “Bullying – We Can All Help Stop It” This is an excellent resource. If you did not receive a copy, please contact [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca) to request a copy.



Thank you to everyone who continues to email us with websites on bullying, articles etc. Here are some of the submissions:

<http://www.canadiancrc.com/Bullying.htm>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/ppb/index.html>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/ssareview/index.html#3>

[http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/branches/pol\\_eval/school\\_plus/crse/anti\\_bully.shtml](http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/branches/pol_eval/school_plus/crse/anti_bully.shtml)

Our mentor and advisor, David Millen, past ED of the Ottawa Anti-Bullying Coalition, is involved with a group of youth that have produced a web site, [www.iamsafe.ca](http://www.iamsafe.ca) Be sure to bookmark this valuable site.

### **TO PONDER:**

Bullying will not be ended by a code of conduct pinned on the wall, a camera lodged in the school yard, or a metal detector at the entrance. It will only be fixed when we all, as a community, start working as a community to end the problem.

- *Youth comment* - OABC - Beyond Rhetoric National Conference on Bullying 2005.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world".

- *Ghandi*

"Real communication happens when people feel safe."

- *Ken Blanchard*

The LABC wishes you a wonderful rest of the summer and a safe exciting school year.

**Corina Morrison, Kathryn Wilkins**  
Co-founders, LABC