
Governments have less power over bullies than parents

November 26, 2012 (Ottawa) - Today the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada is pleased to release a new report: [Family responses to bullying: Why governments won't stop bullying until families step up](#) .

This report underscores the serious limitations of anti-bullying legislation, just days after Alberta's Education Act was passed giving schools the authority to suspend bystanders to bullying. According to researcher Peter Jon Mitchell, requiring children to police other children simply confirms that adults are not present.

A better solution would involve both parents and teachers, since adult intervention is the key to rehabilitating bullies. The report explains how bullies can be transformed through relationships with the appropriate adult role models and how bully victims can be protected.

Solutions should also take into account the natural human instincts behind bully behavior, and understand what causes these instincts to go awry. The report draws attention to various family dynamics and parenting styles that can lead unintentionally to children becoming bullies.

The main point is that a family-level approach is necessary, and it should be integrated into a school-level approach.

Recommendations in the report include:

- Parents should be proactive in speaking to children about bullying
- Parents should cultivate a strong attachment relationship with children and pursue a parenting style characterized by warm, caring communication and sufficient supervision
- Parents should monitor screen time and establish limits around internet devices
- Educators should invite parents to partner in developing a school response to bullying
- School staff and parents should be given more educational opportunities on this subject
- Governments should consider how policy initiatives empower parents

To arrange an interview, please contact Peter Jon Mitchell, Researcher, at 613-565-3832 ext. 7503.

Click here to read [Family responses to bullying: Why governments won't stop bullying until families step up](#).