

“Students were engaged and learning! Really well done! – Teacher, Imperial

“They continued to talk about the puppets all day. This was a fantastic review to our bullying unit – Thank You!! – Teacher, St. Peter

“This was my first Kids on the Block presentation. I will definitely do it again.” – Teacher, Ethel Milliken

“It was very informational in a safe and comfortable way.” – Teacher, St. Michael

## Why Do We Need Personal Safety and Abuse Prevention Programs in Schools?

- No matter what school they teach at, educators will come into contact with students who are experiencing some form of abuse, bullying or neglect.
  - Educators and school counselors may be the only professional adults a child has regular contact with.
  - Of children who are abused, 95% were abused by someone they know. *30-40% are family members.*
  - The social and monetary impacts of abuse cannot be understated. There are many long-term consequences, including depression, substance abuse, unemployment and interpersonal violence. Nearly \$16 billion is spent annually on issues related to child abuse.\*
- Students who are experiencing neglect and abuse are more likely to have problems in school and are more likely to be bullied, or become bullies, themselves.
- In order to break cycles of abuse and violence, it is vitally important that children receive education and skill-building in order to protect themselves and get help.

### The Importance of Open Communication:

- Adults avoid discussing abuse as it can be uncomfortable (and children are sensitive to this). This silence allows for the continued abuse of children because *abusers rely on children not telling.*
- Children who tell, and are believed, have much healthier outcomes, which benefits not only them but our community as a whole.

### How Puppets Help...

- First and foremost, children love puppets! Having the puppet “kids” share their personal experiences permit children to learn about difficult topics in a non-threatening and age-appropriate manner.
- The puppets demonstrate important messages in engaging and often fun ways, which increase children’s attention and learning.
- The puppets encourage questions and suggestions, which create a safe space for children to explore their thoughts.

Just as we teach children about fire safety and school lockdowns, we need to educate children about personal safety **to prepare them, not to scare them.**

Statistically, a child is much more likely to experience some form of abuse than a school fire or lockdown.

— from Windsor, ON Kids on the Block

\*The Economic Costs and Consequences of Child Abuse in Canada 2003