

Pressrelease

23rd March 2011

1,000 Preschools in Denmark are 'Free of Bullying'

In 2007 Her Royal Highness the Crown Princess of Denmark's foundation the Mary Foundation introduced 'Free of Bullying' to Denmark in cooperation with Save the Children. The programme was developed with inspiration from The Alannah and Madeline Foundation's 'Better Buddies' programme.

On the 23rd March, 'Free of Bullying' celebrated that the preventative anti-bullying program is now being used in 1,000 preschools throughout the country. A great result since the total number of preschools in Denmark is 4,500.

"We are absolutely thrilled that 'Free of Bullying' has been so well received. The programme is now used in 1,000 preschools across the country. This clearly shows that teachers, children and parents are focused on strengthening the positive relationships between children and recognizing the importance of a preventative effort in order to ensure a happy and secure preschool and school life for our children", says Crown Princess Mary.

The milestone was marked with an event held at Gnisten Preschool, the preschool that joined the program as member number 1,000. Gnisten Preschool is looking forward to implementing 'Free of Bullying' in its educational endeavours.

"We always work professionally with the children's interpersonal skills as an integral part of our teaching methodology and we were on the lookout for useful, hands-on materials. Good social relationships are important for the children's self-esteem, general wellbeing and development. And just one good friend makes a whole lot of difference. That is why we look forward to 'Free of Bullying' supporting the children in being good mates, capable of showing empathy and distinguishing between good-hearted teasing and bullying," explains Lisa Jacobsen, director of Gnisten Preschool.

Secretary General of Save the Children Denmark, Mimi Jakobsen, is also pleased with this massive show of support.

"The programme 'Free of Bullying' is about teachers, children and not least parents, taking on a shared responsibility. As illustrated by Gnisten today, you don't need to have serious bullying problems to join in 'Free of Bullying'. The point is to focus on prevention, nipping bullying in the bud", says Mimi Jakobsen.

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Facts and background

- 'Free of Bullying' is the preventative anti-bullying programme of the Mary Foundation and Save the Children Denmark. It consists of a suitcase of pedagogical tools, such as the cuddly toy Buddy Bear, conversation boards with drawings, and music and dance activities with the aim of fostering inclusive children's communities.
- The central message is: All children have the right to a happy and secure childhood.
- Research and experience show that the earlier the age at which bullying is confronted, the less will be the personal and social consequences later on. Accordingly, 'Free of Bullying' targets 3-6-year olds in preschools and 6-8-year olds in schools.
- The programme is based on the values of tolerance, respect, kindness and courage.
- Numbers of participants in 'Free of Bullying':
 - Preschools: 1,000
 - Schools: 340
 - Children: 79,000
 - Adult professionals on courses: 3,000
- The feedback from teachers and children using the programme has been highly positive, just as researchers have shown that 'Free of Bullying' makes a difference for the better and that children become better at coping with teasing and bullying at those educational establishments that work intensively with the programme.
- The 15 June Foundation is a financial partner of 'Free of Bullying' in 2011 and 2012.
- 'Free of Bullying' was developed on the initiative of Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary of Denmark with inspiration from the 'Better Buddies' programme of the Australian Alannah and Madeline Foundation. It was launched in Denmark in 2007 in cooperation with Save the Children.
- Read more at: <http://www.maryfonden.dk/Projekter/Mobning-og-Trivsel/Fri-for-Mobberi.aspx>.