

Press release

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**The anti-bullying programme "Free of Bullying" makes a positive difference to nine out of ten children.**

**Bullying can be prevented by means of well-targeted intervention, according to a survey commissioned by the Mary Foundation's and Save the Children's programme "Free of Bullying". Children become kinder and more helpful when dedicated to developing positive children's communities.**

The survey was carried out by the two firms McKinsey and Wilke, whose researchers interviewed people from a random sample of preschools and schools across Denmark.

*"It's very encouraging to see the survey bears out a marked effect towards the main objective of "Free of Bullying", that is, to encourage each child to be a good preschool- or schoolmate, and to contribute to creating positive and inclusive children's communities. It's wonderful to see we've made another big step forward in our effort to prevent and alleviate social isolation", says Helle Østergaard, Project Manager at the Mary Foundation.*

"Free of Bullying" consists of a suitcase of pedagogical tools, which use conversation and play to work towards prevention of bullying on the basis of four core values: *tolerance, respect, kindness and courage.*

#### **Good tools in the busy life of the institution**

According to the survey, 80% of preschools and schools interviewed manage to integrate "Free of Bullying" into their daily routines. There is extraordinary satisfaction with the Free of Bullying suitcase, as fully 98% of preschool and schoolteachers interviewed want to continue working on the programme, while just as many would recommend it to others.

This finding is a pleasant surprise to Professor Jan Kampmann at Roskilde University, who sits in the Mary Foundation's expert panel:

*"This survey of "Free of Bullying" is in line with the analysis of the Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI) in January this year, which found that anti-bullying programmes reduce bullying by some 20%. But it's interesting to see such widespread satisfaction with the programme, especially at a time when teachers often lack resources in their day-to-day work. The teachers are clearly motivated and choose to spend time on fostering the positive values, which indeed turns out to be a good investment."*

The work with "Free of Bullying" does not only create kinder and more helpful children. For three out of four educational establishments, the programme has also become an integral part of the teaching curriculum. As one adult professional interviewed in the survey puts it:

*"The programme has some core elements which we use a lot. For instance how you say 'stop' to things, and how you observe each other to see if others look sad or happy."*

### **Help for transition from preschool to school**

The cooperation between the Mary Foundation and Save the Children sets store on continuous evaluation and adjustment of "Free of Bullying", so that its tools fit easily into the teachers' daily work and routines, making the greatest impact and being as recognisable as possible to the children:

*"The survey paints a picture of how important the "Free of Bullying" suitcase is for the children as an element of continuity in their transition from preschool to school. Many preschool and schoolteachers use the suitcase as a regular part of the daily timetable or activity schedule, and it's precisely this repetition and routine which make the children feel at ease in their day-to-day work with the positive values,"* explains Lars Stilling Netteberg, Programme Coordinator at Save the Children.

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### **Facts and background**

#### **The survey**

- The anti-bullying programme "Free of Bullying" makes a positive difference for 9 out of 10 children.
- 53% of preschool and school teachers questioned stress that the children have become better at handling teasing on their own.
- 60% stress that the children have become more helpful to one another.
- 58% highlight that the children have become kinder to one another.
- For three out of four educational establishments, "Free of Bullying" has become an integral part of the teaching curriculum.
- 56% use the suitcase during timetabled sessions.
- 98% of interviewed teachers in preschools and schools will recommend the anti-bullying programme to others.
- Survey design: a web-based questionnaire was circulated by McKinsey's Survey Section to a random sample of preschools and schools. Subsequently the firm Wilke A/S conducted additional phone interviews, and the data from these two exercises was combined. Survey findings were based on a total of 275 randomly sampled respondents.
- The study of the Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI), January 2011: anti-bullying programmes at school reduce bullying by about 20%. See <http://www.sfi.dk/Default.aspx?ID=7986>

## “Free of Bullying”

- “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 with the aim of fostering inclusive children’s communities.
- **The central message is: *all children have the right to a happy and secure preschool and school life.***
- Research and experience show that the earlier the age at which bullying is confronted, the less will be both the personal and the social consequences later on. Accordingly, “Free of Bullying” targets 3-8-year-olds in preschools and schools.
- The programme is based on the values of tolerance, respect, kindness and courage.
- Numbers of participants in “Free of Bullying”:  
Preschools: 1,047 – Schools: 374 – Children: 85,000 – Adult professionals on courses: 3,064
- 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 the Chairwoman of the Board of the Mary Foundation, 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>