

PURPOSE OF THE FRIGHT-FREE MOVEMENT

Encourage the recognition of the fact that the deliberate frightening of children for entertainment is a form of low-level violence

Be the voice of children who suffer trauma who have no voice in this discussion. It's easy to frighten a child. Children generally are open and trusting and have few layers of resistance to shocks.

Change the culture of the city from horror_friendly to horror_averse. Public displays on our lawns should have some rough guidelines to follow - movies do.

Fright-Free schools. Our children deserve to grow up free of fear. Schools could promote healthier attitudes by concentrating on more positive material. Presently, teachers are free to use as much scary and violent content as they wish. In the presence of fear, hunger or abuse, learning is blocked.

Fright-Free homes. Domestic violence is at appalling levels. (see The War on Women by B. Vallee) Children who live with violence learn to accept and perpetuate violence.

Make violence history by addressing low-level violence at every level of society.

SPONSORED BY

Fright-Free Group est. 1991 : a group of concerned educators and parents.
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CHILD FRIENDLY HALLOWE'EN

"Fear is the one thing that stands
in the way of a peaceful
world"... Dalai Lama

So why create more fear with
frightening images?

For more information see
www.frightfree.com and Sign up for a
pre-publication copy of the book:

Fright-Free Children and the effects of
Low Level Violence

IN TORONTO SCHOOLS

Horror books are welcome in most classrooms and it's obvious that horror really is the fastest growing part of the kid-lit industry. Books are being commissioned to specifically frighten and encourage the joy of being frightened. 'Recreational ' reading like game-boy magazines which encourage the enjoyment of violence and comic books with scenes of torture and psychological violence are common.

For example:

- "Your Momma was a Werewolf" offered in Special Ed classes.
- Studying the biographies of serial killers.
- Scary Hallowe'en season stories to write, to read, to spell, to draw, to experience.
- Stories with witch burnings, kidnapping, ghosts, monsters available in primary classes.
- Books like *Your Momma was a Werewolf* offered in Special Ed classes.

Toronto's Board of Education already has policies against violence in place and in Oct. 1997 their Curriculum Committee passed a resolution stating that horror and violence don't belong in the classroom. That now needs to be

made into policy so that it's clear that positive material really is preferred to negative. the body is more likely to experience ill health, and one's attitude to life has a tendency to sour, life becomes an unstable, frightening place. Children who live in war zones or in abusive households are at high risk for violence later on.

ANSWERING OBJECTIONS

"But it's Fun!" True it can be funny to watch someone else be frightened - but hardly good clean fun. It appeals to the lowest part of our nature: the same part of us that delights in delicious gossip, true or not; the same part that enjoys someone we hate "get theirs". Is this really the humane response we want to encourage? No wonder bullying is still a problem at all levels of society. It's also because some people really enjoy the show that's going on, while others haven't really decided what to make of it and do nothing. Bullying wouldn't happen if there were not accepting or encouraging bystanders. Severe frights do produce severe results, but small frights

produce negative results as well. **"Surprises are fun!"** Interestingly a recent survey at the University of Toronto discovered to everyone's surprise that people don't like surprises. It seems it's not true that you spoil someone's fun when you tell them the ending of a story - people actually enjoy the story more. The conclusion was that only pleasant very small surprises are nice, anything else is an unwelcome shock to the system.

"Being frightened is no big deal."

Untrue. In the short term a bad fright activates the well-documented flight or fight response, where your whole system goes into shock mode: your breathing quickens and becomes more shallow, less oxygen gets to your brain, which needs more oxygen than any other part of you, thinking stalls, immune responses are suppressed, illnesses are made worse, blood pressure and heart rate skyrocket, muscles tense up ready for action, digestion stops, etc. In the long term, the body is more likely to experience ill health, and one's attitude to life has a tendency to sour, life becomes an unstable, frightening place. Children who live in war zones or in abusive households are at high risk for violence later on.