OPEN LETTER TO THE RT. HON. PAUL MARTIN

Let’s create a Canada fit for children.*
Let’s stop hitting them.

February, 2004

Dear Prime Minister:

The Supreme Court of Canada’s recent decision on section 43 of the Criminal Code allows physical punishment of children between two and 12 years of age.

While the decision limits the punishment of children, it sends a message that physical punishment is acceptable. This undermines efforts to educate everyone about the problems that result from punitive force. The majority decision only protects some children. In dissenting opinions, Supreme Court Justices concluded that section 43 violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

An October 2003 national survey by Decima Research shows majority support among Canadians for repealing section 43. The survey shows this support would grow substantially if guidelines were in place to prevent unnecessary prosecutions; support is stronger again if education were provided on the harms of physical punishment.

Repealing section 43 will send a clear message that Canadian children have the right to protection from assault. It will send a clear message that your government does not condone spanking and hitting of children, and it will strengthen education promoting positive, non-violent methods of discipline.

We, the co-signing organizations, therefore call on your government to:

• Repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code.
• Recommend that provincial Attorneys General develop guidelines to prevent unnecessary prosecutions.
• Implement a national education campaign on positive discipline.

*Building a world fit for children
U.N. sponsored theme for National Child Day

Join our campaign to repeal Section 43.
Contact the Prime Minister and your local M.P. to urge support.
For contact information visit www.repeal43.org