

SAFE FOR EVERYONE

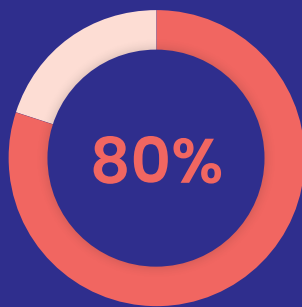
Violence at School The impact of unmet student needs

A call to action for Ontario families from the
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

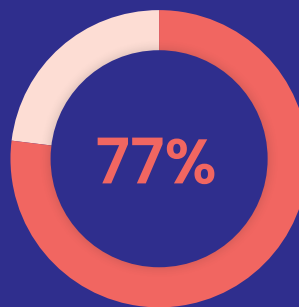


Violent Student Behaviour: A Growing Concern

Schools should be safe for everyone, but more and more, teachers and education workers are facing violence on the job. Many are being injured or spending extra time managing unsafe situations, most often from students with unmet needs.



80% of ETFO members say violent incidents are increasing



77% personally experienced or witnessed violence in just one school year

ETFO members report that educational assistants, social workers, and child and youth workers aren't consistently available when needed.*

Children dealing with unmet special education needs, trauma, stress, communication challenges, or difficult home lives may struggle at school. These children deserve support. So do educators.

*From ETFO's 2023-2024 All-Member Violence Survey.
Full report at etfo.ca.

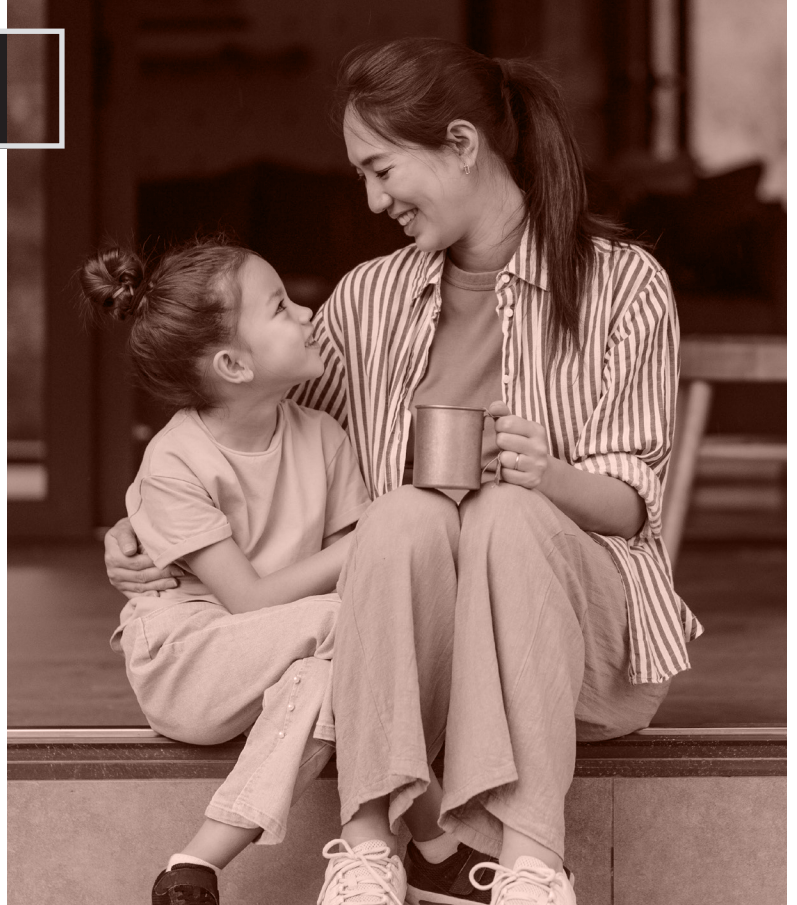


**Elementary
Teachers'
Federation of
Ontario**

Talk to Your Child

Here are some simple questions you can ask your child to start the conversation:

- Have you ever felt unsafe at school?
- Have you ever had to leave your classroom because of someone's behaviour?
- Are students ever taken out of the class because they might hurt someone?
- Do the grownups ever call the office or use a walkie-talkie because someone might get hurt?
- Do you ever have a hard time managing your behaviour? If you do, who helps you?



Talk to the School

According to the *Education Act*, the school principal must inform parents after serious incidents, including violence. The principal must share:

- the nature of a serious incident and the harm done with parents of all students who were involved or affected
- steps that have been taken to keep students safe, including if any disciplinary action has been taken (though specifics about another child cannot be shared)
- supports provided for the student who engaged in the behaviour and students who were harmed



What can be DONE?

- **Funding** that is responsive to actual student needs
- **Smaller classes** that allow for individual attention to students who need it
- **Timely assessments** that identify student needs as soon as they emerge
- **Immediate and appropriate supports** for children and their families
- **Mental health supports** for students who are struggling
- **Special education supports**, including a range of responsive placements supported by funding, staffing, resources, and professionals
- **Behavioural specialists** to provide support and training when violent behaviour is emerging
- **Data gathering about violence** in schools, used to analyze the problem, recommend solutions, and ensure that interventions consider equity.

Changes at school won't be enough. Resources in the community, including access to child care, affordable and nutritious food, stable housing, and family supports, are also necessary. Public health care that is close to home and easy to access is needed to ensure the psychological needs of all children and their families can be met.

Schools should be safe places to learn and work.

Raise your voice and take action against violence in schools.

TAKE ACTION

ETFO and families can work together. Your voice is important to get the government's attention.

Here's how you can help!

- ✓ Talk to your child. If they are witnessing or experiencing violence, talk to the principal and make sure action is being taken.
- ✓ Advocate for your child. If your child is struggling, talk to the principal and your school board trustee, and work with advocacy groups who understand the issues.
- ✓ Ask your school council chair to add the topic of violence in schools to a meeting agenda.
- ✓ School board trustees and members of provincial parliament (MPPs) don't understand what is happening in classrooms. Contact them and insist that violence be addressed in schools.
- ✓ Vote for candidates who understand the issue and commit to improving funding for public education.
- ✓ Talk to your neighbours and friends. Make sure your community understands the importance of adequate funding for public education in Ontario.
- ✓ Visit **BuildingBetterSchools.ca**. Sign the petition and send a letter to your MPP.

To learn more about ETFO's advocacy for students, see the recommendations in ***Promises Unfulfilled: Addressing the Special Education Crisis in Ontario*** at etfo.ca.