



LINK BETWEEN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION TO BE EXPLORED BY LEADING EXPERTS AT SPECIAL ONE-OFF EVENT

**The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh, Friday July 20 2007,
10am –3pm**

Two of the world's leading exponents of the value of early years education in preventing violence are to speak at a one-off event to be held in Edinburgh.

Professor Irvin Waller, professor of criminology at the University of Ottawa, and Mary Gordon, founder of the Canadian-based Roots of Empathy, will be speaking at a special one day conference to be held at The Hub, Castlehill, on Friday, July 20.

The event, which is being facilitated by the Violence Reduction Unit, will provide policy makers and practitioners alike with a unique opportunity to hear two world renowned authorities speak on the value of early years initiatives in combating violence.

Professor Waller's scientific reviews of the arguments for investing in violence prevention have been published widely, including for UN congresses and the European Union high level summit on prevention.

Founding CEO of the UN – affiliated International Centre for Prevention of Crime, Professor Waller's advice on the implementation of violence prevention measures has been heeded by political elites from South Africa to Europe to North America and he has received awards in the USA and internationally for pioneering the UN Declaration on Justice for Victims.

Mary Gordon is recognized internationally as an educator, best-selling author, child advocate and parenting expert who has created award-winning programs informed by the power of empathy. In 1996, she founded Roots of Empathy, a not-for-profit, evidence-based classroom programme that has shown a dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression and violence among schoolchildren. The programme is currently running in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.



Ms Gordon has presented on early childhood development to conferences organized by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Health Organization, and the United States government, among others. She worked with the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health's Knowledge Network for Early Childhood Development for their upcoming report Total Environment Assessment Model for Early Childhood Development.

Her 2005 Canadian bestseller, *Roots of Empathy: Changing the World Child by Child*, was ranked as one of the Top 100 Books of the Year by the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper.

In 2006, Ms Gordon participated in the Vancouver Dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. *Roots of Empathy* will become part of the Dalai Lama's Peace and Education Centre to be based in Vancouver, Canada.

The Hub event will run from 10am – 3pm.