



MEDIA RELEASE

**CDI's Kathy Levene, a pioneer in treating girlhood aggression,
receives YWCA Women of Distinction Award**

TORONTO – March 10, 2014 - On May 22, Kathy Levene, Associate and Early Intervention Services Director at Child Development Institute (CDI), will be awarded the **YWCA Toronto Woman of Distinction Award for Mental Health** for her dedication and commitment to improving the lives of girls and developing the SNAP® Girls Program.

CDI's Stop Now and Plan (SNAP®) program, an internationally-recognized model for teaching behaviourally troubled children ages 6-11 and their parents effective emotion-regulation, self-control and problem-solving was developed in 1985. As the program grew and developed, Kathy Levene realized there was a significant gap in gender-specific research and programs focussing on girl aggression and from that point forward, Kathy, a scientist-practitioner, dedicated her career to researching and understanding the unique factors influencing girl aggression and the treatment approaches that would best meet the specific needs of girls.

In 1996, Kathy launched SNAP® Girls Connection (now called SNAP® Girls), the first-ever sustained, gender-specific program for behaviourally troubled girls and their families. The program was developed using the SNAP® model, but with a feminist lens to recognize gender differences. Along with the program's theoretical foundation of social learning, self-control and problem-solving, there is also a strong focus on relationship building and positive mother-daughter attachment.

"Kathy's contributions to the children's mental health field and gender-specific interventions are immeasurable. She has set the standard for studying and developing programs that address girlhood aggression," said Tony Diniz, CEO of Child Development Institute. "The growth and success of the SNAP® Girls program are a testament to Kathy's tireless commitment to empowering girls, making her a fitting recipient for this prestigious award."

Since the inception of SNAP® Girls, thousands of girls, young women and their families have benefited from Kathy's ground-breaking work. Today the program continues to prevent girls from going down potentially dangerous pathways, and helps them develop positive family and peer relationships, and become successful, productive members of their communities.

-30-

Media contact:

Shauna Klein

Director, Fund Development, Marketing and Communications

Child Development Institute

416-603-1827 ext. 2291

sklein@childdevelop.ca

BACKGROUNDER

About SNAP®

Developed by Child Development Institute (CDI) more than 28 years ago as an intervention program for children under 12 in conflict with the law, SNAP® has evolved into an internationally-recognized model for teaching behaviourally troubled children and their parents effective emotion-regulation, self-control and problem-solving. Gender-specific SNAP® Boys and SNAP® Girls programs are offered at CDI in Toronto, and through SNAP® Affiliates throughout Canada and around the world. The primary goal of SNAP® is to keep children and youth in school and out of trouble.

After being selected as the Pecaut Centre for Social Impact's inaugural partner for social innovation in children's mental health, we're now embarking on a "SNAP® Explosion", with the goal of making SNAP® available to more Canadian children and families from coast to coast. SNAP® was also awarded the Prime Minister's Volunteer Award for Social Innovation in 2012.

For more information about SNAP®, please visit www.childdevelop.ca/programs/snap

About SNAP® Girls

SNAP® Girls is a family-focused, gender-specific early intervention program for girls ages 6-11 exhibiting early disruptive behaviour problems at home and school, and in community. The program components are similar to the SNAP® Boys program, but there are important differences based on research and best practices for treating girl aggression. In SNAP® Girls, for example, there is greater emphasis on discussion and relationship-building.

Typically the program consists of six key components:

- SNAP® Girls Club – a structured group that meets weekly for 13 weeks and teaches girls self-control, problem-solving and emotion-regulation skills through the use of SNAP®.
- A concurrent SNAP® Parenting (SNAPP) Group that teaches parents effective child management strategies.
- One-on-one family counselling based on SNAPP (Stop Now and Plan Parenting).
- Individual counselling/mentoring for girls who require extra support.
- School advocacy and teacher support to assist girls who are struggling behaviourally and/or not performing at their age-appropriate grade level at school.
- Girls Growing up Healthy – A mother-daughter group that occurs after the SNAP® program is completed. The group aims to strengthen mother-daughter relationships at the critical pre-teen stage, and to address challenges of physical development, harassment and healthy relationships.

As girls reach adolescence, they may decide to become engaged in continuing services including SNAP® Girls Youth Leadership Services; individual and family counselling; school support and advocacy; job readiness; and external referrals as needed. As well, a Parent Problem Solving group is offered several times each year to support parents after completing the SNAP® Parenting group.

About Child Development Institute

CDI is an accredited children's mental health agency providing a range of programs and services for children ages 0-12, youth ages 13-18, and their families in Toronto. We offer evidence-based programs across three streams: Early Intervention Services, Family Violence Services and Healthy Child Development. Our approach is family-focused and we work with each child and family's unique strengths, needs and challenges. For more information, please visit www.childdevelop.ca.