



**ThinkFirst Canada / Pensez d'Abord Canada congratulates Flaherty, Miller, Dryden and Courchesne for Thinking First**

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For immediate release**

ThinkFirst Canada / Pensez d'Abord Canada ("ThinkFirst") believes in the right of children and youth to engage in healthy active play. ThinkFirst, a strong advocate for health promotion and head protection, today supported recent comments by Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty, Quebec Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports Michelle Courchesne, MP and former NHL hockey legend Ken Dryden and former NHL player Paul Miller for defending this country's great game and our greatest resources - the minds of our children and youth.

"Hits to the head in hockey must be eliminated", said Dr. Charles Tator, a renowned neurosurgeon and the founder of ThinkFirst. "Head injuries can result in catastrophic outcomes, including death or permanent disability. A concussion is a brain injury." Concussions occur when bumps, blows or jolts to the head or body cause the brain to move excessively inside the skull, and the resulting injury can often disrupt how the brain functions.

"While bumps and bruises are normal for growing children as they reach for adulthood, concussions and other head injuries don't need to be", noted Rebecca Nesdale-Tucker, the Executive Director of ThinkFirst. "By understanding the risks of sports and recreational activities, and by using the appropriate prevention and management strategies, we can prevent these injuries in childhood and youth and start a lifelong healthy habit of head and brain protection".

ThinkFirst, along with supporters including Hockey Canada and the Dr. Pashby Sports Safety Fund, have been longtime advocates for parents, teachers, and medical and community leaders to take action towards child and youth safety. "If anyone suspects a player has suffered a concussion or other head injury, they should immediately be removed from the activity and should see a medical doctor, and should never be left alone", cautions Dr. Tator. "Early and knowledgeable management is the key to recovery from concussion and a safe return to normal activity."

Concussion-related information and video is available on [www.thinkfirst.ca](http://www.thinkfirst.ca), including those on topics such as "Smart Hockey", "Dive Smart / Sudden Impact", "Smart Soccer" and "A little Respect...ThinkFirst" with its focus on a culture of safety for snow hills.

ThinkFirst.ca before you play....and thinkfirst before returning to play too.