



Aviva Brain Day Q & A

Q: What is Aviva Brain Day?

A: Aviva Brain Day is delivered in March around Brain Awareness Week by ThinkFirst Chapters and university student volunteers. It's a fun hands-on half-day program for grade five students that integrates lessons in neuroanatomy and the five senses with brain and spinal cord injury prevention education. Students love the interactive learning of Aviva Brain Day – for half a day, their classrooms become laboratories and students become Sense Explorers!

Q: Why target grade five students?

A: We've found that students at this age are fascinated by the workings of the human body and at a developmental level where they can understand basic neuroanatomy, especially when the material is presented in an engaging way. Grade five is also a crucial age from the injury prevention perspective. Youth are statistically more likely to be injured between the ages of 11-20. This is when youth start participating in sports and recreational activities without adult supervision and begin taking more risks. We want to empower Canada's kids to have fun and stay safe. Aviva Brain Day arms students with the injury prevention information they need to make smart choices.

Q: Who Teaches Aviva Brain Day?

A: ThinkFirst Canada strives to make our educational programs fun and relevant. With Aviva Brain Day, we've found the passion of our university presenters is contagious, with students really immersing themselves in the program. We don't want this to be a regular day at school for these grade fivers. As such we train our volunteer presenters to provide a fun day of learning!

Q: Has Aviva Brain Day been evaluated?

A: Yes, with very favourable results. An evaluation done in 2007 by York University researchers confirmed significant knowledge increases for students who completed the Aviva Brain Day program, with notable improvements to knowledge in the area of helmet durability, brain injury and helmet maintenance. The program has also been overwhelmingly praised by the teachers, students and presenters involved in Aviva Brain Day.

Q: How many students do you reach each year?

A: We piloted the program to a classroom of 30 in 2004 and have been growing Brain Day across Canada ever since. In 2008 we reached nearly 6000 students in more than 200 classrooms in 9 cities across Canada, thanks to our 360 volunteers from universities, our Chapters and public health agencies. 2009 will be another record-breaking year.

Q: What are your plans for the program in the future?

A: ThinkFirst Canada's goal is to reach every grade five classroom in Canada with Aviva Brain Day. We are working hard to reach this goal by building capacity across the country: recruiting volunteers, increasing outreach efforts, and enhancing training



programs. Many universities are building program sustainability from their end by incorporating “Brain Day” positions into their student government structures, and by training their successors in program organization and delivery – with lots of support from ThinkFirst! ThinkFirst Canada is committed to a reduction in the incidence and burden of childhood injury in Canada, and we think Aviva Brain Day is one of the best ways to achieve this! If you’d like to find out how you can help, please contact Sandy Wells, National Injury Prevention Program Manager, at sandyw@thinkfirst.ca.