

Research on Roots of Empathy

Since 2000, the University of British Columbia (UBC), with Principal Investigator, Dr. Kimberley Schonert-Reichl has conducted studies of the program, yielding empirical support for the efficacy of the Roots of Empathy curriculum. Specifically, Roots of Empathy children, relative to comparison children, demonstrated significant improvements from pre-test to post-test in the following areas:

- Increased emotion knowledge
- Increased social understanding
- Increased pro-social behaviour with peers
- Decreased aggression with peers
- Decreased proactive aggression (e.g. bullying)

Projects to evaluate the effectiveness of the Roots of Empathy program are currently underway across Canada and internationally and are coordinated through the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at UBC.

Program Components

- 9 Curriculum themes with specialized lesson plans for four different age groups: Kindergarten, Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, and Grades 7-8
- 27 lessons (about 30 minutes in length) conducted in classrooms over the school year
- 9 lessons (called “Family Visits”) which take place every three weeks, include a neighbourhood infant and parent who visit the classroom with the Roots of Empathy Instructor and become part of the Roots of Empathy curriculum
- A 639-page accredited Roots of Empathy Curriculum and Instructor Manual, available in both English and French
- Certified Roots of Empathy Instructors
- Training program for Roots of Empathy Instructors, Trainers and Mentors
- Ongoing communication between the Roots of Empathy Instructor, participating family, and classroom teacher
- Mentor support and professional development workshops for Instructors
- Toll-free warm-line and e-mail support for Roots of Empathy Instructors through International Office
- Opportunity to be involved with research of the program
- All classroom teachers and students invited to participate in year-end evaluation; results distributed to all constituents annually



What the Community Says About Roots of Empathy

“It is heart-warming to watch a group of people celebrate my baby’s milestones and accomplishments, interact with him, learn about his needs, and care about his well-being.”

Elizabeth, ROE parent, Toronto, Ontario

“[The program taught me that] people have feelings and no matter what you do you must think of the feeling and how you would like to be treated. Respect and understanding is a good way to show kindness.”

David, Grade 5 ROE student, Edmonton, Alberta

“[The class is] becoming more aware of their feelings and the feelings of others. The program is a wonderful way of creating a caring environment in your classroom and a great way to get the community involved in our school.”

**Bonnie Rumbolt, ROE Classroom Teacher
Mary’s Harbour, Newfoundland**

“The Roots of Empathy program has been embraced by educators and schools across British Columbia, Canada, and the world, and has become an extremely valuable tool in encouraging children to identify with the feelings of others.”

**The Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia**

"[Roots of Empathy] is a school-based prevention program... The early years of schooling... are critical and there is compelling evidence of the importance of children's experiences in their early years and the impact these experiences have on their development, learning, health, and well-being.”

**The Honourable Alan Carpenter
Minister for Education and Training, Western Australia**

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**Roots of Empathy
Racines de l'empathie**



Roots of Empathy is a Registered Trade Mark

The drawings that flow so honestly from our students' hearts are among the many treasures of our program. We thank the students from across the country whose art appears on these pages.



Roots of Empathy Racines de l'empathie

An evidence-based classroom program that reduces levels of aggression among school children while raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy.

Empathy is the ability to identify with another person’s feelings. The ability to see and feel things as others see and feel them is central to competent parenting and successful social relationships in all stages of life. Empathy plays a critical role in helping individuals resist aggressive behaviours and is positively associated with prosocial behaviours. Empathy is increasingly recognized as the foundation of social competence, moral development and a sense of justice.



