



Roots of Empathy

Racines de l'empathie

Roots of Empathy

2019 Annual Program Evaluation Report

New Brunswick

“It teaches children to respect our differences and this leads to them to developing a positive learning environment.”

- *Grade 5 Teacher, Millerton School, Derby*

“Being able be empathetic and being able to self regulate their emotions allows them be ready to be pro-active with their learning.”

- *Grade 3 Teacher, West Riverview Elementary School, Riverview*

“How to understand what someone else is feeling, and how to understand yourself and your feelings. I personally think that ROE really helped me when I was stressed or nervous, to understand what to do in that matter”

- *Grade 4/5 Student, Chris Saunders Memorial Elementary School, Quispamsis*

Our mission is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults.



New Brunswick Annual Program Evaluation Report: 2018-2019

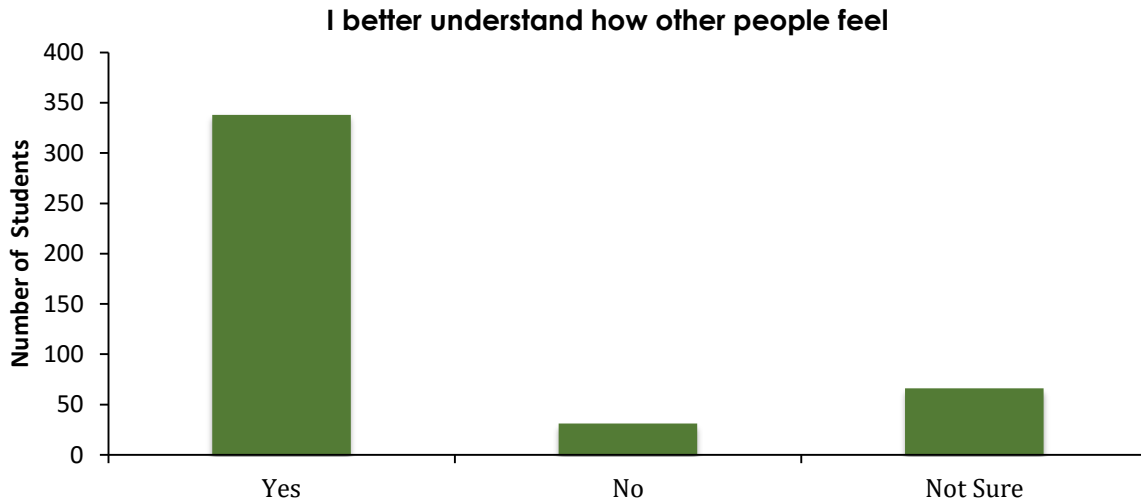
This report is a summary of the annual program evaluation data collected from students, teachers, Instructors and volunteer parents throughout New Brunswick for the 2018-2019 school year. Teachers, Instructors and volunteer parents were asked to provide their perceptions of any changes in behaviour in students who participated in the Roots of Empathy program. Unlike most school experiences, where students are asked to demonstrate what they know, Roots of Empathy invites metacognition. More specifically, students gained experience reflecting on what they learned in connection to the main goals of Roots of Empathy.

Goal #1: To Foster the Development of Empathy

The ability to take the perspective of another person (cognitive aspect of empathy) plays a key role in helping individuals resist aggressive behaviours by providing a buffer against antisocial and aggressive temptations. Empathy is regarded as one of the most desirable personality traits due to its positive association with prosocial behaviours such as sharing, helping, and cooperating, and its crucial role in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

Feedback Results: Students

- 78% of students reported better understanding how other people feel



Feedback Results: Teachers

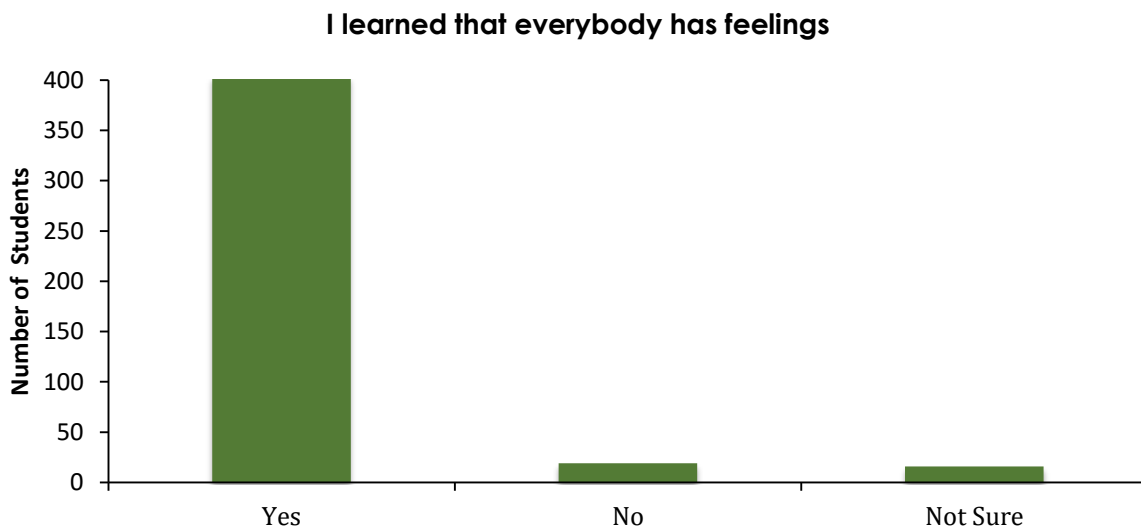
- 92% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, students are more able to understand other people's points of view
- 100% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, students are more empathic to one another

Goal #2: To Develop Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy, or social and emotional learning (SEL), includes developing the skills to recognize, manage, and express feelings. These skills are integral to the ability to regulate emotions. Children who can regulate their emotions are less likely to suffer from childhood psychological disorders, including anxiety and depression. Research also demonstrates that children with good SEL skills have better attitudes towards themselves and others, show more prosocial behaviours, and exhibit less aggression.

Feedback Results: Students

- 92% of students reported learning that everybody has feelings
- 88% of students reported learning to recognize how the baby is feeling



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 92% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, students talk more about their feelings
- 92% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, students have increased their vocabulary of feeling words

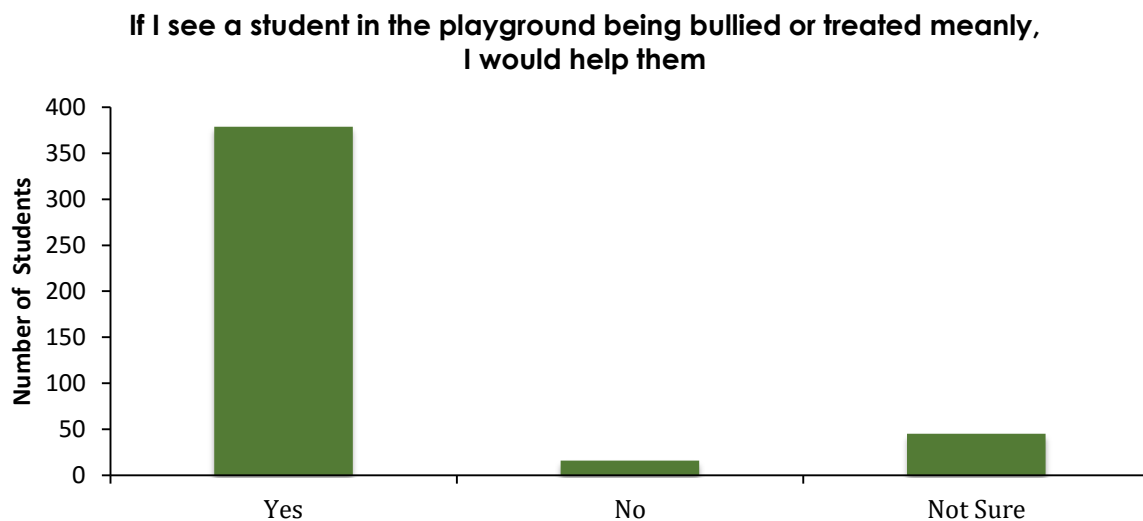
Goal #3: To Reduce Levels of Bullying and Aggression and Promote Children's Prosocial Behaviours

The presence of prosocial behaviours helps to promote positive development in children, improve the quality of their relationships, as well as the overall classroom atmosphere. Quality relationships and perceived social support greatly increase an individual's resilience and protect against negative and stressful experiences. Prosocial behaviour has also been linked to improved academic outcomes.

Aggressive children often have fewer cognitive, social, and emotional skills available to them and are therefore more likely to be rejected by other children, have deviant friends, and are less likely to get along with teachers. Children that display early aggressive behaviour are at highest risk for many negative outcomes, including depression, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug abuse, violent crimes, and neglectful and abusive parenting.

Feedback Results: Students

- 94% of students reported that if they saw a friend being bullied or treated meanly, they would help them
- 86% of students reported that if they saw a student in the playground being bullied or treated meanly, they would help them



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 92% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, students showed more prosocial behaviour (e.g. sharing, helping, cooperating) by the end of the school year

- 88% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, students are more inclusive or accepting of others who are different from themselves (including culture, race, special needs, gender, etc...)
- 80% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of ROE, students are better able to resolve conflicts

Goal #4: To Increase Knowledge of Human Development, Learning, and Infant Safety

Providing information about safe parenting can effectively increase parenting knowledge, increase an individual's confidence in their ability to parent, as well as prevent negative outcomes such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Feedback Results: Students

- 96% of students reported learning that if a pregnant woman smokes or drinks, she can harm her baby
- 98% of students reported learning that it is dangerous to shake a baby

Goal #5: To Prepare Students for Responsible Citizenship and Responsive Parenting

Witnessing a caring parent-infant relationship as well as understanding how sensitive and responsive parenting in infancy and early childhood can protect against stress and negative influences will help to protect future generations and reduce vulnerability to future psychopathology.

Feedback Results: Students

- 94% of students reported learning babies do better when they are loved and cared for
- 91% of students reported learning that being a parent and caring for a baby is a lot of hard work

Additional Findings:

Curriculum Expectations

- 100% of teachers feel that the Roots of Empathy program supports the school's curriculum

When asked, “What can Roots of Empathy teach the world?” students reported:

“That there is kindness somewhere in everybody”

- Grade 4/5, Garden Creek School, Fredericton

“It can teach the world to care for others, and not to hate.”

- Grade 3, West Riverview Elementary School, Riverview

“It is a good opportunity to learn about others and others’ feelings”

- Grade 3, Apohaqui Elementary School, Apohaqui

“Roots of Empathy can teach the world to be kind and help feel and understand what someone else is feeling”

- Grade 3, Kennebecasis Park Elementary School, Quispamsis

“It can teach a pregnant woman not to smoke and not to drink. Also, it can teach the world to care more about feelings and not be so rude and judgmental”

- Grade 4, Keswick Valley Memorial School, Burtt's Corner

“...Ce programme t’aide a comprendre que tu dois respecter tout culture et ne pas intimider. Ça t’aide a mieux ressentir tes propre sentiment (...This program helps you understand that you should respect all culture and don’t bully. It helps you to better feel your own emotions.)”

- Grade 5, École Arc-En-Ciel, Oromocto

“Il peut apprendre au monde comment reconnaître les sentiment des bébé et peut apprendre au monde de ne pas boire de l’alcol ou fume quand on est enseinte. (It can teach the world how to understand feelings of babies and teach the world to not drink alcohol or smoke when pregnant.)”

- Grade 5, École Arc-En-Ciel, Oromocto

When asked about the impact of the program, teachers offered comments such as:

“They are more able to label their emotions and regulate their reactions.”

- Grade 4/5, Meduxnekeag Consolidated School, Woodstock

“It is a wonderful program that shows students how to be self-directed learners. It teaches students there are many ways to communicate our wants, needs and desires.”

- Grade 3, West Riverview Elementary School, Riverview

“Juste du positif !!! Très bon programme... les élèves découvrent l'empathie, accepte plus les autres, les différences, sont capables de parler de leur émotions, etc.”

- Grade 2, Centre Scolaire Communautaire La Fontaine, Neguac

“Les élèves sont capables de mieux s'exprimer, sont capables de mieux gérer leurs émotions donc sont plus capables d'être prêt à travailler, capable de collaborer avec les autres... etc”

- Grade 2, Centre Scolaire Communautaire La Fontaine, Neguac

“I have seen students become more empathetic to the needs of others who may be disadvantaged in one way or another rather than tease or make fun of them.”

- Grade 5, Millerton School, Derby

“It makes the classroom more than just a place for academic work. It demonstrates that there are life skills that are more important than anything else we can learn in school.”

- Grade 5, Millerton School, Derby

“They were better able to cooperate with each without arguing. Overall their respect for one another improved, ie name calling stopped and they would stand up for each other more.”

- Grade 4, Liverpool Street School, Fredericton

“Roots of Empathy helped students understand how their emotions develop as they grow and how their physical display of emotion impacts others. Certainly a greater understanding of why they feel the way they do.”

- Kindergarten, Geary Elementary Community School, Geary

“Roots of Empathy is a wonderful program that teaches children to think outside of themselves. So often today kids have a sense of entitlement. These layers are stripped off when our baby is here. They absolutely delight in her and want her to be content. They listen so well and observe so much as a result of this program.”

- Grade 3, Seaside Park Elementary School, Saint John

When asked about the impact of the program, Roots of Empathy Instructors offered comments such as:

“Children learned and changed a lot this year; language development, self esteem, coping strategies, emotional awareness of self and others, [baby] care, etc. It was amazing to see the children show concern for others, ensuring no one was left out or laughed at.”

- Kindergarten, Geary Elementary Community School, Oromocto

“They seemed to be kinder to each other and to have more empathy. It really brought out a sweetness in the boys in the class who had struggled in their relationships previously. I had two students who have come from foster care in the class and they were able to offer insight into how their birth mothers treated them and how it was hard to watch the mom, at times, interact so beautifully with her child. It helped them realized what a typical parent/child attachment should look like. As guidance I was able to debrief with them after class when I noticed they were affected.”

- Grade 5, Park Street School, Fredericton

When asked about the impact of the program, Roots of Empathy volunteer parents offered comments such as:

“The children were more aware of baby’s feelings and needs. Seeing them develop over the course of the program was very magical. Our first visit, they were already aware that the length of time Alex visited was based on his needs. It really gave the children the opportunity to see the world through the eyes of a

baby!”

- Grade 3/4, Belleisle Elementary School, Springfield

“The children changed by learning how to express themselves and learning how to understand why they felt that way and how others would feel.”

- Kindergarten, Miramichi Rural School, Miramichi

“That we were all sweet babies requiring love and nurturing to grow and develop; we continue to require this even as we grow older. We all share the same types of feelings, even if we don't show them in the exact same ways. If we can remember this and carry it with us through life, we will be happier and will make others around us happier.”

- Grade 2, Princess Elizabeth School, Saint John