

# ROOTS OF EMPATHY

## CHANGING THE WORLD CHILD BY CHILD

Roots of Empathy has offered empathy-based programs to children since 1996. Our school-based program is for children from Kindergarten to Grade 7.

Our deep and rich history in British Columbia started in 2000. We have reached more than 165,000 students since then in English and French.

Nineteen years of research has shown that our program significantly reduces aggression, including bullying and increases prosocial behaviour: kindness, caring and inclusion.

These findings collectively align with the core competencies of the B.C. curriculum to support children's mental health and wellbeing - leading to the best learning possible for B.C. children.

All through the power of a parent and baby



A neighbourhood baby and parent visit a classroom along with a certified Roots of Empathy Instructor throughout the school year

With the Instructor as a guide, and our age-appropriate curriculum, the children learn to identify and understand the feelings of the baby, then themselves, and finally, the feelings of others: empathy.

We help children develop their social emotional competence. They learn how to create connection and healthy relationships. It is experiential learning - the deepest learning there is.

Roots of Empathy is the gold standard for school-based programs and is inclusive and culturally responsive. The program has been successful in urban, rural, immigrant, First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities across Canada as well as Indigenous communities in Hawaii and New Zealand.

innovative  
evidence based

supporting  
mental health  
wellbeing

healthy relationships

inclusion  
sense of belonging

shared social  
responsibility



Roots of Empathy  
Racines de l'empathie

Explore our website  
[rootsofempathy.org](http://rootsofempathy.org)



No other school-based, mental health, or SEL program in B.C. has more published research. In fact, in 2000, Dr. Clyde Hertzman and Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl at UBC conducted the first research on the program, which has since been replicated around the world.

## Key research findings - Roots of Empathy results in

An increase in children's social and emotional competencies (prosocial behaviour)

A decrease in aggressive behaviours including bullying

Greater acceptance of peers and an increased sense of belonging to a caring and supportive classroom

An increase in self-regulation skills and the ability to manage emotions positively



A two-year study from Switzerland recently showed increases in empathy and prosocial behaviour and decreases in aggression that were sustained beyond the end of the program. Students in the control group who did not have the program showed an increase in aggression. A study from Northern Ireland recently showed these effects may have been sustained for three years beyond the end of the program.



We also conduct an annual evaluation to hear feedback from our program's classroom teachers, students, volunteer parents, and Instructors. The report is provided to all stakeholders. We guarantee program integrity.

For all our research, please visit [rootsofempathy.org/research](http://rootsofempathy.org/research)



## Awards & Endorsements

In 2008 the Assembly of First Nations passed Resolution 38. "Be it resolved that: The Chiefs-in-Assembly and the Assembly of First Nations endorse and support the use of the program "Roots of Empathy"...in schools that have diverse global populations in Canada."

In 2018 and 2019, Roots of Empathy was selected by Finnish education organization HundrED.org as one of the most innovative education projects in the world.

Roots of Empathy Founder/President Mary Gordon was honoured to be selected for the Governor General's Innovation Award in 2018 and the 2011 David E. Mitchell Award of Distinction from the Ernest C. Manning Innovation Awards, as the top social innovator in Canada.



With solid roots, epic things can happen. Isn't that a future worth growing?

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