

What is Roots of Empathy?

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based program that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression and bullying among school children while raising social and emotional competence and increasing empathy. The program reaches elementary children ages 5-13. Roots of Empathy is delivered internationally on three continents and in multiple languages.

Roots of Empathy's mission is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. The focus of Roots of Empathy in the long term is to build capacity of the next generation for responsible citizenship and responsive parenting. In the short term, Roots of Empathy focuses on raising levels of empathy, resulting in more respectful and caring relationships and reduced levels of bullying and aggression. Since 2000, there have been many independent evaluations of the effectiveness of the Roots of Empathy program. Results have shown a significant decrease in aggression, including bullying, and an increase in pro-social behaviour (caring, sharing, including and helping) in Roots of Empathy classes compared to classes of children who have not participated in Roots of Empathy, and that these improvements in behaviour are maintained, or continue to improve, at least three years after program completion.

What does the Roots of Empathy Program look like?

The Roots of Empathy program curriculum is copyrighted and designed for four age ranges: Kindergarten (age 5), Primary (ages 6-8), Junior (ages 9-11) and Senior (ages 12-13).

Our Traditional Program:

At the heart of the program is a neighbourhood infant and parent who visit the Roots of Empathy class with the Roots of Empathy Instructor using a curriculum specialized to four age levels over the entire school year. The Roots of Empathy Instructor also delivers a class the week before and the week after each family visit (pre and post visits) to prepare and reinforce teachings using a specialized lesson plan for each visit.

The Roots of Empathy Curriculum consists of lessons which are divided into nine themes with three classes per theme: a pre-visit, a family visit and a post-visit

During the training, Instructors are given all Roots of Empathy learning materials necessary to deliver the program. Throughout the first year, Instructors are supported by a personal Mentor who develops a growth plan with the Instructor and supports and coaches the Instructor. Instructors will have regular communication with their Mentor through phone calls, video conferencing and emails and an in-person visit to the Instructor's Roots of Empathy classroom.

Roots of Empathy Instructor Role, Responsibilities, and Commitment

Who can become a Roots of Empathy Instructor?

Roots of Empathy Instructors are non-judgmental community volunteers who have an openness to understand and embrace the mission, goals, philosophy, and values of Roots of Empathy and an enthusiasm and ability to work in an interactive way with children in the program. Expertise and knowledge in the following areas is an asset:

- Experience with children in a classroom setting/ages 5-13
- Infant development/child development
- Parenting education/support
- Community development

Instructors often have backgrounds or experience in some of the fields listed below.

school guidance counsellors/ school psychologists	education assistants	domestic violence counsellors
recently retired teachers	early childhood educators	family support workers
principals/social workers	recreation counsellors	youth and child welfare workers
school & public health nurses	speech/language specialists	police & firefighters

Note: Educators not assigned full time to a classroom of students, such as guidance counselors, special needs workers, speech/language specialists, etc. may deliver the Roots of Empathy program in their schools.

Educators/classroom teachers who have responsibility for a classroom of children will not be trained and may not deliver the Roots of Empathy program.

What is the role of the Roots of Empathy Instructor?

Instructors set the tone in a Roots of Empathy classroom, creating a risk-free learning environment where children can share their thoughts and feelings without judgment. This begins by building respectful relationships with the participating family, classroom teacher and of course, the students.

What are the responsibilities of the Roots of Empathy Instructor?

- Exclusively using the Roots of Empathy Curriculum without introducing additional materials or concepts
- Traditional Program: Delivering 27 classroom visits over the course of a school year (30-40 minutes per class)
- Preparing lesson plans (30 – 60 minutes per lesson). Some lessons require additional time for photocopying, laminating, cutting and pasting materials or sending materials via email to the classroom teacher, and collecting artwork from students

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- Establishing ongoing communications and scheduling visits with the classroom teacher
- Establishing ongoing communications with the Roots of Empathy family and preparing the parent for their visits over the course of the year
- Engaging in ongoing communications with assigned Roots of Empathy Mentor, including planning for a classroom observation
- Completing annual program information forms and facilitating the completion of year-end feedback forms from students, teachers and participating parents

Instructor certification and commitment

To become a certified Roots of Empathy Instructor you agree to:

- Complete the online Roots of Empathy Instructor application form, participate in a telephone or video conference interview, and be accepted for training
- Attend a Roots of Empathy training which requires full attendance and participation
- Provide a current and clear Police Screening in advance of the Training which Roots of Empathy will facilitate
- Sign the Instructor Agreement
- Successfully deliver the curriculum over the course of a full school year
- Participate in professional development opportunities as a certified Instructor

The cost of training and support for Roots of Empathy Instructors is a substantial investment, and therefore communities expect Certified Instructors to **commit to a minimum of two consecutive years of instruction**. Thank you for your interest in the role of Roots of Empathy Instructor.

Please visit our Roots of Empathy website for further information: www.rootsofempathy.org