

Roots of Empathy Ontario Update

February 2013

Roots of Empathy is Canada's preeminent bullying prevention program, with more than 12 years of research providing evidence of its efficacy in reducing aggression – including bullying – and increasing social/emotional competencies in elementary classrooms across the country and around the world.

Updates

In 2012-13, 796 schools in 80% of the province's school boards have committed to host 1,050 Roots of Empathy programs – a 19% increase over programming in 2011-12.

Roots of Empathy programs in full-day kindergarten classrooms have increased more than three-fold this year, to reach over 6,100 of Ontario's youngest students in 2012-13.

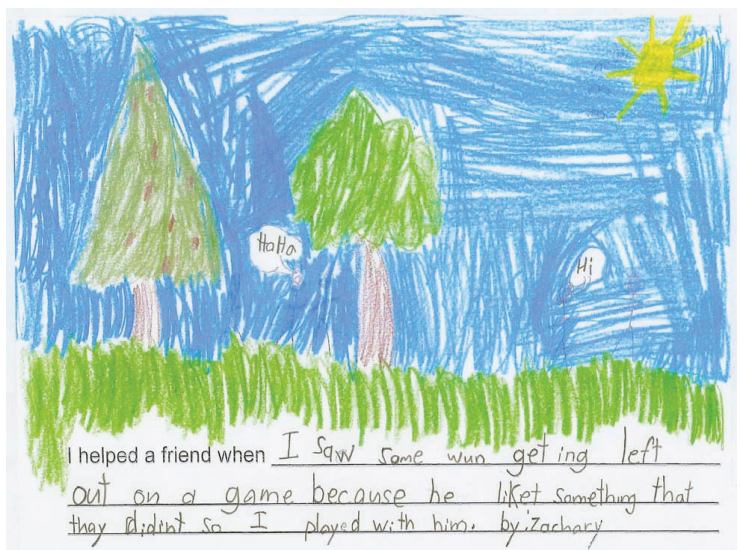
Seeds of Empathy programs in early child care settings have increased by 36% in 2012-13, to 45 programs offered in 42 centres.

To date, almost 193,000 children in Ontario have participated in Roots of Empathy and Seeds of Empathy programs.



Roots of Empathy
Racines de l'empathie

**Changing the world,
child by child.**



"[I helped a friend when] I saw some wun geting left out on a game because he liket something that they didnt so I played with him. by: Zachary."

Zachary has learned in his Roots of Empathy class how to take the perspective of other children. He understands what it feels like to be left out and he uses 'empathy-action' to include the marginalized child.

The presence of prosocial behaviours helps to promote positive development in children, improve the quality of their relationships (Clark & Ladd, 2000), as well as the overall classroom atmosphere (Raskauskasa et al., 2010).

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 (Caprara et al., 2000).

- 92% of students who participated in a Roots of Empathy program reported that if they saw a friend being bullied or treated meanly, they would help them
- 89% of teachers who hosted Roots of Empathy programs in their classrooms 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

Caprara, G., Barbarelli, C., Pastorelli, C., Bandura, A., & Zimbardo, P. (2000). Prosocial foundations of children's academic achievement. *Psychological Science*, 11, 302-306.

Clark, K. E., & Ladd, G. W. (2000). Connectedness and autonomy support in parent-child relationships: Links to children's socioemotional orientation and peer relationships. *Developmental Psychology*, 36, 485-498.

Raskauskasa, J., Gregory, J., Harvey, S., Rifshana, F., & Evans, I. (2010). Bullying among primary school children in New Zealand: Relationships with prosocial behaviour and classroom climate. *Educational Research*, 52, 1-13.