



*“Roots of Empathy taught me that bullying is not okay.”*

Roots of Empathy  
Student in Wellington

## Programme Goals

- ⇒ To foster the development of empathy
- ⇒ To develop emotional literacy
- ⇒ To reduce levels of bullying, aggression and violence, and promote children's pro-social behaviours
- ⇒ To increase knowledge of human development, learning, and infant safety
- ⇒ To prepare students for responsible citizenship and responsive parenting



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# Roots of Empathy New Zealand Programme Feedback Results 2008



## About the programme

Roots of Empathy (ROE) is an evidence-based classroom programme that has shown significant and lasting effect in reducing levels of aggression among schoolchildren by raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. The programme reaches primary schoolchildren from Years 1 to 8. In Canada, the programme is delivered in English and French and reaches rural, urban, and remote communities including Aboriginal communities. Roots of Empathy is also delivered in New Zealand, the Isle of Man and the United States.

In addition to our own results compiled from Roots of Empathy participant feedback surveys, there have been several independent, scientific research studies done by the University of British Columbia, Healthy Child Manitoba and the University of Western Australia. These studies repeatedly illustrate that students who have completed the programme show a decrease in aggression and an

increase in pro-social behaviour with improvements being maintained at least three years after the end of the programme.

Roots of Empathy was first introduced to students in Year 5 at 10 schools in Auckland in 2007. In 2008 it expanded to Wellington with a total of 30 schools in the two cities. This year, 2009, the programme is in 66 schools in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

**Roots of Empathy strives to break the intergenerational cycle of violence and poor parenting.**

*“Roots of Empathy is about changing the world classroom by classroom.”*

Mary Gordon,  
Founder/President

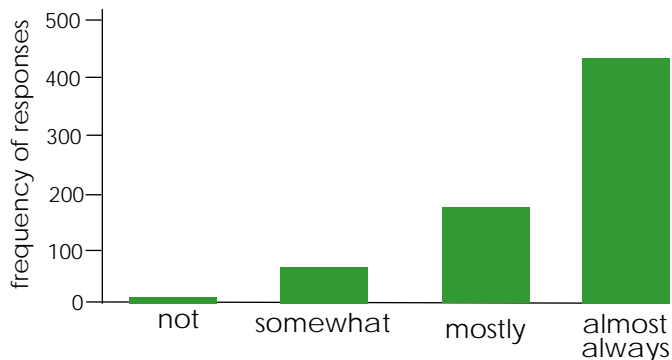
**Our mission is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults.**



## What the feedback in New Zealand is saying about Roots of Empathy



Students learned that it is important to help someone who is being bullied



*“Roots of Empathy taught me that it is okay to feel angry but never take it out on a person or a baby.”*

Roots of Empathy  
Student in Wellington

## What the numbers in New Zealand say . . .

**96% of students** reported learning that it is important for a baby’s brain development and growth, to have a loving relationship with a parent or adult.

**90% of students** reported that Roots of Empathy helped them understand that everyone has a unique temperament and it is okay to be different.

**94% of students** said that they would recommend the Roots of Empathy programme to a friend.

**98% of students** reported learning how to label the baby’s feelings.

**98% of students reported learning that it is important to never shake a baby.**

**88% of students** reported that Roots of Empathy helped them understand how people feel when they are bullied.

**97% of teachers** believe that other teachers would benefit from the Roots of Empathy programme.

**84% of teachers** reported that students showed more pro-social behaviour towards other students.

**80% of teachers** reported that students became more careful of not hurting others’ feelings.

### What students in New Zealand said when asked what they thought ROE could teach the world:

“ . . . that racism could go either way and really we’re all the same.”

“ . . . To have empathy for each other because everyone is special no matter how we look on the outside it’s what matters on the inside.”

“ . . . that being pregnant you should not drink alcohol and have cigarettes because it can hurt the baby.”

### What the teachers in New Zealand had to say:

“A student from another classroom was transferred to my class at the beginning of Term 3. This student is known for being disruptive, not staying on task, not being able to relate to/play with others. This has all changed since he has been in my class. My other students have been accepting, caring, helpful, guiding. Now he is a different student—a lot, I believe, to do with ROE.”

“The programme has helped the class bond and grow together. Everyone gets on with each other. Most children can express their feelings, opinions, and ideas more easily. Most children are empathetic towards each other. They have enjoyed the whole experience and have been involved in depth.”