

Roots of Empathy Instructor Role, Responsibilities, and Commitment

Roots of Empathy is seeking experienced people to undertake an exciting opportunity as a volunteer Roots of Empathy Instructor.

What is Roots of Empathy?

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based program that has shown dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression among school children while raising social and emotional competence and increasing empathy. The program reaches elementary children from Kindergarten to Grade 8. In Canada, the program is delivered in English and French and reaches rural, urban, and remote communities including Aboriginal communities. Roots of Empathy is also delivered internationally in New Zealand, the United States, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Germany, Wales, and England.

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 various national and international independent evaluations of the effectiveness of Roots of Empathy. Results have shown a significant decrease in aggression and increase in pro-social behaviour in Roots of Empathy classes compared to classes of children who have not participated in Roots of Empathy. Results of a follow up study show that these improvements in behaviour at the end of the program are maintained, or continue to improve, at least three years after program completion.

What is the Role of the Roots of Empathy Instructor?

The Roots of Empathy program revolves around a baby, the baby's family, a class of school children, their teacher, school and community, and a Roots of Empathy Instructor. Each brings something different to the program, and the program's success depends on the ability of everyone to work in tandem. Instructors deliver all aspects of the Roots of Empathy curriculum in the classroom and build respectful relationships with the participating family, classroom teacher and students.

What are the responsibilities of the Roots of Empathy Instructor?

- Delivering 27 classroom visits over the course of a school year (30-40 minutes per class)
- Preparing lesson plans and teaching materials as specified including photocopying, laminating, cutting and pasting. Time varies by theme and grade level and from lesson to lesson (average of one hour per lesson)
- Using the Roots of Empathy curriculum manuals as specified without introducing additional materials or concepts
- Engaging in ongoing communications with the participating family and preparing the parent for their visits over the course of the year
- Scheduling an information meeting with the principal and teacher to secure their commitment and reinforce the program concepts
- Scheduling the classroom visits with the Roots of Empathy family and classroom teacher
- Building respectful relationships with the participating family, classroom teacher and students

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- Communicating with and providing feedback to an assigned Roots of Empathy Mentor on a regular basis
- Scheduling a classroom visit with the Mentor, or arrange to video-tape a classroom visit to provide to the Mentor, if requested
- Submitting all requested reports and forms in a timely manner

What Does the Roots of Empathy Program Look Like?

At the heart of the program is a neighbourhood infant and parent who visit the class every three weeks, for the Family Visit, over the school year. The Roots of Empathy Instructor visits the week before and the week after each Family Visit (Pre & Post Visits) to prepare and reinforce teachings using a specialized lesson plan for each visit.

The Roots of Empathy curriculum consists of:

- a copyrighted curriculum specifically designed for four age ranges: Kindergarten, Primary (Grades 1-3), Junior (Grades 4-6) and Senior (Grades 7-8) and includes Roots of Empathy knowledge base and philosophy, reference materials, lesson plans and handouts
- lessons which are divided into nine themes with three classroom visits per theme: a pre visit, a family visit and a post visit

During the training, the Instructors will be given all Roots of Empathy learning materials necessary to deliver the program. Throughout the first year, Instructors are supported by a Mentor through phone calls, email messages and a classroom visit.

Who Can Become a Roots of Empathy Instructor?

In the past, Roots of Empathy has drawn its Instructors mainly from the following areas of expertise:

School guidance counsellors	Early childhood educators	Principals
Youth and family workers	Social workers	Child Welfare workers
Speech/language specialists	Education assistants	Police & Firefighters
Recently retired teachers	Recreation counsellors	Family support workers
Domestic violence workers	School & public health nurses	School psychologists

(NOTE: Educators who work in schools in non-teaching capacities such as guidance counselors, special needs workers, speech/language specialists, etc. may deliver the Roots of Empathy program as long as they don't have responsibility for a classroom of students.

Educators/classroom teachers who have responsibility for a classroom will not be trained and may not deliver the Roots of Empathy program in their own classroom or other classrooms.)

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We are open to all candidates, however, a background knowledge and expertise in some but not all of the areas indicated below will enhance program delivery:

- Teaching children in a classroom setting
- Child development and learning from Kindergarten to Grade 8
- Infant development
- Parenting education/support
- Cultural sensitivity
- Community development

Becoming a Roots of Empathy Instructor requires:

- a willingness to deliver the program as designed and a commitment to deliver 27 consecutive classroom lessons over a school year;
- working collaboratively and cooperatively with school and classroom staff;
- participation in four days of training during the first year of delivery;
- preparing lesson plans and teaching materials as specified including photocopying, laminating, cutting and pasting. Time varies by theme and grade level and from lesson to lesson (average of one hour per lesson);
- communicating with and providing feedback to an assigned Roots of Empathy Mentor on a regular basis;
- attendance in Professional Development opportunities in second and subsequent years of delivery;
- an openness to understand and embrace the mission, goals, philosophy, and values of Roots of Empathy (e.g. intrinsic motivation, creating a risk-free learning environment) as well as the program delivery components (e.g. reading children's literature); and
- an enthusiasm and ability to work in an interactive way with children in the program (including sitting on the floor while delivering Family Visits and interacting with and holding the baby).

Instructor Certification and Commitment

Before you can become a certified Roots of Empathy Instructor, it will be necessary for you to:

- Complete this Roots of Empathy Instructor application form, participate in a telephone interview, and be accepted for training
- Attend a mandatory 4 day intensive Roots of Empathy training (3 days initial training and 1 day mid-year training) which includes your full attendance and participation
- Successfully complete a written, open book, certification test (part I & II). A test result of 75% or greater is required
- Sign a contractual agreement as a volunteer with Roots of Empathy
- Consent to and clear a Police Record & Position of Trust Disclosure check
- Successfully deliver the curriculum over the course of a full school year

The cost of training and support for Roots of Empathy Instructors is a substantial investment; communities expect certified Instructors to **commit to a minimum of two consecutive years of instruction.** Instructors deliver one program in their first year.

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