



Roots of Empathy

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Racines de l'empathie

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Mary Gordon

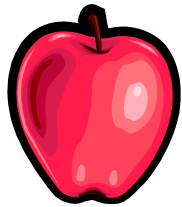


## Two Key Realities of our new decade – The Decade of Empathy



- Interconnectedness of human society
- Unpredictability of world events

Johnny has **3** apples.  
If Amélie takes **2** apples,  
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How will Johnny **feel**?

# Mission

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



# What is Roots of Empathy?



A universal primary preventive classroom-based social and emotional learning program designed to break the intergenerational cycles of violence and poor parenting.

# Our Teachers...

## Changing the world child by child



Breaking the intergenerational cycle of poor parenting and violence.

# A Roots of Empathy Classroom



# Emotional Literacy



Observation and labelling of emotions

Reflecting and identifying own emotions

Understanding the emotions of others (empathy)

Comfort in discussing emotions



# Intrinsic Motivation



No trophies, no praise needed.

# Participatory Democracy & Building Consensus



Children as “Changermakers”



Early aggressive behaviour is  
the single-best predictor of  
delinquency and later  
aggression.

# Why Promote Empathy in Children?



- Key to successful relationships in life
- Critical in resisting aggressive behaviours
- Key to social competence
- Positively associated with pro-social behaviours
- Key to academic functioning
- Key to competent parenting

# Independent Research

## Key Finding #1:

**Decrease in aggression**

Aggressive children are at higher risk of depression, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug abuse, violent crimes, and neglectful and abusive parenting.

*(Tremblay et al., 2004)*

## Key Finding #2:

**Increase in social and emotional understanding**

Students who participate in SEL programs have lower levels of stress and depression, fewer conduct problems and aggression and do better academically.

*(Payton et al., 2008)*

## Key Finding #3

### Creating more caring and supportive children

Quality relationships and perceived social support are powerful protective factors that increase resilience to negative and stressful experiences.

*(Powers, Ressler, & Bradley, 2009)*

## Key Finding #4

### **Increase in knowledge of parenting and needs of babies**

Sensitive and responsive caregivers in infancy and early childhood protects against stress and reduces vulnerability to future psychopathology.

*(Luthar & Brown, 2007)*

## Key Finding #5

### Lasting results

Improvements in behaviour were maintained up to **three** years after the end of the program.

# What does this mean for mental health?

- Poor emotional regulation skills are involved in most childhood and adult psychopathologies (i.e., *depression, anxiety, conduct disorder*).
- Increased understanding of emotions helps children to regulate their emotions and reduces their risk for negative mental health outcomes.

*(Zeman, Shipman and Suveg, 2002)*

# Mental Health

“The Roots of Empathy Program is solidly grounded in both current advances in developmental psychology and in recent findings in affective neuroscience.”



*~Dr. Allan Schore, Dept. of Psychiatry and Biobehavioural Sciences  
Los Angeles School of Medicine, University of California*

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