

# Roots of Empathy

## MENTORING MESSAGES FROM MARY



LETTER 2

Dear Roots of Empathy Instructors,

You will have already experienced the magic around the Green Blanket and your Mentor will be in touch soon to connect on how you're feeling after finishing Theme 1.

### Questions You Might Ask Your Mentor



One of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of being a Roots of Empathy Instructor is playing the conductor role in a symphony of relationships. Working with the orchestra members—the Roots of Empathy Family, the Mentor, the Classroom Teacher, the Principal, and the Local Coordinator (Key Point Person)—requires a lot of coordination and many questions may arise, such as:

- My classroom teacher has asked me why we take so long with having the children stand up and sing the baby in and out of the Family Visit. What do I say?
- It's hard for me to sit on the floor. Why is it important that the Roots of Empathy Instructor sit on the Green Blanket with the parents, baby and students?
- My Roots of Empathy parent sits outside of the Green Blanket area during Family Visits. What do I do?
- I have such a lot of students in my Roots of Empathy class! How do I arrange them around the Green Blanket?
- The classroom teacher has asked what she should do during Roots of Empathy lessons. What do I say?

If you don't know the answer to these questions or if you have other questions please contact your Roots of Empathy Mentor for support and guidance.

### From the Green Blanket



#### Emotional Literacy

Explaining Emotional Literacy to classroom teachers, principals, parents and other stakeholders in Roots of Empathy can sometimes be challenging.

**Emotional Literacy** is the ability to identify and name one's own emotions and be able to express them.

Through guided observation, as the Instructor, you coach the children in observing the baby's feelings. In this experiential learning, the baby is the "Teacher" and lever that you use to help the children identify, reflect upon and understand their own feelings and the feelings of others (empathy).

Roots of Empathy anchors the feeling with the baby. For example, on the Green Blanket, when the baby struggles to sit up and constantly falls over, the Instructor may label the baby's feeling as frustration. This allows the Instructor to invite the children to reflect and share a time they felt frustrated like their Roots of Empathy baby. As the children learn to identify and discuss their emotions and share their stories of feeling frustrated, they gain insight into each others' feelings.

Emotional Literacy is central to learning how to relate and self-regulate. It is at the core of Social and Emotional Learning.

**Empathy is the ability to understand how another person feels.**

## Empathy Action

Most of us have still-vivid memories of being excluded, bullied or treated unkindly as children. We also may harbour guilty recollections of times we led or joined in, being unkind toward others.



School should be a place where children not only learn to read, but through Roots of Empathy, learn to lead, such as six-year-old little Ricky, an example of empathy action.

With Roots of Empathy, children learn to find our shared humanity through the baby. They celebrate differences and learn Emotional Literacy—the universal language of humankind.

Although learning how to identify how others are feeling lays the groundwork for empathy action, it is not enough. Children in Roots of Empathy are encouraged to see themselves as *Changers*—people that have the ability to challenge what is not fair and to help those with problems.

Every classroom, playground, community, board room and war room needs a Ricky.

With respect,

*Mary Gordon*

Mary Gordon  
Founder/President, Roots of Empathy



Roots of Empathy  
Racines de l'empathie