

Headteacher: Mrs Jacqui Noakes
Deputy Head: Mr Stephen Mitchell

E-mail: admin@johnball.lewisham.sch.uk
Website: www.johnball.lewisham.sch.uk



John Ball School is fully committed to safeguarding all pupils and celebrating diversity.

Wednesday 21st April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

This letter is to tell you some exciting news that will affect children in our classroom this year. We have been invited to participate in a program called Roots of Empathy <https://rootsofempathy.org/>. This award-winning program supports children's positive mental health, wellbeing and learning, and in this unprecedented school year, this type of emotional support is more important than ever.

A Roots of Empathy Instructor will be introducing us to Baby Cerys, Sienna and Benjamin, a "Tiny Teacher", babies from your community that we will get to know through photos, videos and stories. Over the course of the school year, we will watch the babies grow. The children predict and cheer when their Roots of Empathy baby reaches the 'developmental milestones' of the first year: "She can roll over!" "He got his first tooth!" "He can sit up!" "She can crawl!!"

The Roots of Empathy Instructor also coaches the children in observing and reading the emotional cues of the baby. The Instructor will use this discussion as a lever for the children to talk about their own emotions and to understand how their classmates feel. Roots of Empathy is founded on the loving relationship between a parent and baby which is where empathy starts.

Roots of Empathy is an award-winning program delivered in every province of Canada and on four continents around the globe. For twenty-five years, over 1,000,000 children have been learning to respect and care for one another with the lessons started through their Roots of Empathy baby. Roots of Empathy is a tried, tested and proven effective program that increases children's kindness, caring, including, sharing and helping behaviours as they develop empathy. Research from 3 continents shows that as empathy develops, aggression and bullying behaviours are reduced. You may want to watch this 1 minute animated video that shows the impact of the program. <https://youtu.be/BZHD5dO0kVg>

The Roots of Empathy organization provides relevant information about parenting during COVID- 19 on their website. To access these videos, please visit: <https://rootsofempathy.org/covid-19-resources/>.

We are excited that we've been chosen to participate in Roots of Empathy, and we hope you are too.

Your consent for your child to take part is required, please consent or decline via Arbor. Along with this, there are two consent forms that need completing and returning to your child's teacher **by Friday 23rd April**. You will find these attached to the e-mail as well as a paper copy that will be sent home.

Yours Sincerely,

Sinead Hagan
YR4 teacher

shagan4.209@lgflmail.org



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