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Dear Parents,

This letter is to tell you some exciting news that will affect children in our classroom this year. We’ve been invited to participate in a program called Roots of Empathy (ROE). This program teaches children about feelings, their own feelings, and the feelings of others. Once every three weeks, baby Tori and her parents will visit the classroom. A trained ROE Instructor will gather the children in the classroom around a green blanket and together they watch the baby grow.

The children predict and cheer when their ROE baby reaches the ‘developmental milestones’ of the first year. “She can roll over!” “She got her first tooth!” “She can sit up!” “She can crawl!”

The ROE Instructor also coaches the children in observing the baby and reading the cues the baby gives as to how the baby is feeling: “Is the baby happy or sad?” “How can you tell?” And we use this discussion as a lever for the children to talk about their own emotions and to understand how their classmates feel: “Do you smile when you’re happy?” “How can you tell if your friend is happy?” Being able to understand how other people are feeling is called **empathy**. The ROE Instructor also visits the classroom before and after each Family Visit to prepare and reinforce teachings using a specialized lesson plan for each visit.

For more than ten years across Canada and internationally, thousands of children have been learning respect and care for one another with the lessons started through their Roots of Empathy baby.

We’re excited that we’ve been chosen to participate in Roots of Empathy, and we hope you are, too. If you have any questions or would like more information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Karen Newman