



***AN EVALUATION OF THE DIRECT IMPACT OF THE
RAINBOWS PROGRAMME IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS WITHIN SOUTH YORKSHIRE ...
ONE OF THE REGIONS OF RAINBOWS BEREAVEMENT
SUPPORT GREAT BRITAIN***

A SUMMARY OF THE INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

***Undertaken by
Nicola Hutchings BA (Hons) MSc***

May 2011

Rainbows Bereavement Support Great Britain

National Director Sue McDermott: sue.rainbows@btconnect.com

Tel: 07725340623

Charity no: 1058476

ABSTRACT

This research project used structured questionnaires from 93 primary and secondary aged pupils, their parents and carers, and headteachers from schools within the South Yorkshire area, to evaluate the impact of the Rainbows programme in supporting children and young people who had experienced a significant loss in their lives.

Evaluations of the questionnaires found the Rainbows programme to be of significant benefit in enabling children and young people to work through their grief, and a valuable resource to schools.

A summary of the research project and implications of the research findings for the development of Rainbows Bereavement Support South Yorkshire are outlined below.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

An evaluation of the impact of the Rainbows programme in this research has shown that children and young people benefit from participating in the programme in relation to building their self-esteem and emotional development, their ability to form and sustain relationships and their inclusion within school life. The importance of a trusted adult in school was prevalent in the responses to the pupils' questionnaires, most notably at the secondary school level.

At a whole school level, headteachers have evidenced that the Rainbows programme supports vulnerable pupils within their school, develops the professional skills of their staff and fosters positive relationships between home and school.

For parents and carers, the programme allowed their child to talk about their experiences outside of the family environment. It supported their child's emotional development, which had a positive impact on family relationships.

The experiences of prisoners who have accessed the programme serve to highlight the great need for the Rainbows programme to be available to all children and young people in schools and communities. Intervention and support at an appropriate time can help prevent emotional and behavioural problems in later years.

Rainbows is a valued resource in schools and prisons in offering an opportunity for those children, young people and prisoners who have experienced a significant loss in their lives, to work through their grief. The programme provides them with the emotional vocabulary which enables them to recognise and express their feelings in a safe, supportive environment.

SOME OF THE HEADLINES FROM THIS RESEARCH ARE PARTICULARLY WORTHY OF NOTE:

100% of headteachers (30 heads of primary and secondary schools) agreed that Rainbows is a valuable resource for supporting vulnerable children in school.

86% of headteachers believed that children who had participated in the programme now engage more positively with school life.

97% of the headteachers agreed that being involved in the programme had helped to develop the professional skills of the staff.

Pupils agreed that the Rainbows programmes supported their emotional development by helping them feel less angry and calmer in themselves.

100% of pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 agreed that they trust the adults who run the groups

95% of children in Key Stage 2 agreed that the group gave them a safe place to talk about their feelings

“Rainbows has helped me to move on from being sad to happy and I have really enjoyed it” (Year 5)

“It is a time where I can say everything to someone who I trust” (Year 9)

“The programme made a huge difference to our family life. We found that our son was more able to cope with his grief and loss.” (Parent)

The research makes compelling reading. We now have strong and secure evidence to show that:

“... children and young people benefit from participating in Rainbows in relation to building their self-esteem and emotional development, their ability to form and sustain relationships and their inclusion within school life.”

(Research conclusion page 26)

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***Full copies of the research findings may be obtained from Sue McDermott
OBE Rainbows Bereavement Support Great Britain. Email:
sue.rainbowsgb@btconnect.com***