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the early years organisation  
promoting high quality care, education, family  
support and community development



peace initiatives institute



The Media Initiative for Children – Northern Ireland

A joint effort between the Peace Initiatives Institute (Colorado, US)  
and NIPPA, the Early Years Organisation (Northern Ireland)

## summary findings of the evaluation of the pilot programme

Dr Paul Connolly  
First in a series of publications



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### The vision

- The Media Initiative for Children aims to use mass media and classroom experience to encourage young children to respect – and include – others who are different to themselves.
- It is a grassroots initiative, working in partnership with key organisations and experts as well as local families and communities to make a real difference to the lives of young children.
- Central to all of this work is a commitment to bringing about real and measurable change. The initiative is therefore research-led, ensuring that the Media Initiative for Children is as effective as possible and that its impact is clearly evidenced.

### The pilot programme

- During February 2004, an educational programme comprising three one-minute cartoons and supported by preschool curricular materials was piloted in five preschool settings in Northern Ireland with a total of 95 3-4 year olds.
- The programme ran for three weeks and involved the children watching the cartoons and then being engaged in related educational activities for about 30-40 minutes per day.

### The achievements

- In just three weeks, measurable effects of the pilot programme were found in terms of increases in the young children's:

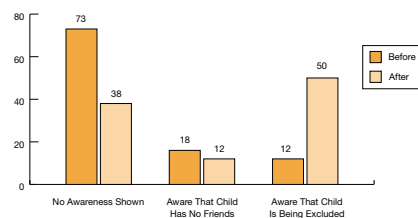
- Ability to recognise instances of exclusion without prompting;
- Ability to understand how being excluded makes someone feel; and
- Willingness to play with others, including those who are different to themselves.

### The key findings

*Ability to recognise instances of exclusion without prompting*

- The young children were shown photographs of playground scenarios depicting children being excluded and asked to describe what is happening. By the end of the programme over four times as many children (50% in total) were able to recognise, without prompting, that a child was being excluded compared to before (Figure 1).

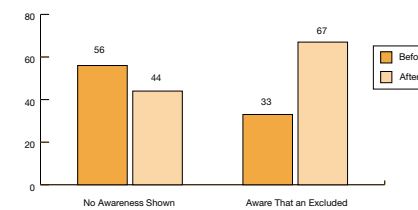
**Figure 1: Preschool Children's Ability to Recognise that a Child is Being Excluded (%)**



*Ability to understand how being excluded makes someone feel*

- In describing these photographs, the young children were also over twice as likely to recognise that the excluded child feels 'sad' after the pilot programme than before (67% in total) (Figure 2).

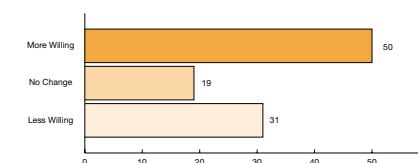
**Figure 2: Preschool Children's Ability to Recognise How a Child Who is Excluded Feels (%)**



*Willingness to play with others, including those who are different to themselves*

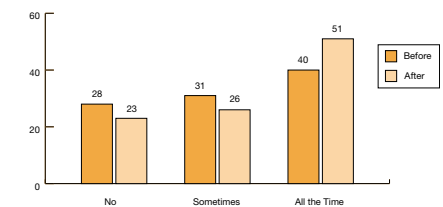
- After participating in the pilot programme a small but significant tendency existed for the young children to be more inclusive of others. Precisely half of the children (50%) stated that they were more willing in general to play with others than before (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: How Willing Preschool Children Demonstrated They Would be, in General, to Play with Others After the Pilot Programme Compared with Before (%)**



- The young children were shown photographs of a number of other children, some of whom were different to themselves (in terms of either physical, ethnic or cultural differences). After the pilot programme, small but significant increases were found in their willingness to play with some of these other children (see Figure 4). No negative changes in attitudes were found overall in relation to the rest.

**Figure 4: Young Children's Willingness to Play with a Chinese Girl Before and After the Pilot Program**



Further information

- Copies of the executive summary and the full report of this pilot evaluation and also more details on the Media Initiative for Children, including versions of the television messages to view, can be found at: <http://www.pii-mifc.org>.

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