



## SEL programmes boost children's academic results

**A** new review carried out for Partnership for Children has concluded that programmes which boost children's emotional wellbeing can also improve their academic achievement. This confounds the common criticism that such programmes divert attention from more academic subjects.

The review was conducted by Aleisha Clarke and Prof Margaret Barry of the Health Promotion Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway. They looked not just at Zippy's Friends but at Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes in general.

They were particularly impressed by the results of the largest and most rigorous study, which was conducted for the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and looked at 317 studies involving 324,303 children. This found that 'evidence-based programmes are intimately

linked to improving children's academic performance.'

Two other findings of the CASEL study were particularly interesting for Zippy's Friends. The first was that significant improvements in academic achievement result only when an SEL programme is taught by school staff, rather than by

social skills of young children,' said Clarke and Barry.

They also noted that several reviews found more evidence of effectiveness in the early years (children aged two to seven) than in programmes for older children.

They concluded: 'Taken together these findings highlight

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***'SEL programmes improve skills which are vital for children's academic performance.'***

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outside experts. Zippy's Friends is taught by class teachers.

The second finding was that the most effective programmes had four common characteristics – sequential content, active forms of learning, sufficient time for development, and specific social and emotional skill targets.

'It is interesting to note that Zippy's Friends uses all four of these recommended practices in developing the coping and

the need for schools to embrace their role in promoting social and emotional learning from an early age in primary schools, and to adopt a spiral approach that builds on what has been learned as children progress through primary school into secondary school.'

Programme Director Caroline Egar welcomed the review.

'This is a really useful study because it's an area in which

we need more evidence,' she said. 'Most countries don't test the academic performance of young children, and those that do tend to use fairly blunt measures which make it difficult to detect improvements.'

'We often hear positive feedback from teachers, but it's good to have those impressions underpinned by an objective review of many SEL programmes.'

Clarke and Barry's review is published exclusively at [www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk](http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk), and is available as a downloadable pdf.



Zippy's Friends class at Beijing No. 6 Kindergarten, China

## New Chair and Trustee

**P**artnership for Children has a new Chair of Trustees – Randi Talseth.

Randi has been on the Board for two years, and is Secretary General of Voksne for Barn (Adults for Children), the agency which manages Zippy's Friends in Norway. She also sits on the Board that oversees Norwegian hospitals.

Speaking about her new role, Randi said: 'It's wonderful to see this small charity, with only three full-time staff, helping tens of thousands of young children every year, from Iceland to India.'

She also paid tribute to her predecessor Doro Marden, who has retired after eight years on the Board, praising her tremendous commitment and generosity.



Randi Talseth (left) and Tony Skrzypecki (above).

Another change is the appointment of Tony Skrzypecki to the Board. Tony is a Chartered Accountant and a partner of the UK firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the world's largest professional services organisations.

He succeeds Ann Cottis, who has retired from the Board after seven years' service.

## Voksne for Barn at 50

**O**ur Norwegian partner agency Voksne for Barn has been promoting the mental health of children and adolescents for 50 years. Highlights of this year's anniversary celebrations have included an international conference and a royal visit.



Queen Sonja of Norway is welcomed to Voksne for Barn by Randi Talseth, Secretary General (right) and Stein Are Agledahl, Chair.

## Expansion of Zippy's Friends

**Zippy's Friends is helping more children around the world.**

- Classes are well underway in **Argentina, Mexico and Panama**, and are expected to start in at least two more Latin American countries in 2011.
- **Shanghai** has become our biggest single city programme, with more than 19,000 children enrolled last year.
- In the **UK**, more teachers have been trained in Newcastle, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.
- In **Brazil**, Jundiaí is the latest city to embrace Amigos do Zippy. Many schools have already signed up, and all the others are expected to do so next year.



Two boys in a first Zippy class in Panama

## Honouring the City of Sorocaba

**I**n 2006, the Brazilian city of Sorocaba introduced Zippy's Friends in every primary school. The programme has continued to flourish there, and a programme for parents has also been developed, to reinforce the lessons that children learn in class.

This strong focus on promoting

children's emotional wellbeing has been championed by Mayor Vitor Lippi, who led a delegation to London in October. The Mayor had a packed schedule, but made time to visit a Zippy's Friends class in Southwark and attended a reception for supporters at the Royal Over-Seas League.



(From left) Maria Teresinha Del Cistia, Minister for Education, Sorocaba; Tania Paris, Co-ordinator, Amigos do Zippy; Robert Paris; Doro Marden, Former Chair of Trustees; Valderez Soares, Educational Development Administrator, Sorocaba; Caroline Egar, Programme Director; Chris Bale, Director; Randi Talseth, Chair of Trustees; Mayor Vitor Lippi, Sorocaba; Dr Denise Lippi.

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