



Reaching IN ... Reaching OUT

A resiliency-promotion program sponsored by

- The YMCA of Greater Toronto
- The Child Development Institute
- University of Guelph
- George Brown College

And funded by

- The Ontario Trillium Foundation

FAQs

What is Reaching IN ... Reaching OUT?

Reaching IN ... Reaching OUT (RIRO) is an **evidence-based skills training program** designed to **promote resilience in children six years and younger**. It helps adults help children cope more effectively with life's inevitable stresses and challenges.

RIRO adapts the renowned Penn Resilience Program (PRP) school-age model to help children **reach "in"** to think more resiliently about daily challenges and **reach "out"** to others and opportunities.

The PRP is a resiliency promotion program based on more than 20 years of systematic research by Dr. Martin Seligman and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania. They discovered that our thinking patterns have a profound impact on our ability to cope with stress, our health and longevity, and our happiness and success. They also found that thinking patterns are not immutable – **we can learn to be more resilient by changing the way we think about adversity and opportunity.**

Our thinking patterns about adversity and challenge develop early in life. By eight years of age, most children have developed a thinking *style*, or preferred way of viewing the world. Even children two and three years old are able to mimic the thinking styles of caregivers around them. RIRO is designed to influence young children's thinking styles during this critical window of opportunity.

How did RIRO test the model & develop the Resiliency Skills Training Program?

Realizing that adult role modeling is an important resource for children's early learning, RIRO received funding from Social Development Canada to adapt and pilot the PRP model in child care centers because of the daily contact between Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and young children and families.

ECEs were taught the PRP adult skill set. After practicing the resiliency skills in their own lives, they introduced the skills by role modeling during their daily interactions with children. ECEs also introduced selected skills directly through child-friendly activities. Formal evaluation revealed that children as young as 3-1/2 years were able to benefit from the child-friendly activities. And adult role modeling of the skills was appropriate with children of any age. ECEs reported additional benefits including reduced job stress, better adult communication and increased teamwork.

Based on the promising results of the pilot study, Social Development Canada provided funding to develop a specialized skills training program for ECEs and other professionals as well as curriculum modules for college and university students. Post-training surveys confirmed the original pilot results. The skills training program and curriculum modules are available for dissemination across Canada. RIRO's website offers downloadable print and video resources including the new *Resiliency Guidebook* and *College Curriculum Modules*.

In Spring 2006, RIRO was awarded project funding by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to develop, pilot and implement an evidence-based "Train-the-Trainer" program and to create a trainers' network to roll out RIRO skills training in the Early Learning and Child Care sector across Ontario.

What are RIRO's goals?

A major goal is to promote children's resilience by increasing our awareness of the importance of **creating resilience-rich environments for young children by role modeling resilient thinking and actions** in our daily interactions with them. RIRO is committed to making resources and training about resiliency promotion widely available to professionals, paraprofessionals and students.