



# THE FOUR ROOMS OF CHANGE

## Research Project at Vasaskolan Primary School in Strängnäs

### Goals of the Study

The aim of this study, conducted by Gina Almegård from Linköping University, was to examine how pupils who worked with The Children's Four Rooms of Change differ from those who did not, on the basis of two questions: 1) Do pupils who work with The Children's Four Rooms of Change rate themselves differently on issues relating to socio-emotional skills and empathy compared with pupils who have not used The Children's Four Rooms of Change? 2) Is there any difference in approach to talking about feelings with classmates between pupils who have worked with The Children's Four Rooms of Change and those who have not? The first relates to socio-emotional abilities and empathy and the second to the pupils' attitude to talking about feelings in class.

### Methodology

All classes in grades one to five inclusive participated in the study, giving a total of ten classes with 197 pupils in all. Of the ten classes, half worked with The Children's Four Rooms of Change; these were evenly distributed over the grades, with one of the two parallel classes in each grade using the model while the other did not. Class size varied from 19 to 26 pupils. Of the five classes that did not use The Children's Four Rooms of Change, four worked with other types of socio-emotional training programs, including EQverkstan, SET and Emotional Intelligence or combined elements of different methods.

The pupils completed a self-assessment form specially devised for this study. The test consisted partly of questions designed by the author and partly of questions from the tests "Jag tycker jag är" ('I think I am') designed by Pirjo Ouvinen-Birgerstam to measure self-esteem in children and adolescents (Ouvinen-Birgerstam, 1984), the Social Skills Rating System, Student Elementary Form constructed by Gresham and Elliott (Gresham & Elliott, 1990) and the Index of Empathy created by Brenda Bryant (Bryant, 1982).

### Results and Conclusions

In many of the questions dealing with socio-emotional ability and empathy there were significant differences between the two groups of children. A factor analysis produced three interpretable factors: Sympathy, Exclusion and Sociability. The greatest difference between the groups was found in the factor Sympathy, where the pupils who used The Children's Four Rooms scored considerably higher mean values than those pupils who did not. There were also significant differences found in the factor Exclusion and while it is not the avowed aim of the model to limit feelings of exclusion this clearly was happening. No differences were found relating to Sociability but there was a strong impact on pupils' attitude to talking about feelings with their classmates and pupils that used the Children's Four Rooms found it easier to sit still and concentrate in class.

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#### Ander & Lindstrom Partners

Drottninggatan 55  
SE-111 21 Stockholm, Sweden  
Tel: +46 8 677 00 30  
[info@andolin.com](mailto:info@andolin.com)  
[www.andolin.com](http://www.andolin.com)

#### Ander & Lindstrom Partners

200 South Peyton Street  
Alexandria Va 22314, USA  
[info@andolin.com](mailto:info@andolin.com)  
[www.andolin.com](http://www.andolin.com)

#### Clarion Learning P/L

13 Wakefield Street  
North Manly NSW 2100, Australia  
Tel: +61 2 9939 7017  
Fax: +61 2 9939 7016  
[info@clarionlearning.com.au](mailto:info@clarionlearning.com.au)  
[www.clarionlearning.com.au](http://www.clarionlearning.com.au)