

# Child Animal Nature Empathy

Prevention of violence

Our educational software develops **emotional empathy** and moral reasoning for 8 to 11 year olds **to prevent violence** and bullying.

[www.enfantanimalnature.fr](http://www.enfantanimalnature.fr)



**Our innovative educational software develops emotional empathy and moral reasoning for 8 to 11 year olds and especially for ‘the followers’ in order that they change their behaviour.**

**The children will become more responsible and compassionate when they understand the consequences of their behaviour and the suffering they inflict on their victims.**

**We help the victims to gain self confidence as they realize that their suffering is understood.**

**700 600 French students are victims of bullying including 295 000 in primary schools-UNICEF and International Observatory of the violence at school.**

**This programme is suitable for teachers to use when teaching civic and moral education, youth workers and parents.**

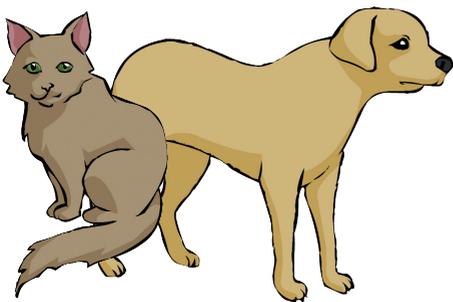
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## THE ANIMAL AS A TRIGGER

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**We use the child’s empathy for animals to trigger and to reinforce their empathy towards people, especially their classmates.**

The students react thanks to the use of stories, putting them in diverse situations where at first an animal, then a child are victims of taunting and abuse. Little by little they begin to feel and understand the pain and suffering that the victims feel when subjected to jokes and acts of violence.



By using animals as examples the children are put into a context outside of the school environment which enables them to reflect differently. This builds a relationship with children who otherwise would have been completely closed to actions for the prevention of violence.

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# OUR METHOD

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**Our method is based on European and American research:  
A link between cruelty to animals and violence towards humans.**



**In France** the psychiatrist - ethologist Boris Cyrulnik explains that children who are violent suffer themselves from developmental disorders. The mentors who work with these children block the development of the child's empathy and prevent them from putting themselves in the place of the person being abused, labelling them as insensitive beings and thereby missing the importance of early prevention.

For a long time violence towards animals was considered a marginal phenomenon but today it's known as one of the warning signs which should be taken seriously when studying personalities at risk.



**In Switzerland** professor of penal law Martin Killias and professor of psychology, Sonia Lucia demonstrated in their study (2006) that cruelty to animals can lead to acts of violence towards people.



**In the United States**, the DSM4 (Diagnosis of Mental Health) considers that cruelty to animals predicts serious behavioural problems in children.

'Aggression is a long term disorder and professionals must be aware that such acts are a sign of maladjustment which can persist'. They conclude that it's necessary to pay particular attention to a child who commits acts of cruelty towards an animal'.

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# OUR OBJECTIVES

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**Promote awareness** among the victims and the abusers and to refuse normalisation.



**Understand the suffering** of the victim and to bring about solidarity among children who are abused.



Allow children to **become more responsible**, less self-centered and less impulsive.



Give children who are abusers the opportunity to **reflect on their actions** in a neutral place away from conflict.



Children won't respect the rules to escape punishment but rather because they feel the suffering of their victims as well as the social implications of **changing their behaviour**.



**To emphasize thinking before acting**, encouraging them to seek adult help when needed.

Our approach is based on an exchange with the students, leading them to reflect on other ways of behaving and to realize that they can act differently, notably by going to see a key adult (head teacher...) to be helped or to help others.

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# OUR EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

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Our educational software includes 7 themes, 13 animated sequences followed by quizzes with the 82 answers and useful comments which will allow the adults and children to interact, discuss and reflect together:

1

**Teasing, violent acts:** two different intentions but they often have identical consequences for the victim.

2

**Analyzing what the victims feel:**

Successfully identifying with the victims by showing empathy.

3

**Not being indifferent to the victim** - knowing the difference between telling tales and calling for help.

4

**Being able to say NO:** Daring to say no so that a person, an animal or yourself are not put in danger.

5

**Anger, Violence and Commitment:** Not transforming anger into violence and being responsible for your commitments.

6

**Think before acting:** Why am I doing this ? What are the consequences of my behaviour? How can I behave differently?

7

**Rights:** 'I have the right to do something' and 'I feel like doing something', understand the difference. The historical evolution of human and animal rights.

The children of today should understand that they can be agents of change to build a less violent society.

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# SOME REACTIONS

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## FROM TEACHERS

'The students including the most difficult and the least motivated academically, showed great interest in the topics and actively participated in the proposed activities...'

'The children were very interested and enthusiastic...'

'The behaviour of the children in the class has improved whereby they show more respect for their classmates.'

'The class in which these interventions took place has evolved positively throughout the year.'

'I learned a lot about my students that I wasn't aware of.'

'Unquestionably, the originality and the innovation of the approach develops in most of the students a better understanding of violent events.'

'The opinions they had about themselves were pushed aside.'

'Your project is so close to my heart as I truly believe that empathy is a way of life. We, as educators, have a responsibility for this.'



## FROM STUDENTS

'We must show empathy, I learned that word.'

'There is another way we can act besides kicking each other : try to have confidence in ourselves and to control our emotions.'

'Some acts can appear amusing but they can be very dangerous.'

'We must respect life, whether human or animal.'

'We must not hurt people for fun.'

'Cats do not always land on their feet.'

'It's certain that animals suffer like us.'

'If we see an animal or a child being abused, we must help them.'

'Small stupid acts can have serious consequences.'

'Do not hurt people or animals because we wouldn't like to be in their place.'

'Sometimes friends are not true friends.'

'My opinion is that the intervention is useful for the safety of everyone. Perhaps it will put a stop to violence and nurture respect.'



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# THE ASSOCIATION

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**Created in 1998**, our Association has been approved by the Hauts de Seine département for its role in favour of young people and education and has been subsidised, since 2003, by the Departmental Council of the Hauts de Seine.

It has carried out in France, **600 animations** for **15000 children** in youth centres, as well as secondary and primary schools.

The secondary school Denis Diderot à Deuil la Barre (95) was used for our pilot study and we have worked with them annually over the last ten years.

We regularly train teachers, youth leaders and those involved in prevention how to use the programme with children.

Since its creation it has been backed by **professor Hubert Montagner** who is a specialist in the relationship between animals and children. Our educational programme has been considered 'promising and interesting' by **Eric Debarbieux**, professor of science education in the university of Paris Est Créteil. He is also specialist and founder of the international observatory for violence in schools.



We developed **the sector 'Nature' in partnership with LPO**, an association for nature conservation and we were financially supported by **the 'Nature and Discoveries Foundation'**.

With this new software which develops empathy for nature and wild animals like swallows, hedgedogs, spiders, foxes, seagulls... children would be more aware of having respect for the world, human, animal or plant.

# A FEW WORDS FROM THE FOUNDER MARIE-CHRISTINE CHARMIER

*'Laws exist to protect us. Sanctions against offenders are often upheld but the suffering of the victims continues.  
Children are the leaders of tomorrow. It's through them that a less violent society will evolve.  
Teach children to think, to talk outside of a managed conflict so they react as responsible and caring human beings.  
Teach children that being abused or being an abuser is violent and not trivial.  
Offer children an alternative way of communicating, not based on judging others or competition but rather by offering empathy, the ability to identify with others, feel their emotions thereby avoiding pain.  
There exists a link between cruelty to animals and violence towards humans, which has been scientifically recognised through European and American studies.  
Children have natural empathy towards animals.  
For this reason we decided to create an educational programme based on the empathy that children feel for animals, as a way of triggering and strengthening it among themselves.  
Our method raises awareness for the need to respect both animals and humans.'*



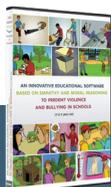
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[www.enfantanimalnature.fr](http://www.enfantanimalnature.fr)



The programme can be downloaded from our website for

**17€**

*The first four sequences of our software can be watched free of charge on our website.*