



Rainbows for All Children, Inc. is committed to helping children and teens grieve and grow after loss. Our goals include helping children to develop and strengthen problem-solving and coping skills, learn appropriate behavior and anger management, improve school attendance and academic performance, alleviate depression and anxiety, reduce emotional pain and suffering, improve communication in their families and peer relationships, and prevent destructive behaviors such as involvement with gangs, alcohol and drug abuse.

In response to the needs that children and teens have after experiencing a significant loss or change in their young lives, Rainbows designed age-appropriate curricula and programs for grieving youth, ages 3-18. All programs are offered at public and private schools, social service agencies, hospitals and faith communities at no charge to participants. This is incredibly important, because many families shaped by loss do not have the financial means to seek mental health assistance. Emotional pain knows no barriers; therefore, Rainbows serves youth of all racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Children need guidance and compassion to prevent the loss event from literally defining their lives through later destructive choices. The Future of Children Organization states that children and youth of single parents are at an increased risk of poor academic performance, aggression problems, depression, negative self-esteem and poor social skills. Without intervention, research and experience also show that grieving youth are at risk of developing maladaptive coping behaviors such as gang involvement, alcohol and drug abuse, and school truancy.

Since confidentiality is a cornerstone of our program, Rainbows does not maintain a database of participant's personal information. However, Rainbows collects data to ascertain the quality, effectiveness, and consistency of our services which we share with stakeholders and our community partners. In order to obtain a 360 degree analysis of the impact and value of the Rainbows program on each participant, there are pre and post evaluations given to the participants, as well as evaluations requested from parents/ caregivers, the participant's academic teacher, the group facilitator and the site coordinator. None of the persons in these categories are employees of Rainbows but rather are paid staff or volunteers from each community site.

In a two - year sampling of the five evaluation streams, Rainbows consistently received high marks in addressing the needs of children who participated in its programs. Each program level - primary, middle and secondary- indicated results which demonstrated significant improvement in a wide variety of developmental areas critical to the success and well being of today's youth. These areas included problem solving, behavior, communication and self-esteem.

There are three areas that deserve to be highlighted from the evaluation outcomes:

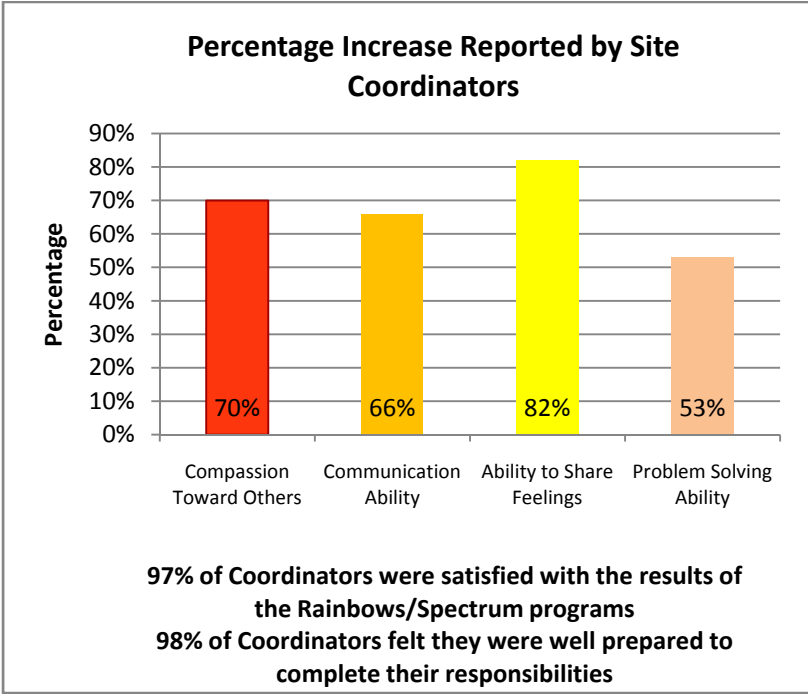
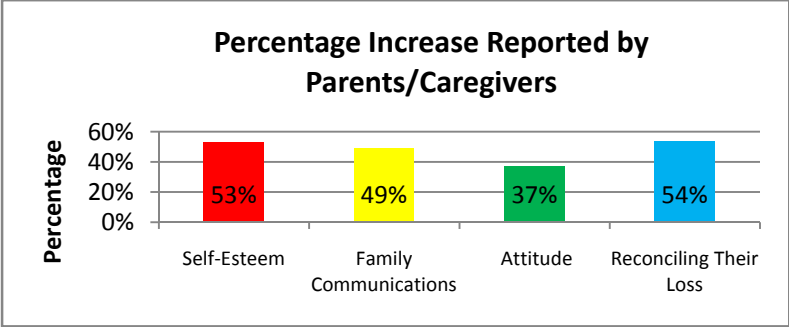
- 1) Recent research has proven a positive correlation between strong self esteem and academic achievement. **Parents and caregivers reported that they observed a 53% increase in their child's self-esteem after participation in a Rainbows program.**
- 2) Of further note regarding academic success, teachers **reported a 75% decrease in absenteeism in the students after participation in Rainbows.**
- 3) Stories in the media and studies have stated that bullying is more prevalent than ever with the technology being used by today's youth. However, the likelihood of bullying is greatly diminished, if not eradicated, when a child or teen has a heightened sense of compassion towards others and bolstered by strong self-esteem. **Site Coordinators reported a 70% increase in compassion of the participants after participation in a Rainbows program.**

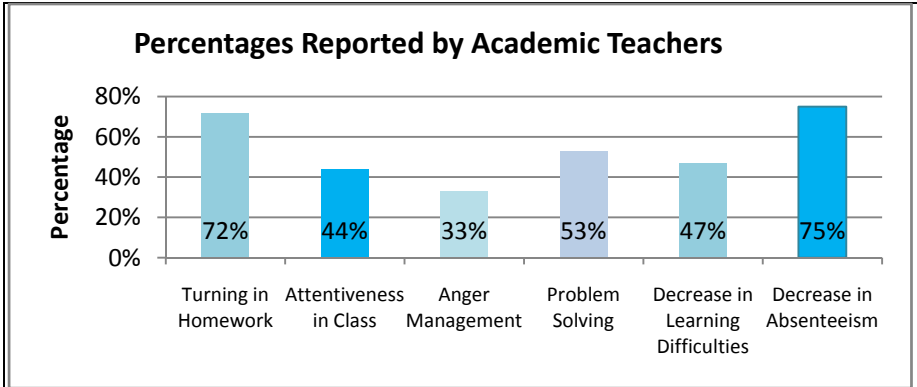
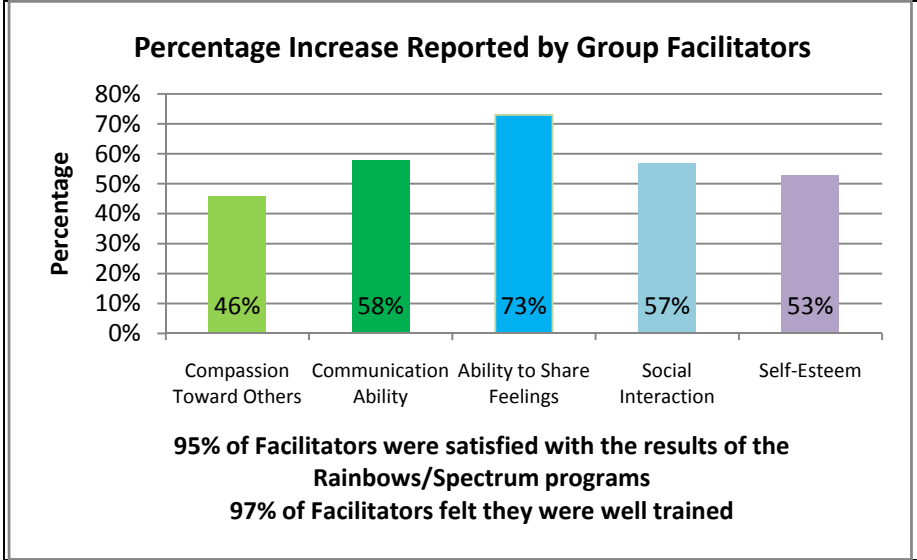
Gender participation appears to have been slightly in favor of females although not to a significant degree. In all of Rainbows programs, regardless of age, divorce appears to be the greatest grief issue behind children's participation. Coordinators indicate across all levels of programs that over 60% of participants were suffering from grief related to parental divorce.

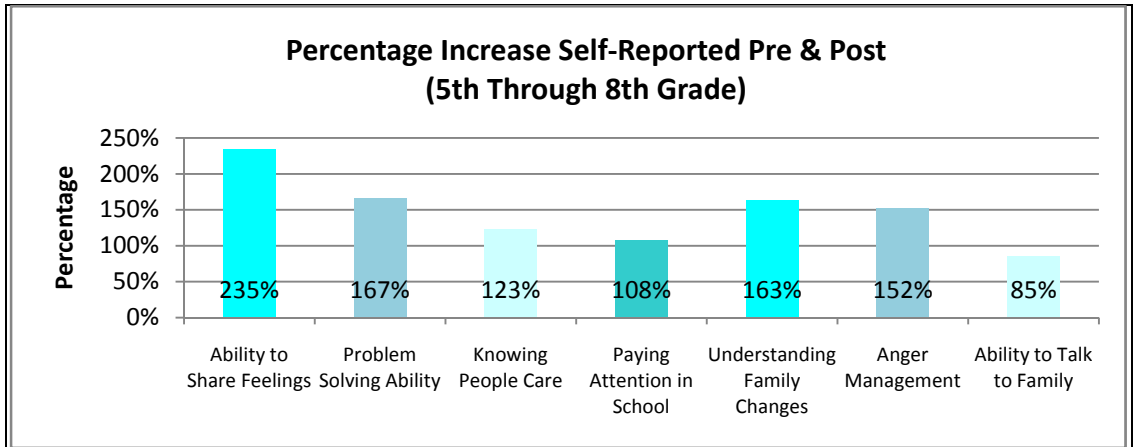
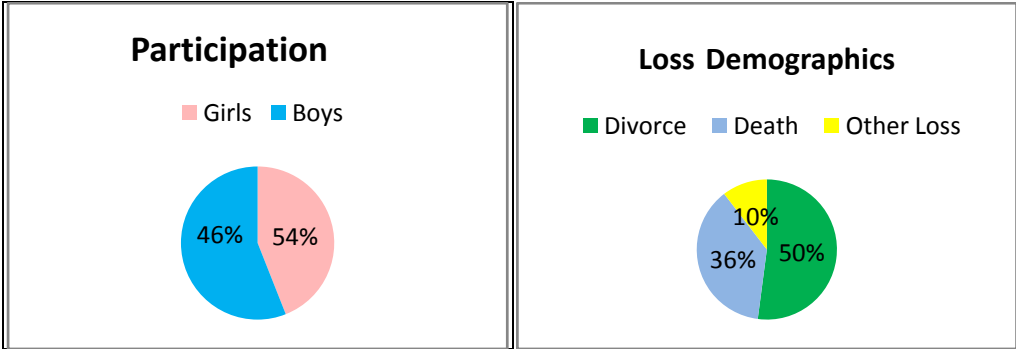
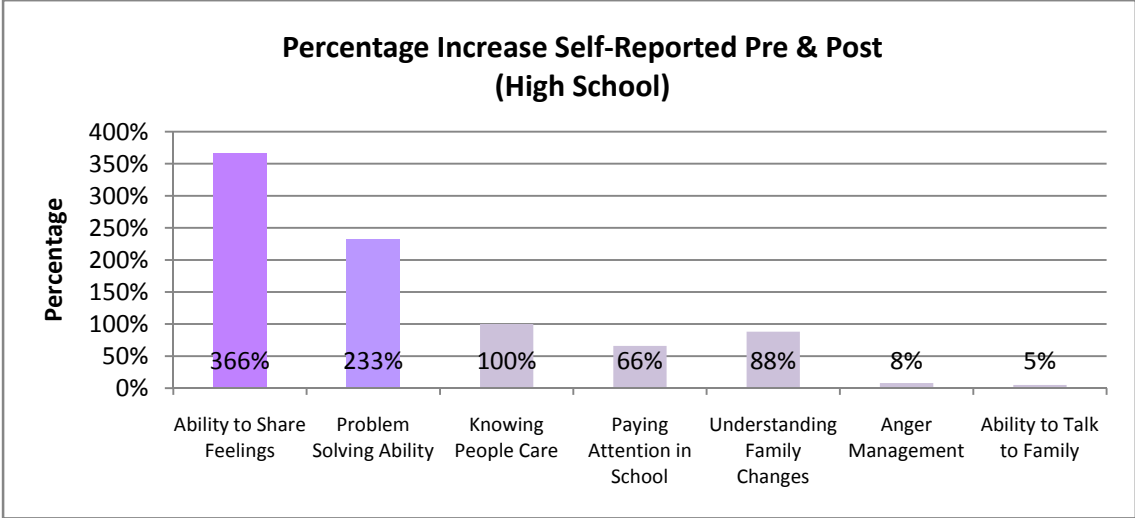
In summary, data provided to Rainbows by community partners and parents/caregivers indicated gains by children in important developmental and behavioral areas. Improvement was seen in every measurement and it is clear from these results that the Rainbows program has a tangible, immediate and meaningful impact on a child's development and happiness. This highlights and reinforces the continued need of Rainbows programs in communities around the world.

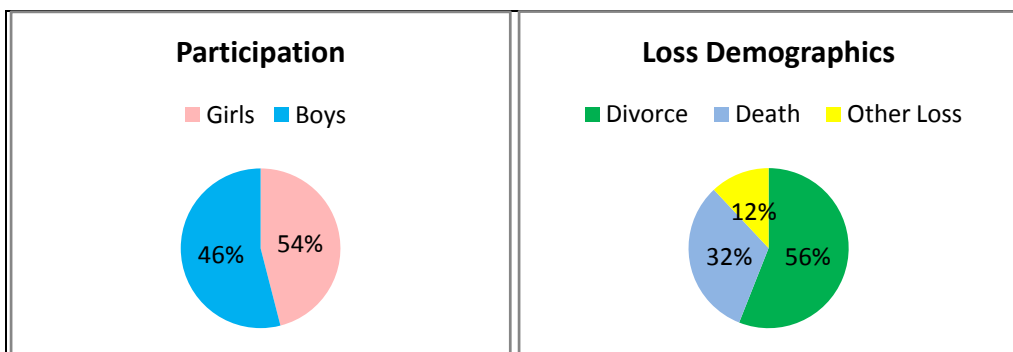
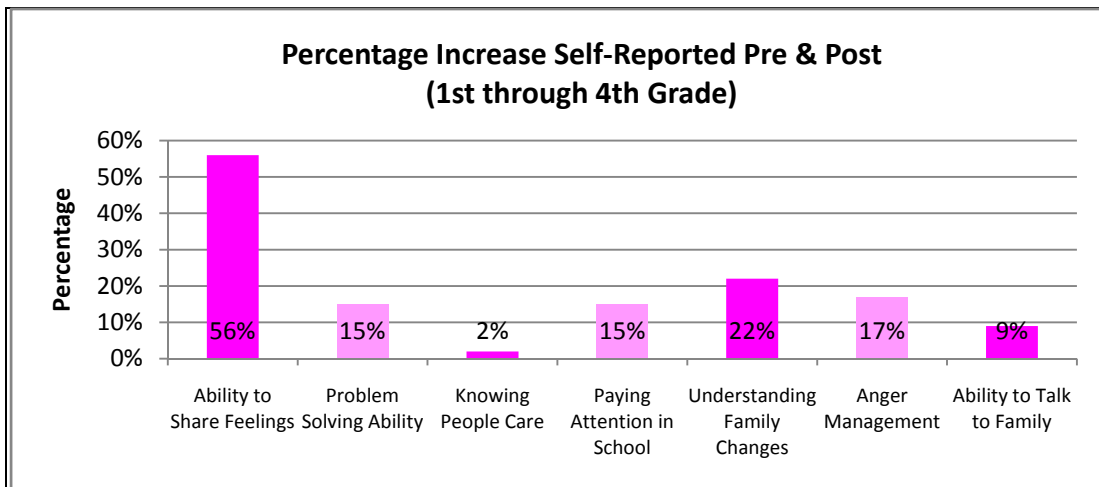
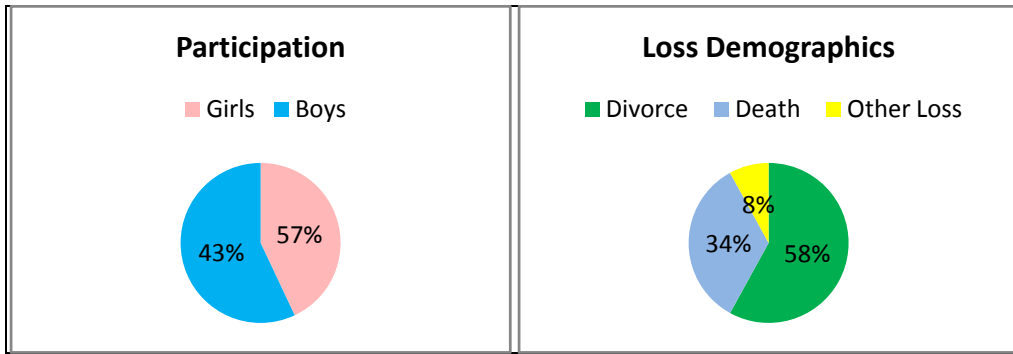
Adult Rainbows alum tells her story...

"Twenty-five years ago, I was a fourth grade student at St. Stephens School in Des Plaines, IL. Twenty-five years ago, my mother walked away from our family. My first grade brother Jerry and I were left to be raised by a single parent father. Needless to say, life quickly became much more than I could handle. Responsibilities that should never have to be part of a fourth grader's life became the norm for me. As one could imagine, my grades began to suffer. So many days, I can remember feeling sleep deprived and overwhelmed. I felt strange, scared and non-existent. I felt that there was no one true person that I could trust to share my feelings. It was at this time that my wonderful fourth grade teacher, one of the initial Rainbows mentors, saw the dire need to get me involved in a group. Suzy Marta, Rainbows for All Children founder was just piloting the program. I was placed in a Rainbows group made up of children who were in similar circumstances of grief. I slowly began to trust again. I found a place where I was not only normal, but a place where I could open up and share what was going on in my troubled world. I learned strategies to cope with the tough stuff. Thankfully, my grades improved. I finally felt supported. As a mother, teacher and former Rainbows participant, I can honestly say that my life was changed. To this day, my Rainbows friends continue to help me through life struggles. Without Rainbows, I would not be the person I am today." Jennifer, age 35









Compiled by:
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