

Building Mindfulness Through Art

An Art-Based Intervention Kit for Children — Pre/Post Evaluation Report

Swami Dayananda School, Manjakkudi, Tamil Nadu

Grades 4 and 5 · N = 100 children · Five-week pre/post design

Prepared by Shruti Arvind

1. Background and Objective

Art therapy uses creative expression as a structured route into feelings and behaviour that children often cannot yet name directly. This project set out to test whether a simple, low-cost art kit — designed and assembled independently — could move the needle on five socio-emotional domains in a real classroom setting, outside a clinical context.

The project sits at the intersection of art therapy and developmental/cognitive science: it asks a measurable question (do scores on a structured rating instrument shift after a five-week art-based intervention?) rather than a purely anecdotal one. The domains assessed were:

- Acceptance — of self and others, including how mistakes are handled
- Non-Judgment — reacting to others' differences and imperfections without labelling
- Patience — tolerance for waiting, frustration, and unfinished tasks
- Letting Go — recovering from being upset, and forgiving after conflict
- Trust — trust in adults, feeling safe, and willingness to ask for help or share

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

100 children across two grade levels at a rural government-aided school in Manjakkudi, Tamil Nadu, took part: 43 children in Grade 4 and 57 children in Grade 5.

2.2 Instrument

A bilingual (Tamil/English) rating toolkit was used, completed by the same rater/observer at both time points for consistency. Each of the five domains was scored using a set of behavioural indicator questions (e.g. "After getting upset: stays upset long / calms slowly / calms quickly"), each scored on a low-to-high scale and summed into a domain score. Maximum possible domain scores were: Acceptance (15), Non-Judgment (9), Patience (12), Letting-Go (9), and Trust (12) — a maximum composite score of 57.

2.3 Procedure

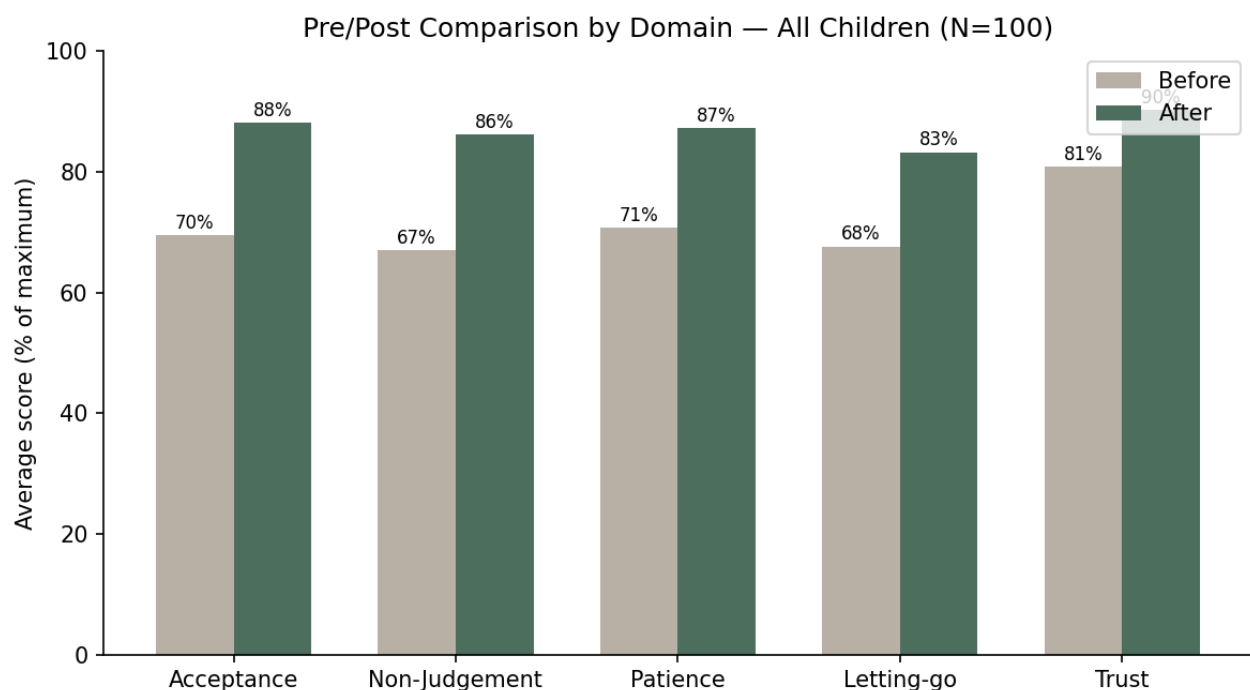
Children were rated once before receiving the art kit intervention ("Before"), engaged in art-based activities using the kit twice a week over five weeks, and rated again on the same instrument at the end of that five-week period ("After"). The same five-domain structure was used at both time points to allow direct pre/post comparison.

3. Results

3.1 Overall Sample (N = 100)

Every one of the five domains improved on average from Before to After. The largest relative gains were in Non-Judgment (+19.1 points as a share of the maximum) and Acceptance (+18.6 points), while Trust started highest at baseline and showed the smallest — though still positive — shift (+9.4 points), consistent with trust being the slowest-moving of the five domains.

Domain	Max Score	Avg Before	Avg After	Gain	% Improvement
Acceptance	15	10.42	13.21	+2.79	18.6 pts
Non-Judgement	9	6.03	7.75	+1.72	19.1 pts
Patience	12	8.48	10.46	+1.98	16.5 pts
Letting-Go	9	6.08	7.49	+1.41	15.7 pts
Trust	12	9.70	10.83	+1.13	9.4 pts



3.2 Grade 4 (n = 43)

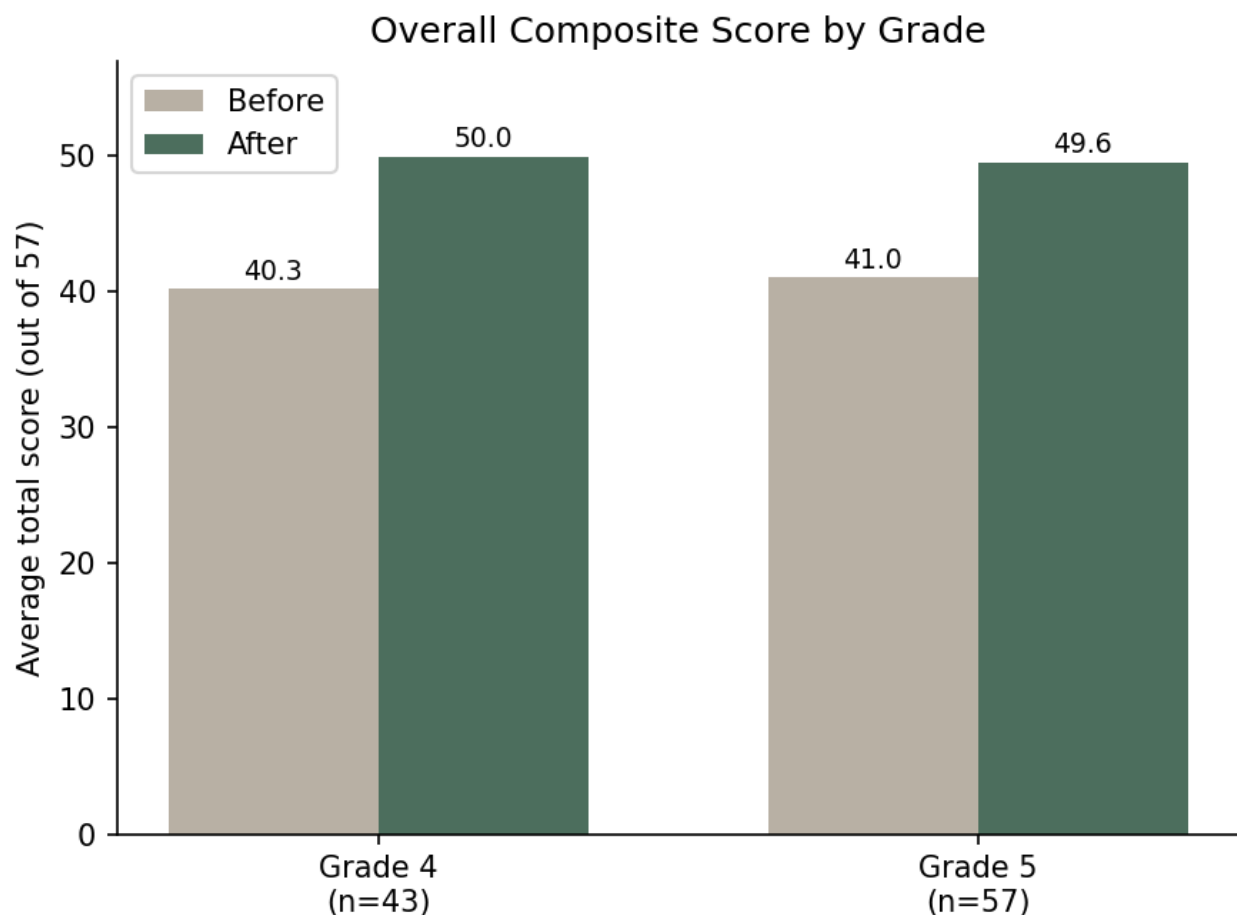
Domain	Max Score	Avg Before	Avg After	Gain	% Improvement
Acceptance	15	10.49	13.09	+2.60	17.4%
Non-Judgement	9	5.84	7.86	+2.02	22.5%
Patience	12	8.58	10.72	+2.14	17.8%
Letting-Go	9	5.88	7.58	+1.70	18.9%
Trust	12	9.47	10.72	+1.26	10.5%

Grade 4's composite score rose from an average of 40.3 to 50.0 out of a maximum of 57 — a gain equivalent to about 17.1% of the total scale.

3.3 Grade 5 (n = 57)

Domain	Max Score	Avg Before	Avg After	Gain	% Improvement
Acceptance	15	10.37	13.30	+2.93	19.5%
Non-Judgement	9	6.18	7.67	+1.49	16.6%
Patience	12	8.40	10.26	+1.86	15.5%
Letting-Go	9	6.23	7.42	+1.19	13.3%
Trust	12	9.88	10.91	+1.04	8.6%

Grade 5's composite score rose from an average of 41.1 to 49.6 out of 57 — a gain equivalent to about 14.9% of the total scale.



3.4 Consistency of the Effect

Improvement was not limited to a few standout cases. Every child in Grade 4 (43 of 43) showed an equal-or-higher composite score after the intervention, and 54 of 57 children in Grade 5 improved, with the remaining 3 holding steady at their baseline score — none declined. This

breadth of effect, across nearly the full sample rather than a subgroup, is the most notable finding of the evaluation.

4. Discussion

The pattern across domains is informative, not just the headline averages. Non-Judgment and Acceptance — the two domains most tied to how children relate to other people's mistakes and differences — showed the largest gains, which fits the design of an art activity: making things alongside peers, where imperfection is visible and low-stakes, gives repeated, low-pressure practice at exactly this kind of tolerance. Trust moved the least, but it also started from the highest baseline (a ceiling effect): children already reported relatively high trust in known adults before the intervention began, leaving less room to move.

The near-universal direction of change (100 of 100 children flat or improved, none declined) is a stronger claim than the average-score gain alone. It suggests the effect was distributed across the group rather than driven by a handful of children with dramatic shifts.

5. Conclusion

Across 100 children in Grades 4 and 5 at Swami Dayananda School, a five-week art-based intervention was followed by measurable gains in all five socio-emotional domains assessed — Acceptance, Non-Judgment, Patience, Letting-Go, and Trust — with no child's composite score declining. The results support art-based activity as a low-cost, scalable tool for building socio-emotional skills in a rural classroom setting, and point to non-judgment and acceptance of imperfection as the domains most responsive to this kind of intervention.