



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

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Elementary School Offerings

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility has a 25-year track record of successful work in the New York City public schools. Through our evidence-based programs for grades pre-k through 12, we help all members of the school community (students, school staff, and parents) deal better with conflict, create positive learning environments, and take leadership in shaping a more peaceful world. Our approach is engaging and interactive, employing small-group sharing, brainstorming, skills practice, role-playing, and discussion. We tailor our work to address the needs of each school or group, so costs vary.

The 4Rs Program (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution). The 4Rs Program integrates social and emotional learning (SEL) and language arts for grades pre-k to middle school. Morningside Center provides workshops and classroom coaching to prepare teachers to teach weekly 4Rs lessons. The 4Rs uses high-quality children's literature and engaging interactive activities to develop students' skills and understanding in seven areas: building community, feelings, listening, assertiveness, problem-solving, diversity, and making a difference. The 4Rs curriculum is grade-specific: Each grade has its own teaching guide, books, and age-appropriate activities. Teachers receive a 4Rs Learning Kit containing everything they need to implement the program, including the teaching guide and children's books for their grade, 4Rs Family Connections (the parent component), supplementary activity sheets, and puppets or other age-appropriate tools. A recently completed gold-standard scientific study found that students in 4Rs schools developed more positively—socially, emotionally, and academically—than their counterparts in the control schools.

Peer Mediation and Peace Helper Programs. Through our peer mediation programs, selected young people (typically third, fourth, and fifth-graders) learn foundation skills in nonviolent communication, and then master a specific step-by-step mediation process. They apply these skills on a daily basis, mediating disputes among their peers on the playground, in the lunchroom and in class. They often become leaders in their schools. Our peace helper programs prepare children in grades k-2 to be peace helpers in their classrooms, working with their teachers to set up peace corners and then being available to help students who want support in dealing with feelings and/or conflicts. Morningside Center provides consultation, training, and ongoing support for mediators, peace helpers, and faculty advisors. Members of the school faculty need to take part in the training and serve as advisors to the program.

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) Founded by Morningside Center and the NYC Board of Education in 1985, the RCCP is one of the nation's oldest and most effective

school-based conflict resolution programs. Morningside Center provides workshops and classroom coaching to prepare teachers, grades k to 12, to teach weekly RCCP lessons. The curriculum consists of engaging, interactive lessons on peace and conflict, listening, feelings, assertiveness, problem-solving, intercultural understanding, countering bias, and making a difference. A rigorous scientific study showed that students who received weekly instruction from their teachers in the RCCP curriculum developed more positively – socially, emotionally, and academically – than their counterparts who did not experience the curriculum.

Planning for Social & Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL is the process by which students develop their social and emotional competencies. It is also a powerful lever for school improvement. A growing body of scientific evidence suggests that as students develop life skills in handling feelings, dealing with conflict, and making good decisions, they do better academically. Programs like the RCCP and The 4Rs foster SEL. Students also learn what they live: everything that goes on in the school affects SEL, including recess, discipline policies, the curriculum, and the way teachers talk to students. Our SEL coaches, mostly retired principals with extensive SEL training and experience, support principals and their leadership teams in creating a vision of a school infused with SEL, assessing needs and resources, and creating and implementing an action plan for sustained school-wide high-quality social and emotional learning.

Eliminating Bullying & Building Community. Our research-based Pathways to Respect Program takes a whole-school approach to countering bullying and building community. On the school level, we work with a planning team to analyze the problem and develop school-wide initiatives to eliminate bullying. On the classroom level, we provide a curriculum and professional development to support teachers in implementing it. And on the individual level, we provide professional development to support school staff in working with students being targeted for bullying and with students doing the bullying.

Holistic Discipline. Through many years of helping schools implement SEL programs, Morningside Center has developed Holistic Discipline, an approach to discipline and classroom management aligned with SEL. We provide workshops and classroom coaching for teachers to improve climate and productivity in their classrooms. We facilitate collaborative planning to help schools develop and implement effective discipline plans, including agreement on core beliefs and principles to guide adult and student behavior. We provide consultation to help schools develop effective procedures for managing areas that sometimes contribute to student misbehavior (e.g. playground, lunchroom, hallways). Through Holistic Discipline students develop their social and emotional skills and engage in self-reflection that leads to internalizing the values and ways of thinking that lead to caring, responsible behavior.

Peace in the Family. Our Peace in the Family workshops help parents develop their social and emotional skills and strengthen their relationships with their children. Parents come together to discuss common issues they face, and develop skills in communication and problem-solving. A typical workshop series includes four 3-hour workshops on such topics as: active listening, dealing with feelings, assertiveness, building self-esteem, collaborative problem-solving, child development, punishment versus discipline, and advocating effectively for your child. We also implement intensive leadership development programs for parents, providing training to prepare parents to facilitate Peace in the Family workshops for other parents.