



## Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

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# Middle 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.

**4Rs for Middle School (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. 4Rs for Middle School begins by creating a vision of a classroom and school community based on respect. Then, using high-quality literature and engaging interactive activities, the curriculum develops students' motivation and skills for creating that community by strengthening their social and emotional skills (understanding and handling feelings, becoming better listener, being assertive, solving problems nonviolently, dealing well with diversity) and by addressing behavior that undermines community (teasing, bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination). Teachers receive a 4Rs Learning Kit containing everything they need to implement the program, including the teaching guide and the student literature that is a springboard for each unit. 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.

**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.

**Peer Mediation and Peer Leadership.** Peer mediation programs can help transform the school atmosphere—and students' lives. Through our peer mediation programs, selected young people 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 in the playground, lunchroom and class. They often become leaders in their schools. Morningside Center also supports schools in developing other student leadership activities, such preparing students to conduct diversity workshops and organize community service projects. We provide consultation, training and ongoing support for student mediators and faculty advisors. Members of the school faculty need to take part in the training and serve as advisors to the program.

**Advisories.** Advisories can strengthen the bonds among students and between students and adults. They can help young people feel more connected to school and develop students' social and emotional competencies. But effective advisories require careful planning and implementation. Morningside Center's services include: facilitating a collaborative planning process aimed at creating a viable program that is tailored to the school's needs and that enjoys broad support from the school community; providing professional development for advisory teachers; and working with the school to create a customized curriculum for advisories.

**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 SEL 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 to strengthen their relationships with their young adolescents. Parents come together to discuss the common issues that 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.

**Teachable Moments.** Morningside Center has pioneered inquiry-oriented approaches for exploring controversial issues and current events. Hundreds of thousands of teachers turn to our website [www.TeachableMoment.org](http://www.TeachableMoment.org) for materials to help their students learn about important issues, consider opposing points of view, and develop critical thinking skills. To introduce social studies teachers to Morningside Center's approach to promoting inquiry and critical thinking, Morningside Center also offers training and classroom coaching.