



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

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Elementary School Offerings

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility (formerly Educators for Social Responsibility Metropolitan Area or ESR Metro) has a 22-year track record of successful work in the New York City public schools. Through our research-based programs for grades PreK 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.

Resolving Conflict Creatively. Founded by Morningside Center (then ESR Metro) and the NYC Board of Education in 1985, the RCCP is recognized as one of the nation's most effective school-based conflict resolution programs. The core component of the program is professional development to support teachers in providing regular instruction to students. The curriculum consists of engaging lessons on listening, handling anger, assertiveness, collaborative problem-solving (including negotiation and mediation), intercultural understanding, countering bias, and making a difference. The curriculum can be seamlessly infused into other curriculum areas. Participants receive training, classroom coaching, and Resolving Conflict Creatively, a 51-lesson teaching guide.

Peer Mediation Programs. Peer mediation programs can help transform the school atmosphere—and children's lives. Through our mediation programs, selected young people (typically about 25 fourth- and fifth-graders in a school) learn foundation skills in nonviolent communication, 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 provides consultation, training, and ongoing support for mediators and faculty advisors. Members of the school faculty need to take part in the training and serve as advisors to the program.

The 4Rs Program (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution). The 4Rs integrates conflict resolution into the language arts curriculum for grades pre-K to 5. Designed to fit into the NYC public schools' balanced literacy framework, The 4Rs uses high-quality children's literature to build students' literacy skills while developing their social and emotional competencies. Each unit includes a read-aloud, book talk, and applied learning (conflict resolution skills lessons). With its emphasis on creating a caring classroom community,

The 4Rs also helps teachers establish a good climate for learning. Teachers receive a 4Rs Learning Kit containing everything they need to implement the program, including teaching guide and children's books, 4Rs Family Connections (the parent component), supplementary activity sheets, and puppets or other age-appropriate tools. We provide introductory training for teachers, then coach them as they implement 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 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 Safety Program takes a whole-school approach to countering bullying and building community. On the school level, we work with a planning team to survey the problem and develop school-wide initiatives to eliminate bullying. On the classroom level, we provide a ten-lesson curriculum and professional development to support teachers in implementing it. And on the individual level, we provide professional development for guidance counselors to support them in providing effective counseling for students who are targeted by bullies and their parents as well as for bullies and their parents.

Classroom Management. We provide training and coaching to help teachers create a positive classroom environment. Our approach is based on four principles: Know yourself and your students; be proactive; deal well with conflict; and always treat students with respect. During our training sessions, teachers learn to create effective classroom procedures, set enforceable limits, and establish positive connections with students. They practice skills in deescalating conflict, and they brainstorm and discuss creative approaches to challenging situations they encounter with their students. We observe teachers in the classroom and meet with them afterwards to debrief and discuss effective approaches for handling student behavior.

Peace in the Family. Our Peace in the Family workshops help parents strengthen their relationships with their children. They bring parents together to discuss the 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.