**Conscious Discipline**

**What is it?**

**The behavior management program in our classroom is grounded in the philosophies and principles outlined in Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey.**

**Conscious Discipline is an emotional intelligence program that teaches children to react or respond, rather than react during life events. Everyday life events are used as teachable moments and guide children to develop self-control, utilize tools for conflict resolution, boost self-esteem, foster positive relationships and social skills. It is also based on current brain research, child development information and best educational practices.**

**Why do it?**

**Based on my experience as a mother and an educator, I have witnessed how a child's emotional state affects his or her learning. Current brain research also suggests that the brain functions optimally when it feels safe. I know that I play a key role in creating a physically and emotionally safe environment for my students in my classroom. In addition, I believe in the saying, "Children don't care how much you know, till they know how much you care" and that building positive relationships can promote changes in behavior.**

  **Conscious Discipline is a classroom management program that practically links social-emotional learning and classroom management through guiding principles that are congruent with my personal beliefs. It is developed upon a community model of discipline rather than competitive as indicated in the table below:**

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| **Models of Discipline**  **Competitive Model        Community Model**  |
| **It is possible to control others through environmental manipulation**  | **Controlling and changing ourselves is possible and has a profound impact on others**  |
| **Rules govern behavior and are upheld through consequences**  | **Connectedness governs behavior**  |
| **Conflict is disruption to the learning process**  | **Conflict is an opportunity to teach**  |
| **BELIEF: We can make others change**  | **BELIEF: We must first change ourselves and model our expectations for others**  |

**How does it work?**

**Conscious Discipline promotes a positive relationship-based community in the classroom. As we develop our "school family", students will learn about safety (physical and emotional safety), trust and problem solving. In our classroom students will learn through:**

  ** The 7 Basic Skills of Discipline (listed below)**

** Cultivating higher-order thinking skills through "Brain Smart" activities**

** Class Meetings**

** Creating a "School Family"**

**The 7 Basic Skills of Conscious Discipline:**

**The program focuses on the following basic skills of discipline which apply to myself, as well as, my students:**

* **Composure- willingness to change your internal state from upset to calm and bring you mind to where your body is.**
* **Encouragement- develop a school family and understand that "we are all in this together."**
* **Assertiveness- learn how to say "no" and having thoughts heard and respected.**
* **Choices - understand that the only person you can "make change is yourself and, in turn, build self-esteem and willpower.**
* **Positive Intent- begin to look for the best in others turning conflict into cooperation.**
* **Empathy- gain an understanding of the moment and validating the emotions of self and others**
* **Consequences- learn that everyone makes mistakes and that they are viewed as opportunities to learn.**

**Classroom Structures Which Support Conscious Discipline**

**When you visit our classroom, you will notice several classroom structures that foster the development of the 7 basic skills of Conscious Discipline. These are introduced to the students through class meetings and/or as the need arises through our daily interactions in class.**

* **Safe Place** - **A place where students can remove themselves from the group in order to become calm, regain composure and maintain control when upset, angry or frustrated. Students are taught the following relaxation techniques using these picture clues:**

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| SchoolCenter Picture |

**Be a S.T.A.R.- Smile, Take deep breath, And Relax**

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| SchoolCenter Picture |

**Ballooning- Place hands over your head and inhale as if blowing up a balloon and at the same time raising the hands. Then slowly exhale and bring arms down.**

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| **SchoolCenter Picture** |

**Draining - Extend both arms in front of your body parallel to the floor. Clench fists tightly and continue to tighten shoulder and body muscles. Then open the drain (make shhhhh sound) and relax body as if releasing water out of a faucet.**

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| SchoolCenter Picture |

**Pretzel - Stand with feet crossed, extend arms out in front and cross the left wrist over the right wrist. Interlace the fingers and bring hands up toward the chest. Close eyes and press the tongue to the roof of the mouth. Hold this position for a few seconds and slowly release.**

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| SchoolCenter Picture |

**Stretching - Release tension and breathe deeply.**

* **Meaningful Jobs** - **Every student is given a job for the day. This provides opportunities for all to be contributors to the School Family.**
* Ti **me Machine** - **A place where students willingly "go back in time" and redo harmful interactions with others.**
* **Celebration Station -** **A place where students celebrate important events, achievements, accomplishments, etc. This may include rituals such as reciting poems, singing songs, special applause, etc.**
* **We Care Center - A place where students can express empathy or encouragement for others. Materials are provided for learning songs, creating cards, letters, etc.**
* **Fr iends and Family Board - Pictures of friends and family are displayed to promote our School Family.**
* **Class Meetings - This daily routine provides a means for students to problem  solve, develop connections, celebrate, reinforce guiding principles and begin the day with Brain Smart activities.**

  **Our Promise**

**Instead of a dictating a list of rules from myself, the students will brainstorm a list of positive behaviors to which the class commits. From this work, we will generate a "Classroom Promise” that is posted and referred to daily. Conscious Discipline is not an extrinsic reward and punishment system. Instead, when a student fails to follow our classroom promise, a logical consequence is tied to the behavior. Together we will discuss the conflict or issue and problem solve together. Positive choices will be offered if necessary. This work helps students reflect and understand the connection between behavior and the result of their behavior. These mistakes are viewed as teachable moments and consequences are given with empathy and the intent to promote responsibility.**

**[www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)**