

# The Conscious Kids' Curriculum

Helping Children Learn To Live in Harmony with Themselves & Each Other



Created by  
Karen Thompson, Linda Marinovich, Bob Neufeld, Marlene Neufeld & Philip Johncock

## **Dedication**

*Our activity book is dedicated to our beloved children:  
Natalie, Jasper, Marcella, Eric and Jesse.*

*Thank you for inspiring us and giving us many blessed  
opportunities to practice these teachings.*

*May your lives be richly enhanced as a result of this work.*

# **The Conscious Kids' Curriculum**

**An Activity Book for  
Helping Children Learn to Live In Harmony  
with Themselves and Each Other**

**Created By**

**Karen Thompson, Linda Marinovich,  
Bob Neufeld, Marlene Neufeld and Phil Johncock**

***Based on the work of Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks  
[www.hendricks.com](http://www.hendricks.com)***

**With Illustrations By Bob Neufeld**

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## Acknowledgments

The five of us were trainees at The Hendricks Institute in the early part of the 21st century. During that time we worked intimately with each other and created lots of fun while we learned new whole-body tools and shifted patterns in our lives we had previously thought were permanent. Upon our graduation we came together with a desire to contribute something of value, which was a direct result of the transformative apprenticeship, we had shared. So, the five of us, from different parts of the United States and Canada, created The Conscious Kids' Curriculum to give something of value back to our individual communities and the world at large. Applying the Hendricks' work to our own lives with our children and those other children and teens with whom we had the privilege to work was a natural extension of our experience and seemed to fill a need which had not yet been met within the field of consciousness work. Thus, The Conscious Kids' Curriculum was conceived of our gratitude, appreciation and commitment to whole-body learning and our daily practices of conscious living and loving in our own lives.

We give our deep and soul-satisfying gratitude to Kathlyn and Gay Hendricks for sharing their profound teachings generously so that we might in turn share them with you. Kathlyn's divine spirit of play and appreciation of whole-body wisdom and creative movement have been life-changing in each of our growth processes and are the cornerstones of the activities we have created for the teachers, children and teens who utilize this book. Gay's teachings about the value of breath, loving oneself and spaciousness are woven throughout the activity book and are also embedded firmly in each of our hearts. We acknowledge and thank them both for being such fun and playful teachers as well as deep, soulful friends and co-creators of the wave of conscious living and loving which is currently sweeping the planet.

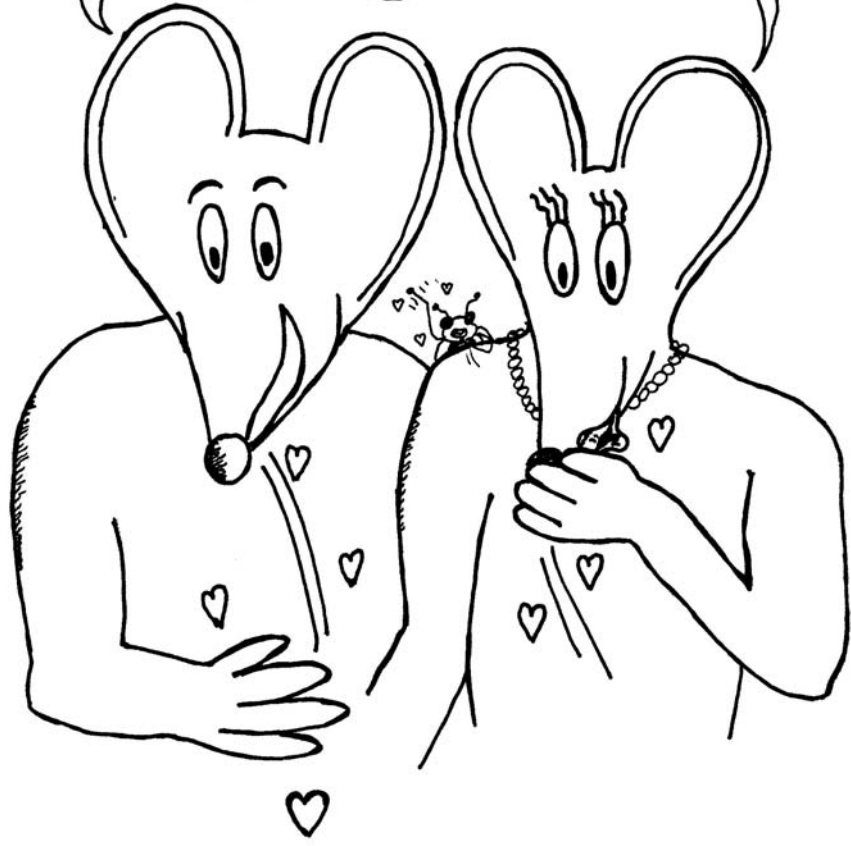
In addition, we wish to thank all of the many other trainees with whom we had the great pleasure of learning and growing with while we were in the apprentice-training program. Some of those folks also contributed "vignettes" for our book and for that we are also grateful. The vignettes are intended to show how the practice of conscious living and loving is currently working in families, with other teachers and coaches and with children and teens all over the world. Among them are Audrey Hazekamp, Daniela Koenig, Helen Daniels, Kemery Bloom, Linda Wellenbach, and Rebecca Burgman.

Finally, we appreciate and express our gratitude to Heather Dana Monroe who did the initial editing, Leah MacDonald who did further editing and formatting and to each other for our commitment to opening to our creativity and genius areas so that our project could come to life. We appreciate all the learning that came forth for each of us and for our group, which enriched our lives and further reinforced many of the principles that are taught in this very book. Throughout the process, we stayed open to learning as we created and we believe we are all more conscious, whole human beings, as a result.





Blowing kisses to all of you.



## Section One: Introduction

Our vision is this: by teaching our youth the value of the consistent practice of conscious living and loving, we will create a more peaceful world in which human beings live in their full creativity and in harmony within themselves and with each other. ***The Conscious Kids' Curriculum*** is an activity book with forty-five conscious living and loving activities designed for use with groups of children of all ages in the classroom, in after-school programs, at summer camps, in therapy/counseling/coaching, and/or at home. In our activity book, we share many fun and stimulating ways for kids to begin to practice and eventually master living and loving consciously. By teaching these practices to children and teenagers, adults too will learn to apply the tools in their own lives.

The youth and adults who practice our tools will benefit in the following ways.

- They will learn more easily and efficiently in school
- They will problem-solve more creatively
- They will live in harmony within themselves and with others
- They will feel good about themselves on a regular basis
- They will act as responsible members of society

The activity book is an easy-to-follow guide for anyone who works with children, adolescents, and adults. The word ***teacher*** is used throughout the text to refer to facilitators, caregivers, group leaders, therapists, coaches and parents. The activities were created for use by schools, childcare facilities, and families, in individual and group settings. The word ***student*** is used throughout the text to refer to “kids” of all ages. While the activities each have a suggested age group, for which they are appropriate, all of them can be adapted for all ages. Each activity has a suggested duration although teachers can shorten or expand the activities to meet their classroom needs.

Each activity is organized by first briefly outlining the ***concept***, then specific activities are detailed that will allow students to ***experience*** the concept, and then the ***concept*** is summarized. This con-ex-con format has been found to be an excellent learning model for students of all ages. Many activities have a “Taking It Further” section, which is optional but allows the students to expand their learning. Worksheets known as “Handouts” are also provided in Appendix 2, which teachers may copy and re-use again and again.

By employing these playful and fun learning activities, students of all ages will develop greater self-awareness fostering greater harmony within themselves. This inner harmony then ripples out into the world, creating goodwill with others and ultimately – peace. A vibrant living, breathing tapestry of opportunity is thus spread for those who are open to learning our user-friendly, practical tools to build a conscious life.

## **The Main Idea**

The main idea of this book is that our bodies know everything. Becoming aware of what we call “whole-body wisdom” helps people feel better and improves lives. The benefits of “whole-body wisdom” are interpersonal (how people relate to others), intrapersonal (how individuals relate to themselves), and social (how groups relate to each other). In addition, our emphasis on the importance of creativity throughout the book assists in teaching students how to solve problems in new and different ways. Children are naturals at being creative and in knowing what is true. A bit of guidance from the adults in their lives in the direction of expanded consciousness is all that is needed to create marvelous and lasting results.

Our activity book is comprised of hands-on learning activities designed for children and teens to experience and discover the value of “whole-body learning”. Our activities are simple, easy to teach, and lots of fun for everyone involved. By having fun while learning, the material is easily assimilated and utilized, and applied rapidly and effectively. This learning will also organically transfer to other areas of the lives of those who experience it.

We have included the following seven sections, with their respective activities and handouts:

- Preparation and Safety
- Increasing Aliveness
- Emotional Literacy
- Communication
- Knowing Oneself
- Love and Respect for Self and Others
- Flow of Creativity

## **Special Features**

The activity book has many special features:

- It is formatted in a friendly way for easy use in the classrooms and with other groups.
- Everything needed (other than the materials) to do the activities is included in the book and teachers can actually read verbatim from the book to engage students easily.

- It includes a list of the specific materials needed for each activity so teachers can prepare ahead of time.
- It is equipped with specific age-ranges appropriate for the activity and how to adapt the activity to satisfy other age-ranges.
- It is complete with an appendix that consists of special worksheets that may be copied and used for additional activities in the classroom to enhance on-going learning.
- It is organized in such a way that teachers may choose what learning objective they wish to teach and then locate an activity designed to fulfill that objective.
- It was co-authored by teachers who know first-hand what other teachers want and need.
- Included in it are the real-life experiences of people who have used these and similar practices with children and teens to give an accounting of the practical value of the activities and how similar activities have worked in their lives.

## Definitions

We have identified the following key words which we use throughout the book and choose to clarify their meaning up front as follows to make the utilization of the book easy for teachers:

**Conscious** – capable of responding creatively with self-awareness

**Body-centered** – using body experiences, sensations, and movement to promote learning; based on the understanding that the whole person cannot be artificially separated into parts, such as into body and mind

**Curriculum** – clear, step-by-step activities that includes learning resources to teach conscious living skills, as demonstrated by observable measurements.

## Relevance

Our world is becoming a more and more conscious place. Everyday, people across the globe are waking up. Oprah Winfrey recently collaborated with Eckhardt Tolle to offer a widely attended global teleconference about Tolle's teachings from his book, *The New Earth*. Millions of people are now familiar with the principles and practices of the law of attraction now that the movie, *The Secret*, has become so popular. In addition, humanity has recently undergone a huge cultural paradigm-shift with the election of Barack Obama as the first African-American President of the United States. Because of these unprecedented, expanded events, the time is ripe for conscious living

and loving to be shared widely with children and teenagers in organizations throughout the world.

Our contribution, *The Conscious Kids' Curriculum*, is available for widespread use by schools, churches, after-school programs, and summer camps to teach our effective and friendly concepts, principles and practices to children and teens who might not be taught these life-tools by their parents. Or, some parents may be beginning to learn them from television and movies and would like to learn even more. Not everyone can afford to go away to an expensive and time-consuming spiritual retreat. Our book brings the spiritual retreat to the school and family via teaching the children how to practice conscious living and loving on a daily basis.

Additionally, it is one thing to read a book or attend an isolated teleconference or workshop. It is far more potent to actually embody the principles and practices of awakening in the form of activities experienced in a whole-body manner on a regular basis. Rather than simply reading about conscious living and loving, our guidebook helps kids of all ages and their teachers to learn by doing these amazing and life-changing practices. This is particularly relevant in schools and after-care programs where teachers welcome new, cutting-edge, socially relevant materials, which are of value to the psycho-emotional-spiritual well being of students. In addition, these practices actually bring about positive change and will ameliorate the often-stressful situations that many teachers and youth face within the very organizations in which they will be taught.

## **Benefits**

The benefits of *The Conscious Kids' Curriculum* are threefold:

First, children will learn friendly, elegant tools that will assist them in being more responsible, creative, nonviolent members of our culture.

Second, the children's learning will inspire learning in the adults in their lives. The tools will then help families to function in a more harmonious way. Imagine decades from now, adults will no longer use the term "dysfunctional" when describing their previous family of origin life as is commonplace now!

Third, by teaching teachers to share these tools with students, they will automatically heal the systems in which these tools are taught. Adults teachers will be called to "walk the walk" and teaching the students will inspire them to do so. School systems will function in a more harmoniously as will the other organizations which adopt and teach our progressive activities and principles.

In summary, our aim is to teach children and in so doing to ultimately heal the planet. As the saying goes, "A drop is the same as the ocean." By starting with our youth, the ripple of consciousness will extend to all.

## **OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR BEST TEACHERS**

My 10 year-old daughter and I were in the car and I was ranting and raving about something I was not happy about. My daughter softly said, "Mom that sounds like that victim thing you talk about." We both laughed and I thanked her for coaching me.

**Karen Thompson, Ph.D., Conscious Living Coach at [www.ktphd.com](http://www.ktphd.com)**

## **Section Two: A Note to Teachers from Teachers on Classroom Management and Whole-Body Learning**

You are about to embark on an active learning journey with children, which may or may not be new to you. These activities are designed to stimulate a lot of conversation, and even some emotions. The activities are designed to assist students to be in their bodies and be active. If it is new to engage children in this way, you can expect to feel somewhat apprehensive. You may be asking some of the following questions,

“How do I keep control in an active learning situation?”

“If my students get excited, how will I ever calm them down again?”

“If children show strong emotions, how am I going to handle that?”

“My students have enough difficulty accepting limits and with impulse control. This will only make it worse.”

These concerns are normal and valid, especially if you are used to a quiet classroom that is focused on paper and pencil tasks.

We have experience in a wide variety of classroom settings from head start nursery school and day care programs to primary school settings from kindergarten to the eighth grade. We have found that when we tried to make children into something they are not (i.e. always sit still) we created more problems than if we encouraged them to be what they are (i.e. active, inquisitive, whole-body learners).

The key is to create a container within which children can be active, exploring, playful, and curious. If their emotional needs are addressed, they will have more energy available for learning. In 1993, Rena Kornblum began a program in Lapham Elementary School in Madison, Wisconsin, which was designed to give a class that was having anger management issues healthier ways to express their anger. Some of the activities in this book were inspired by her work<sup>1</sup> while others were inspired by our own experiences in classrooms.

Bob has classroom-tested many of the activities in this book. One teacher told him that after using this program, she observed some of her first grade children using some of the presented strategies on their own to solve a classroom problem. Several parents commented that they and their children were using the material successfully at home.

Another teacher said:

“Thanks for the great program you offered on helping children deal with feelings. It was very appropriate for grade one and your excellent and amazing manner with the children was inspiring. We still use the 4 B's for self-settling. Some of my students even spontaneously remind others to use this strategy. A parent of mine was delighted with

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<sup>1</sup> Kornblum, Rena



her daughter's performance in primary choir and drama. Her daughter told her she was able to calm down and do her best because of the 4 B's which she practiced before the show." Danielle Fontaine, Grade One at Lady Evelyn School

If you as a teacher are having difficulty with any of the concepts in this book, you might want to explore with a trusted colleague or mentor whether this is an issue that is your personal learning edge. You cannot teach something you haven't learned yourself or are not ready to learn yourself. One parent said about the program "It gave me simple ways to deal with my emotions so in turn, I can better deal with my child's feelings."

As a reminder, here are some standard tips for centering children:

- When beginning a new set of routines practice carefully how the routine works many times so all understand that this is how the interactive activities work. Cooperation increases with children if you have activities build on each other in terms of routine; i.e. we have done many activities like this before so I know what to expect in terms of beginning, middle, ending and discussion time routines.
- Activities with a lot of movement and interaction need to be interspersed with activities that are quieter.
- Use a format like "con-ex-con" in which the **concept** is presented, students have an **experience**, and then they debrief or the **concept** is summarized. This format allows students to integrate their experience into their learning.
- Children desire clarity and respond well to clear consistent communication. For more complex activities, model with some students in front of the whole group so all are clear what the activity involves.
- Develop a clear signal for beginning and ending all activities; for example:
  - Begin when the teacher says 'go!'
  - End decisively and clearly with a single word like "sit!" (all stop and sit down)
  - Another good stop signal is the teacher raising a hand and calling 'stop!' or "listening!"
- It helps to be physically close to students whose attention you are trying to get.
- Use eye contact that indicates confidence and firmness (but with no malice).
- It's useful when you have the whole group's attention to:
  - Keep surveying the group as you speak making sporadic eye contact;
  - Modulate your voice – speak softly and clearly (practice getting softer so they really need to listen closely);
  - Speak for short periods of time only and then have children respond to questions;

- Use hand motions as commands as well as your voice.
- Promote a sense of lightness, enjoyment and that the activity is a “game”.

To see one example of a teacher who creates space for expression and emotions in a classroom, see the Japanese teacher Toshiro Kanamori. His story has been produced as a documentary called “Children Full of Life” and can be viewed as a five-part series on YouTube.

These activities will not work unless you have “bought into” them and see them as valuable. Keep in mind that things work when you have a commitment to them and you believe in them. We invite the adults planning to use these activities to first get comfortable with the activities for themselves. Try them out with yourself or your family, friends, and colleagues. Once you have used them and feel comfortable with them, feel free to adapt them to fit your needs in the classroom.

**From Marlene Neufeld, Certified Early Childhood Educator and Bob Neufeld, M.Ed.**