



ConsciousDiscipline®

**Conscious Discipline® is a comprehensive emotional intelligence and classroom management program consisting of Brain Smart® strategies for responding rather than reacting to life events.** Through responding, conflict moments are transformed into cooperative learning opportunities. We believe that our internal state dictates our behavior and if we feel upset, irritated or disappointed we are more likely to express hurtful behaviors. Furthermore, if we feel calm, loved and connected, we are more likely to express helpful behaviors. When we feel content and competent, we are able to treat others with a sense of generosity and well-being.

**The Conscious Discipline® Brain Smart Start™ is based on scientific research about optimal brain function and mind-body states.** The Brain Smart Start supports all of us as we change internal states from conflict /chaos to peaceful /focused. Try to begin each day with a Brain Smart Start to improve your mindset and emotional well-being, as well as those of your staff. Additionally, encourage your staff to begin their school day by engaging children in a Brain Smart Start, as well.

Note: Some of the activities (also known as Brain Breaks and/or Brain State Changes) can be done throughout the day to help staff and students with transitions, after outside play, lunch or ongoing activities.

**Our hope is that a Brain Smart Start will help all members of the Conscious Discipline® School Family™:**

- Understand school expectations and goals;
- Cultivate a sense of unity so we can all get to know each other;
- Practice taking care of each other so we can all feel both safe and connected;
- Share different experiences and ideas as we learn from each other; and
- Enjoy learning and feel a sense of safety.

**The Conscious Discipline Brain Smart Start is made up of four components.** Each component each has a specific purpose and provides both staff and children with the opportunity to practice the skills of greeting, listening, group problem solving, noticing and anticipating.

1. **Activity to Unite** - Involves everyone doing something that brings everyone together and puts everybody on the same page. Also builds relationships, safety, and endorphins.
2. **Activity to Disengage the Stress Response** - Involves deep breathing and stretching. Prepares the brain for cortical learning and turns off stress responses.
3. **Activity to Connect Everyone to Each Other**- Involves eye contact, touch, presence and playfulness. Helps build relationships, AND maintains focused attention/motivation to learn.
4. **Activity to Commit Oneself to Learning** - Involves affirmations and positive thinking. Produces serotonin, teaches responsibility, and promotes mindful attention as it supports maturation of the prefrontal lobe.

A Brain Smart Start also offers opportunities to practice social skills. It also provides many chances to model acceptable behavior, reinforce, redirect, or remind. The investment returned on time spent with a Brain Smart Start is repaid many times over. This teaches a sense of belonging, as well as develops skills of listening, attention, expression and empathy. A Brain Smart Start sets the tone for the day ... It is not an add on nor something extra to *make* time for, but rather an integral part of the day's planning and curriculum.

## Brain Smart Start™ Staff Experiences

- Encourage teachers to start each staff meeting by sharing their Brain Smart Start with other staff members.
- Design a chant to start all staff meetings followed by other Brain Smart activities (see below for some ideas).

## Design Your Own School Staff Brain Smart Start

### Activity to Unite

- Collectively recite school mission.
- Collectively recite "intention" for the month/week.
- Sing the school song.
- Use a music CD that goes with the program to expose staff and faculty to a variety of music.
- Create a School Family faculty song to a popular tune.
- Safekeeper ritual: *I am willing to keep the meeting safe.*

### Activity to Disengage Stress

- Be a S.T.A.R., Balloon, Drain, or Pretzel and/or introduce other creative ways to breathe or stretch; consciously breathing deeply..



***“I am safe. Keep breathing. I can handle this ...”***

- Ask faculty to bring "*their mind to where their body is.*"

### Activity to Connect

- Draw for monthly partners.
- Turn to partner and share a short success story. (Something they are grateful for, a kindness they witnessed or experienced.)
- Introduce an I Love You Ritual.

### Activity to Commit

- Have each set of staff ( teachers of the 1s; 2s; 3s; 4s; 5s; K staff; 1<sup>st</sup> grade staff; administrators; bus drivers; kitchen staff, etc.) create commitments for the year, month or week.
- Have a predetermined list of commitments from the group and have everyone select a focus.
- Have the commitments come out of the content 'of the meeting, making sure adults commit verbally, in writing or symbolically with an object.

**NOTE: Visit [www.ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://www.ConsciousDiscipline.com) for more information on these various concepts.**

