



# Conscious Discipline®

Conscious Discipline is an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach to interacting with students focused on developing their self-regulation skills. It emphasizes the power of the teacher to be the change they wish to see by meeting students' upset with a calm, strategic response to move students toward safety, connection and problem-solving.

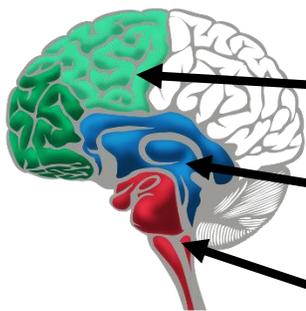
### Premises of Conscious Discipline:

1. Controlling and changing ourselves is possible and has a profound impact on others.
2. Connectedness governs behavior.
3. Conflict is an opportunity to teach.

## Why Conscious Discipline?

Conscious Discipline recognizes what many of us have long known: extrinsic motivators and punishments are shallow in their effectiveness, and can even be counterproductive. Instead, CD is based on two closely linked ideas, "First, a healthy family is the ultimate cultural model for optimal development and learning; second, intrinsic motivation is the only means for achieving of life-long learning and healthy values." Environments of fear and punishment shut down the learning centers of the brain, leaving us at the mercy of our impulses and insecurities. We are working toward an environment that requires children to be conscious of their internal states, change them, reflect on their behavior and come up with skills to replace the original behavior. CD provides tools and strategies to accelerate the shift from reward and punishment to safety, connection and problem-solving. (Bailey, 60-62)

## The Brain State Model



Where the brain is firing

Brain State	Behaviors	Tools to Help Regulate
Executive State: <i>What can I learn?</i>	Willingness, reflection, empathy, problem-solving, achievement	<u>SPACE</u> : Solutions (class meetings), Positive Intent, Academic Integration, Consequences, Executive Skills
Emotional State: <i>Am I loved?</i>	Verbal resistance, attention-seeking, clinginess, name calling, social exclusion	<u>REJECT</u> : Rituals, Encouragement, Jobs, Empathy, Choices, The School Family
Survival State: <i>Am I safe?</i>	Physical aggression; fight/flight/freeze	<u>NARCS</u> : Noticing, Assertiveness, Routines, Composure, Safe Place/Keeper

## Establishing the School Family

Central to Conscious Discipline is the establishment of the School Family, beginning in the first days of school.

- Job Assignments
- Greeting/Goodbye Rituals
- Safekeeper Rituals
- School Family Agreement
- Connecting Rituals
- Kindness Rituals
- Absent Child Rituals
- Welcoming / Leaving Rituals
- Wish Well Ritual
- Testing Rituals
- End-of-Year Rituals

### Jumpstarting Your School Family Week One

**Brain Smart Start:** A scientifically based routine to maintain optimal learning states during daily transitions consisting of 4 activities to: unite, disengage stress, connect, and commit to learning (106-109)

**Wish Well & Greetings:** Sharing a positive field of energy. Focusing your attention on your heart and imagining it opening and sending all the love in the universe through you to those in need. (102)

**Be a S.T.A.R.:** A calming technique to **S**mile, **T**ake a deep breath **A**nd **R**elax to take three deep belly breaths (101).

**Safekeeper Ritual:** Students place a representative figure in the safekeeper box while making a commitment to help keep the classroom a safe place to learn. (112)

**Establish the Safe Space:** Space for a child to choose to go when upset where children have been taught to practice self-regulation. (113-114)

**Brain Smart Start:** A routine for use at the beginning of the day (and abbreviated use following transitions), that consists of four activities that support our deepest values and are designed to create a biochemistry that balances and integrates brain function, mind and body. More on website book portal (Ch 4).

Activity Purpose	Goal	Examples
<b>Unite</b>	Bring scattered minds and bodies into a more congruent whole by singing the same song, reciting the same chant or moving in unison	Our School Family "3rd Grade Agreements" rap An original chant co-written with your class
<b>Disengage Stress</b>	Reduce or eliminate the biochemicals stress releases, which inhibit the brain's learning centers. Practicing these skills when students are calm make them more likely to be able to access them when upset.	S.T.A.R., Drain, Pretzel, Balloon (pg 105-106)  Stretching, Yoga, creative belly breathing techniques
<b>Connect</b>	Through face-to-face activity involving eye contact, touch, presence and playfulness, build a sense of connection with each other and school to increase cooperation	By students' choice: Foot tap, hip bump, high five, hug, hammer, cell phone greeting, skunk greeting, etc.
<b>Commit</b>	Focuses the brain on a specific goal, activating prefrontal lobes so the brain is ready for learning. Making and following through on commitments build self-worth activates brains reward centers and helps us focus attention.	Class chant listing positive behaviors (kind words, listening) Individual (journaling) Group commitment, "Today I will be helpful at least one time."

### Safe Place Examples

