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Miss Kendra Programs Add Social Justice Emphasis to Miss Kendra's List

Miss Kendra launches new school curriculum for children K-12 to address issues around social justice and promote equality

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (June 24, 2020)—Miss Kendra Programs have added a social justice component to their well-known “Miss Kendra’s List,” a central component to the K-12 classroom program used across the country. Miss Kendra Programs, which have gained national attention for their unique public health approach to childhood trauma, has developed the additional list item and accompanying curriculum in consultation with several experts in the field and a group of school principals.

With the recent demands for social justice throughout the United States, the new list addition states: “No child should be harmed because of their race, religion, or gender,” encouraging conversations about acts of oppression and prejudices. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) including trauma, abuse and neglect, directly and negatively impact personal identity. In addition, historical, institutional, economic and cultural sources of oppression and the misuse of power are critical factors behind ACEs that occur in families, neighborhoods and schools.

This list addition and the corresponding curriculum have been in development since 2019, as Miss Kendra Programs continue efforts to address the impacts of trauma and toxic stress in the schools amidst an ever-changing social climate.

“By adding this component to our Miss Kendra Programs, we intend to expand students’ opportunities to explore and learn about these important issues,” said David Read Johnson, Ph.D., co-founder of Miss Kendra Programs. “Miss Kendra Programs are not intended to be a course on social justice in which the children are “taught” concepts. The lessons in the curriculum are methods for eliciting the worries and concerns of students, and then to be listened to by a caring adult.”

The Miss Kendra curriculum is designed to be applicable to all school settings and cultural environments. However, the counselors and teachers are encouraged to dig deeper into these issues according to their comfort level and the norms of the school or community. Counselors and teachers must use their judgment in negotiating the depth to which this material will be explored.

Miss Kendra Programs include classroom- and school-wide models that use a public health approach to address childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences. With programs in schools in Connecticut, North Carolina, Florida, Indiana, South Carolina, Michigan, New Hampshire, Washington and Minnesota, Miss Kendra Programs have joined the national movement for bringing trauma-informed strategies to every student and every classroom. For more information on the Programs, visit misskendraprograms.org.

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