



Our Vision

We envision a world where all young people learn and practice the concrete skills of peacemaking—conflict resolution, communication, cooperation, civic engagement, empathy—every day, just like reading, math and science. In teaching these critical social emotional learning skills and providing opportunities for young people to practice these skills, we nurture and unleash the inherent calling of young people to be natural and highly effective problem solvers. We call this work peacemaking. Peacemaking is the process of engaging with others to make positive and lasting change. The Peace First curriculum is part of a larger set of programs, all designed to teach, model, and value peacemaking skills of children and youth. Other programs include the [Peace First Prize](#) and the [Peace First Fellowship](#).

Why Peacemaking? Why Peace First?

Mastering peacemaking is the key skill of our time. In an increasingly connected world, our ability to form healthy and productive relationships across lines of difference, to care for one another, and to work cooperatively to improve the lives of others has no parallel. Peacemaking starts with learning the essential social and emotional skills of personal awareness, relationship building, and addressing exclusion and bullying, and goes beyond these to engage young people in seeing themselves as agents of social change.

About the Curriculum Design

The Peace First curriculum is designed to build the knowledge, skills, relationships, and experiences that students need to become effective peacemakers at each developmental level, from Pre-K through 8th grade.

- **The Peacemaker Skills lessons** are the first ten curriculum lessons for each grade level. They focus on developing knowledge and awareness that build the peacemaking skills of communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, empathy, and civic engagement using a cooperative learning approach. Grade level themes include Taking a Stand, Friendship and Peer Groups, Communication and Cooperation. See page 3 for a detailed list of grade level themes.
- **The Peacemaker Project lessons** are the eight lessons comprising the second half of each grade level's curriculum. Students identify a community problem they wish to address and design a creative solution in the form of a Community Service Learning (CSL) project, or Peacemaker Project. Ranging from the very local (addressing school bullying) to the global (helping refugees), Peacemaker Projects enable students to collaborate and put their newly acquired peacemaking skills into action to effect change at an age-appropriate level.

Peace First Curriculum: Research Based, Practitioner Informed

The Peace First Curriculum was originally developed in 1992 in partnership with the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The curriculum is informed by the developmental education research of Dr. Robert Selman and grounded in the child development principles of Piaget and Kohlberg. Now in its 4th revision, the Peace First curriculum includes the experience and perspective of teachers and students at every stage of design, making it uniquely accessible, relevant, and easy to use. With 20 years of experience in schools, the Peace First curriculum has proven results.

- **Peace First students demonstrate increased knowledge and skills of peacemaking.** 90% of teachers observe positive changes in students' conflict resolution skills and 81% of students report that they can walk away from a fight without feeling like a coward.
- **Teachers are highly satisfied with Peace First, citing that the curriculum is easy to use, relevant, and helps build positive classroom climate.** Over 80% of teachers using the Peace First curriculum integrate Peace First concepts, vocabulary and rituals into their regular work with students.
- **The overwhelming majority of visitors to the Digital Activity Center are pleased with the content and structure of the curriculum.** Users of the site feel equipped to implement the curriculum with little to no training or assistance from Peace First.

Core Principles

Several core principles have guided the development of content, themes, and structure of our curriculum. Feedback from practitioners affirms that these core design principles set us apart:

- **Developmentally Appropriate and Sequenced**— The curriculum is designed to challenge and support students in a developmentally appropriate progression. Grade-level themes and lesson activities are built on Dr. Robert Selman’s research on the moral and social development of children—in particular, the evolution of children’s understanding of others’ feelings and perspective and the developmental sequence for friendship.
- **Experiential and Interactive**— Each lesson is grounded in games, whole class activities, and small-group activities that bring the concepts to life for the students, teachers and classroom. Our activities provide students with opportunities to learn, practice, and reflect on peacemaking through direct experiences (role playing, small-group work, cooperative games, and guided practice) and offer space for teachable moments.
- **Inclusive of All Learners**— With guidance from a team of inclusion specialists, Peace First lessons were designed with a range of options to allow all learners to engage with the content. As a highly constructivist and interactive curriculum, lessons include choices for small groups, kinesthetic and non-verbal activities, and supports for students to bring their unique skills and perspectives to the discussion and learning.
- **Accessible and Easy to Use**— Each lesson is self-contained, includes a reflection guide, and is part of a larger scope and sequence. Lessons are designed to minimize teacher preparation time through detailed guided language while still allowing for flexibility and creativity. Peace First lessons can be supplemented by over 100 fully scripted games and activities that are available in our searchable online library on the Digital Activity Center.
- **Action Oriented (Community Service Learning)**— Student leadership and civic engagement are built into the curriculum through Peacemaker Projects. Lessons help teachers empower students to work together on projects to improve their community. This section of the curriculum often gets the highest accolades from both students and teachers.

The curriculum, with a full scope and sequence, is free and accessible [here on the Digital Activity Center](#). All you need to do to access over 200 activities, lessons and tipsheets is become a registered user. If you are interested in having your school adopt Peace First or engaging a broader group of educators or youth service professionals in utilizing the curriculum, Peace First’s national staff offer a range of supports for getting started. Our staff is also available to discuss the benefits of our curriculum and whether it is a good match for your classroom or school needs.

Grade Level Themes

Each grade level of the Peace First curriculum explores a different central theme to promote ongoing mastery of peacemaking at each developmental level. Primary and early elementary grade activities focus on helping children understand and value their personal identities, skills, and attributes; upper elementary grade activities focus on interpersonal issues of friendship, fairness, cooperation, conflict resolution, and inclusion and exclusion; middle grade lessons expand on these concepts and skills to include issues of group identity, social justice, and social action.

Pre-K	Friendship and Sharing	Students explore friendship and sharing through songs, books, and cooperative games that demonstrate the positive outcomes of sharing and taking turns.
K	I Am Special	Students explore how they and their families are special. This curriculum celebrates the theme “I Am Special” through literature, art, and cooperative games.
1st	I Have Feelings	Students explore feelings—how to identify and cope with their own feelings, how to understand the source of feelings, how to recognize and name others’ feelings—and deepen their understanding of how feelings play a role in helping them become effective peacemakers. This curriculum celebrates the theme “I Have Feelings” through literature, art, and cooperative games.
2nd	I Am a Friend	Students develop relationships with others and explore issues that affect their friendships, such as inclusion and exclusion. This exploration helps children to deepen their understanding of friendship and the role it plays in helping them to become effective peacemakers. This curriculum celebrates the theme “I Am a Friend” through literature, art, and cooperative games.
3rd	Communication and Cooperation	Students develop skills and awareness around communication and cooperation. The students apply these skills to build positive relationships with their classmates.
4th	Taking a Stand	Students examine bullying, activism, courage, choices, and consequences. The knowledge and skills they gain are applied to build positive relationships with others.
5th	Exploring Conflict	Students focus on understanding how their actions affect themselves and others, as well as how they can resolve conflicts.
6th	Gender, Culture, and Identity	Students explore and define attributes of their own identity and the identities of others. Students feel more confident with their own perspective and have a better understanding of the perspectives of others.
7th	Friendships and Peer Groups	Students explore the value and the struggles associated with friendships and peer groups in adolescence. Students practice developing strong and supportive relationships both with each other and with their community outside the classroom.
8th	Peer Mediation and Leadership	Students study the skills of peer mediation to become active leaders and role models in their school, peer groups, and communities. Students can use their skills to create or contribute to a peer mediation program at their school.