

MESSAGE IN SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Message in Schools Association is to provide high-quality and professional training to all teachers and caring adults willing to bring nurturing touch into schools.

VISION

The vision of the Message in Schools Association is that every child attending school experiences positive and nurturing touch every day....everywhere in the world.

What is the MISP?

The Message in Schools Program is an easy, accessible, and effective tool for improving children's quality of life in school. The intention is simple: to give children the opportunity to experience nurturing touch at school in a safe way.

By implementing the MISP, teachers will see the school's curriculum "come alive" in a way that respects children's inherent nature. Educational goals, including those are cognitive, emotional, and behavioral are attained through consistent use of the MISP.

Teachers will notice children begin to interact differently, in a more cooperative and compassionate way. Parents will also be introduced to a new, healthy way of interacting with their children while implementing the MISP at home.

The Message in Schools Program is divided into two main aspects:

- 1) the basic routine of massage strokes that teachers are encouraged to implement every day
- 2) the aspect of including touch and movement with learning, since children are able to learn more effectively if their whole bodies are involved

Basic MISP Routine

The basic routine consists of a series of simple movements that evoke images, thereby engaging the child's natural faculty of imagination. All children are taught the same basic routine, and they perform these movements over clothes on each other's head, neck, arms, hands, and back.

Once mastered, the entire routine takes approximately 15 minutes. Experience has shown that engaging in MISP the first thing in the morning of the school day is an excellent time, as it helps children to relax and be more attentive. Teachers have also noticed children are more likely to arrive on time in the morning if they know that they are going to receive a massage.

Children experience an inner security when an activity is repetitive and done regularly in the same way and at the same time. Within a few weeks, this massage routine becomes second nature to them; and they become proficient and eager to practice their new skills. Naturally, the teacher is ultimately the one to choose the best time during the school day for themselves and the children. Children will also benefit by practicing the routine at home with their parents before doing homework or going to bed.

Touch, Movement and Learning

The second aspect of the program integrates touch and movement into school curriculum subjects. For children, learning is more than becoming cognitive and having brain connections. They learn with their WHOLE being, needing to move and touch in order to integrate what they learn.

Using creativity to develop new games and ideas, the MISP honors the crucial necessity of involving touch and movement for improved learning. Drawing letters on a friend's back (language), discovering which muscle works with which movement (science), clapping the multiplication tables (math), and modeling clay into mountains (geography) are a few examples of incorporating movement into school subjects.

Respect: The heart of the MISP is respect.

Children experience respect for themselves and their partner while learning the routine. They are required to ask permission before any touch activity presented by MISP instructors or teachers. At home, the MISP also requires parents and children to ask permission of each other before beginning the routine.

Each child has the right to say "no" to a massage. The child not wanting a massage is asked to sit and watch while the others are performing the strokes, and is always able to see the other children during the routine.

Children are encouraged, while practicing the massage routine, to express their preferences regarding the strokes; voicing what they like and dislike, and how much pressure and at what pace the massage should be done for them.

Benefits of the MISP

Research has shown that massage helps strengthen the immune system, lower stress levels, and increase the production of relaxing hormones. A few of the specific benefits which have been observed by teachers using MISP in their classrooms are:

- calmer children
- improved concentration
- stronger sense of self
- improved ability to make choices
- improved emotional health
- reduction in bullying and aggression

"MISP is a tool that teaches respect for others as well as yourself. It is an essential component to shifting the current education system into a more safe and healthy paradigm," says MISA-USA board member Allison Dutton.

Give your children an opportunity to discover the magic of healthy, respectful, nurturing touch through the Massage in Schools Program!