



# A MONTESSORI MODEL FOR BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT INFORMED BY PEACE LITERACY



*A Montessori school guided by the needs of the developing child and dedicated to building a culture of peace and justice, requires all of us – children and adults alike – to develop our Peace Literacy by recognizing and supporting the following foundational principles:*

- 1. All of us have non-physical needs, such as our need for belonging, purpose and meaning, nurturing relationships, and transcendence.** To help children meet these needs in healthful ways, adults must prepare an environment where children can work uninterrupted, transcending their sense of time, in a community of healthy belonging, with minimal but nurturing supervision, on tasks that provide them with purpose and meaning. When we adults prepare this kind of environment for children, it helps us meet our needs as well.
- 2. All of us want to do well if we can.** If any of us find we can't do well, this means we have encountered a gap in our understanding, skills, and/or capacities, that makes us unable to meet a challenge we've experienced in the learning environment.
- 3. All of us can feel the fires of distress when we encounter a gap in our understanding, skills, and/or capacities.** The fires of distress can look like frustration, shame, or fear, and children and adults alike will sometimes respond to the fires of distress by behaving with the heat of aggression. To effectively mitigate the heat, we need to understand and attend to the fire of distress at the root of the aggressive behavior.
- 4. All of us can help each other if we encounter a gap, experience distress, and respond with aggression.** What gap in the learning environment is at the root of the distress? Have we understood our non-physical needs? Do we have the skills to meet those needs in a healthful way? Have we developed the capacities needed for exercising those skills? When we get help understanding these needs, learning these skills, and building these capacities, we can close the gap, lower the distress, and mitigate the aggression.
- 5. All of us can help each other increase our understanding, learn skills, and build our capacities, to develop our literacy in peace.** Helping children develop their Peace Literacy is a key academic subject for primary education. Peace Literacy is their work. It is our work.