



**The Miss Kendra Program**  
**Social and Emotional Trauma Exposed**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Lesson Plans

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**What is the Miss Kendra Program?**

The Miss Kendra Program, (formerly known as ALIVE), is described in their materials as “a trauma-informed, social and emotional learning (SEL) program that equips schools to proactively address the social and emotional needs of their students as they return to school while continuing to grapple with the ongoing threat of COVID-19, the lasting impacts of extended school closures and stay-at-home orders, and the upending of many other aspects of their lives.”

It was famously said, “Never let a crisis go to waste.” The pandemic crisis has opened the door for more SEL initiatives to make their way into the public schools to replace or water down academic learning. The Miss Kendra (MK) Program is a recent example. **It is based on the premise that all children come to school with toxic stress known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and it is the school’s duty to intervene.**

This program, from the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), is designed to be implemented in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and is based out of New Haven, Connecticut. Each lesson supports one or more of the SEL skills that include: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Their materials claim to meet the emotional needs of children “by giving them a safe space to share their stressors and worries and by equipping schools to create whole-school environments that welcome open conversation about stressful experiences.” The plan includes 38 weekly classroom sessions of 30 minutes throughout one school year. What does this have to do with reading, writing and arithmetic?

**Since when did we give these outside organizations permission to turn our academic institutions into therapeutic institutions? And since when did we allow the worries, stresses and traumas of a few children become the basis of a curriculum for the entire class?**

In some elementary MK classes, Buddhism’s mindfulness techniques of breathing and meditating are being taught to “bolster the resilience of youth exposed to trauma and toxic stress” (MK Program 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Lesson Plans page 5).

Children are told on the first day that Miss Kendra is a fictional character who is a kindhearted woman who had a child that she loved very much and who died at the age of 10. As a result, she felt great sadness. Students learn that Miss Kendra cares for children so much, wants them to be safe and desires for them to express their worries with the whole class through personal letters written to her that are placed in a Miss Kendra mailbox located in the classroom.

She responds to the letters so the children can know they are cared for and can be strong when they face difficult things like death. To ensure strength through hard times, Miss Kendra leaves a red bead for the child in the mailbox, or the teacher presses it into the hand of a child who has shared a worry with the class. Holding the red bead signifies to children that they are strong.

**This kind of teaching, by an untrained person, may cause unnecessary trauma by causing students to relive intense emotional experiences. Ordinary classroom teachers are not prepared to recognize or cope with deep emotional concerns that may be raised in the classroom.**

The weekly classroom lesson begins by the teacher asking, “Hey, kids, what time is it?” The children respond, “It’s Miss Kendra time!” This harkens back to the 50s when a T.V. host asked children, “Hey, kids, what time is it? It’s Howdy Doody time!” Miss Kendra, however, is no Howdy Doody! And this is not light-hearted, fun Howdy Doody time.

**Although the lessons allow children to share their worries, they do not teach or validate what is right or wrong.** Instead, the teacher or MK helper replies to a student’s comment by saying, “that is an interesting thought or idea thank you for sharing.” The MK Program Introduction states, “These lessons are designed to normalize student’s opinions, feelings, and thoughts and make space for everyone’s experiences.”

**In *The Miss Kendra Program: Addressing Toxic Stress in the School Setting* by David Read Johnson, Nisha Sajnani, Christine Mayor, and Catherine Davis, truth is not necessarily the goal, but rather “the pressing need for open and direct conversation about the truth of people’s experiences.”** (emphasis added)

The weekly lesson has an “Opening Ritual” where children follow the lead of the teacher in repeating, “We remember we are strong!” Then the teacher says, “Take it to the sky (Raising arms up), to the world around you, (Raising arms out) and to your heart (Putting hands back to heart). Altogether, “We are strong!”

The class ends with a pixie dust ritual, for extra strength, where the teacher walks around the room and sprinkles pixie dust on each child.

### **Where is the Miss Kendra Program taught?**

According to the website, the Miss Kendra Program is being taught “In more than 40 schools in 10 states.” In **Minnesota**, it was piloted and is currently being implemented in the White Bear Lake School District in Willow Lane Elementary School. Other piloting schools in different stages are Birch Lake Elementary in White Bear Lake; Vadnais Heights Elementary Schools; KIPP Elementary in North Minneapolis; St. Paul City Charter School in St. Paul; Menlo Alternative High School at East Side Neighborhood Services in NE Minneapolis and Paladin Alternative High School in Blaine.

### **What is the cost of a Miss Kendra Program?**

The first year of the program is roughly \$25,000. It costs \$50 per student for a school of 500 students. In year two and beyond, the program costs \$5,000 per year. A school district can apply for a \$20,000 grant for the first year.

## Why is the Miss Kendra Program harmful?

There are ten major areas of concern. Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

### 1. It shifts the classroom focus from an academic one to a therapeutic one.

Schools have failed to teach the ABCs and now they are presuming to teach about ACEs? Lessons on Adverse Childhood Experiences have no place in the public schools. The school is an academic institution—not a therapeutic institution.

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines ‘school’ as “a place where children go to be educated.” It is a place where knowledge is passed on. A school is an institution of learning—not a mental health facility.

### 2. It is unfair to teachers who are trained to teach academic content.

Educators want to teach academics; they are not trained as psychologists. **The MK Program places a heavy responsibility on teachers to address all the emotional needs—real or imagined—that are brought to the surface from probing classroom lessons. Even school counselors do not have the depth of training needed for certain levels of trauma.**

Children come to school desiring to learn, and a child’s emotional needs are best met by a loving, caring teacher who is encouraging and kind. Children with special trauma needs can be referred to a skilled counselor instead of traumatizing the entire class by airing all the stories based on the needs of a few.

Although the Miss Kendra Program brings a mental health counselor into the classroom during the lesson, the classroom teacher will still have to deal with the emotional fallout from worries in children that are raised and continue to surface the rest of the week.

### 3. It can increase anxiety in children and make it hard to learn as a result of trauma-based scenarios.

While one of the stated goals of the program is to lessen a child’s worries by sharing the trauma in their lives, *this approach can increase worries in other children*. The MK lesson plans make this admission, “It is expected that some anxiety will arise from eliciting open conversations about adversity.” (MK 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Lesson Plans Page 7)

Trauma-based programs can turn untroubled children into being troubled by hearing other’s stories of adversity. Sharing stories about family trauma can raise new worries in children during the classroom discussion times as nightmarish stories from other children can place a heavy burden on a young mind.

WHAT IS A WORRY? Foundational Lessons Week 3:

The teacher asks, “Does this remind you of any worries or experiences?” “A Miss Kendra worry is a worry where you might be in danger. (Ex.: Like getting hit, or not having food, or seeing other people getting hurt.)”

WRITING LETTERS TO MISS KENDRA Foundational Lessons Week 4:

The Introduction states, "...Miss Kendra says that worries make it hard to learn..." If that is true, why introduce children to new worries by having the whole class share what they are worried about?

In the Miss Kendra Program Curriculum Introduction teachers are told, "If the child shares a sad or personal worry the MK helper remind [sic] the child they are brave and may give them a red bead to remind them that they are strong!" Quite possibly, some children will be anxious to share just so they can get a red bead!

An illustration in Week 4 compares children to a balloon that is blown up with worries; if it is not released, it will pop. The teacher says, "We are just like this balloon! Sometimes we have a lot of worries, and if they keep adding up, we could pop!"

Children are prompted to write a letter to Miss Kendra. "Every time you write to Miss Kendra or tell someone about a worry, a little air comes out of your balloon!"

Children are also instructed in Week 4 to, "Mime putting in all your worries and stress into the magical box and send it away to Miss Kendra." This lesson is based on fantasy—not reality! A Magical Worry Box does not magically make their worries, or what caused them, disappear.

A child's anxiety does not end when the classroom discussion ends. It can carry over into the next classroom subject and can affect a child's ability to concentrate as well as learn.

#### **4. It can make children feel *less* safe after exposure to frightening scenarios.**

Foundational Lessons WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAFE? Week 5

In this lesson on safety, nine scenarios are presented to students to imagine and then determine how they would respond. These scary scenarios only serve to increase worries about death. Here are a few examples of the scenarios that can trigger nightmares in young children.

- Scenario 3: A grown up is driving the care, and it crashes, and goes off the road. The grown up is not moving or talking. (Call 911 – Hospital!)
- Scenario 5: You hear gunshots outside and screaming. They seem close to your house. (Find a grown-up to call 911- Police/Hospital! If you're alone, call 911.)
- Scenario 6: Grown-ups are fighting in your house. Someone is bleeding. (Find a grown-up to call 911 – Police/Hospital! If you're alone, call 911.)
- Scenario 7: You wake up to the sound of glass breaking downstairs, it sounds like someone broke a window. (Find a grown-up to call 911 – Police! If you're alone, call 911.)

These scenarios are too traumatic for innocent young children to be discussing in class. That is why we shield them from the evening news!

Children are introduced to a child's safety "bill of rights" called Miss Kendra's List. This list is the basis for discussion questions for several weeks and is read aloud as an "Opening Ritual" at the beginning of each weekly MK session.

### **Miss Kendra's List**

- No child should be punched or kicked.
- No child should be left alone for a long time.
- No child should be hungry for a long time.
- No child should be bullied or told they are no good.
- No child should be touched in their private parts.
- No child should be scared by gun violence at home or in school.
- No child should have to see other people hurt each other.

### **Because**

- It makes a child not care about school.
- It makes a child feel sad or scared or lonely.
- It makes a child feel angry and want to fight too much.
- It makes a child feel like not trying hard or giving up.
- It makes a child worry a lot about their family.

When children hear stories about death and trauma in other families, it can increase fears about someone dying in their own family. We need only to look to the dismal failure of death education that was taught in the early 1990s to see that this kind of teaching does not belong in the schools.

The premise of death education was that children needed to be able to talk about death so as to alleviate their worries and not fear it. It was hopeful that these lessons would reduce teen suicides. Instead, the opposite occurred—teens who went through death education showed an *increase* in suicide ideation and actual suicides ("Death in the Classroom" 20/20, Broadcast in 1990).

### **NO CHILD SHOULD BE HARMED BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE RELIGION, OR GENDER**

#### **Week 1: Topic Introduction**

The children are asked, "Is it okay for grown-ups to punch or kick kids? Next, students are given a piece of paper and asked to draw a body. Each child is given a Band-Aid to put on "the hurt spot." In the discussion time, they are prompted to respond to one of four choices:

1. A time someone hurt me on purpose was \_\_\_\_\_
2. A time I got hurt by accident was \_\_\_\_\_
3. A time I saw someone hurt another person was \_\_\_\_\_
4. Or any other worry you have!

### **NO CHILD SHOULD BE PUNCHED OR KICKED**

#### **Week 1: Topic Introduction**

In this section, emotionally charged scenarios are read to the class:

"Rosey's mom hits her every day. She pinches her ears and throws heavy things at her! Sometimes Rosy's mom does this even when Rosy does all her chores and is on her best behavior."

“Tony has an older brother. His brother babysits him when his parents are away. Toni’s brother slapped him hard on his face. And then begged Toni not to tell anyone.”

The discussion question asks children, “Has anything like [sic] happened in your life?”

Hearing stories like this makes children think that this is a common occurrence. It normalizes unhealthy behavior in the minds of kids and can increase worries in children who hear over-the-top stories of abuse.

In the early elementary years, some children will fabricate elaborate stories to fit in with their peers or to impress their friends. A child’s imagination can invent fanciful situations that are untrue or exaggerated. They may not quite be able to discern the line between reality and fantasy. Who knows how many parents and relatives will find their names in a child’s file as a result of classroom discussions of Miss Kendra’s List!

##### **5. It introduces “blurring gender lines” to the children.**

NO CHILD SHOULD BE HARMED BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE, RELIGION, OR GENDER

Week 3: Social Emotional Impact

This lesson is about “Gendered Stereotypes.” The teacher passes out “boy” and “girl” stickers and is “intentional about some boys getting ‘girl’ pictures and some girls getting ‘boy’ pictures.” Next, the teacher asks if any student would like to trade their picture. “If anyone says yes, ask them why.”

Teachers are instructed, “When someone says, ‘Because this one is for (girls/boys)’ then proceed to ask: Why do you think that something is for a girl or a boy? Who told you that? Can girls or boys like things that are for others and still be a girl or boy? Is there only one way to be a boy or a girl or can there be multiple ways? Are there things only boys or girls can do? WHAT [sic] does your family say about this? Is it okay if our families have different views?”

The politically correct pop culture and Miss Kendra are heavily promoting gender-neutral parenting, trying to destroy the so-called social constructs of gender roles, clothes and toys. *It is a scientific fact that there are biological differences between males and females.*

Dr. Debra Soh, sex researcher and author, explains in her book *The End of Gender* “Gender is dictated by prenatal hormone exposure, as opposed to coercive gender norms imposed upon infants the minute they exit the womb.” Soh explains that boys are drawn to “mechanically interesting activities, like playing with wheeled toys” because, while in the womb, boys received higher levels of testosterone. Girls, on the other hand, received far less testosterone. As a result, they are more empathetic and are drawn toward “socially engaging activities and occupations” like playing dolls or house.

These lessons are a wasted classroom effort. It is not the school’s role to determine whether to encourage specific interests for gender roles. Let boys be boys and girls be girls!

## 6. It usurps the role of parents and the church

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Many of the Miss Kendra lessons are subjects that should be discussed in the home. There, parents can filter worrisome topics and teach their children about them when they feel they are ready to handle it.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE STRONG? Foundational Lessons Week 6

The Chair of Strength is introduced in this lesson. This is a place where children sit during Miss Kendra time when they share their worries. The chair is covered with post-it-notes written by the children about where they draw their strength from. The teacher tells the children that the chair reminds them that “we are strong when we share our worries!”

The Bible teaches that strength comes from Jesus—not from a red bead or a chair. It is the role of parents and the church to address these topics with children—not the classroom teacher. Miss Kendra is not a parent and is not God. Why should children tell their worries to her, a fabricated person, instead of praying to God?

## 7. It violates family privacy through invasive questions.

**Private, personal letters should never be written without parental oversight. And psychologists should not be in the classroom to probe children’s emotions without parental supervision.** Parents have no idea what is being confided to the teacher or shared in the classroom.

**In a Miss Kendra classroom, parents are not aware of the emotionally-charged issues that are being discussed.** They have no idea what kinds of discussions about worries their children will be hearing in the classroom since the teacher reads the letters children have written to Miss Kendra.

NO CHILD SHOULD BE HARMED BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE, RELIGION, OR GENDER

Week 3: Social Emotional Impact

In Week 3 a TIP to the teachers reads, “The primary goal of letter sharing is to witness, validate, and norm open conversation.”

What kind of conversation will the teacher be validating in the classroom? At the end of the class, red bead dust is sprinkled on each 2<sup>nd</sup> grade child once again.

In Week 4 teachers ask the following questions:

- Why do you think people hurt others based on their race, religion, or gender?
- What can you do at home or school to help address this problem?

Children can easily be emotionally manipulated since they begin to think of Miss Kendra as a real person who they can trust. They readily share, through letters to her, personal family information. **That information, unbeknownst to the parent, can become a permanent part of a child’s file. Children are also asked to “take a photo to send to Miss Kendra.”**

### Week 3: Social Emotional Impact

After hearing a story about how four frogs respond to danger, children are asked, “What kinds of things have you experienced that made you feel like hiding under a rock, growing armor, freezing or jumping away?”

### Week 4: Resilience Building Skills

Kids are asked:

“Have you ever had anybody show their anger toward you when they were upset?”

“Have you ever had to take care of younger siblings or family members when grown-ups were not around? If so, how did you feel about that? Have you ever been left alone?”

Other examples include being left alone in a car and that can make a child feel like “nobody cares about me.” Children are instructed, “...write about it to Miss Kendra, to get our worries out!”

In this lesson, the child becomes a ‘tattle tale’ about what might be happening in the home. Children are given three responses to choose from: write a letter to Miss Kendra about it, use the worry board, or whisper their worries in the teacher’s ear.

**A parent will never know what is being written and placed in their child’s file since the lessons are done without parental knowledge or consent.** Some of the ‘reporting’ by children could result in a call to parents from Child Protection Services!

### **8. It invites imitation of negative behavior through role playing.**

NO CHILD SHOULD BE HARMED BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE, RELIGION, OR GENDER

Week 1 Topic Introduction

In the skit in a restaurant the teacher acts as a waitress and says, “Hello, I’m here to take your order. I’m so sorry about those other people who look so ugly! They don’t belong here, their eyes and hair and skin look funny and weird, they sound weird...Look at them and what they’re wearing...we don’t serve people like that here.”

This puts negative thoughts about others into a child’s mind. Children often mimic outside of the classroom things they hear in class. This lesson introduces remarks that most children have never thought of in the first place. Positive comments should be acted out in a skit instead of focusing on negative comments about differences. At the end of the lesson, the teacher is instructed to “sprinkle red bead dust on kids and tell each child they can be who they are!”

Week 2 Expanding the Conversation

This lesson uses *Jenga* stacking blocks. Students take turns reading sentences out loud such as, “Your skin looks dirty...You and your family should go back to where you came from...Why can’t you speak English? Are you stupid?”

Another student reads a sentence that says, “One student was eating food that their grandma had made and the kid next to them looked over and said, ‘Eww gross, what is that, puke?...’” Still another student reads, “One student heard kids calling them gross for not washing their hair every day.”

A *Jenga* block is pulled out after each negative comment until the tower collapses as a result of the mean things said to people “because of who they are.”

Children should not be repeating mean things out loud in the classroom. Teaching kindness by having children imitate *positive* remarks is a better way to *build* a *Jenga* tower.

#### **9. It weaves SEL into all pre-K through grade 12 education.**

**Lesson Plan Format SEL Skills makes it clear that the goal of the Miss Kendra Program is to allow “opportunities to practice the core social emotional competencies set out by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).” The Miss Kendra Program is just another SEL program sold as Trauma-Informed Education.**

Layer after layer of SEL is being sold to schools until K-12 education becomes saturated with SEL lessons and SEL propaganda disguised as “social justice” causes. SEL, while collecting personal data, continues to retrain the emotions, attitudes, values and behaviors of school-age children.

As the *New Vision for Education: Fostering Social and Emotional Learning through Technology* page 5 states, “...it can be highly effective to introduce SEL early and embed it in the core curriculum throughout a child’s schooling.” The MK Program does just that.

#### **10. It opens the door to politicized lessons on Critical Race Theory (CRT), gender identity and sexuality.**

The Miss Kendra Program Minnesota Expansion Initiative application explains, “Miss Kendra Advances Social Justice.” In June 2020, Miss Kendra’s List added a social justice item stating, “no child should be harmed because of their race, religion, or gender.” This was to encourage “conversations about acts of oppression and prejudices” since “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...”

The word ‘institutional’ can refer to the church while ‘personal identity’ can open the door to discussions of LGBTQ issues. “Oppression” is code for teaching CRT. This is also an opening for radical viewpoints and beliefs about homosexuality and gender identity.

**NO CHILD SHOULD BE HARMED BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE, RELIGION, OR GENDER**

Week 1: Topic Introduction

In the General Discussion lesson, gender is a topic for discussion. Gender is not defined as ‘male’ or ‘female,’ ‘boy’ or ‘girl,’ but rather “what it *means* to be a boy or a girl” (emphasis added). This can introduce the topic of transgenderism.

To what level of discussion will the teacher go? It's up to the individual instructor. Parents have no knowledge of what Miss Kendra is writing back to the student.

This review only covers the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade lesson plans. The concerns about the Miss Kendra Program increase with each additional grade level—especially in high school. On the third page of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Lesson Plans it states, "With highschool [sic] you can be more direct in your communication style." That is, more direct in the indoctrination style!

### **In Conclusion**

The Minnesota Constitution Article XIII says that the stability of our government depends mainly upon the intelligence of the people. Without a good education, the intelligence of the people is diminished. Schools must provide the education that parents want and our children need.

At a time when students are falling behind in key areas like reading, math and science as a result of the COVID pandemic and distanced learning, elementary teachers should not be required to focus on sensitive topics related to trauma in individual families. These kinds of lessons are outside the purview of the public schools and are a misuse of precious class time needed for students to catchup due to COVID school closures and stay-at-home orders. **Schools should focus on academic subjects and leave the teaching of values and feelings, death and worries, to parents and the church.**

A real worry for parents, is that their child is falling behind in reading, math, science etc. Most parents do not want their taxes supporting a trauma-based program that is more about therapy than academic education. This approach is another educational fad that is harmful, unnecessary, and a waste of tax dollars and school resources. Our children deserve better.

### **What can parents do?**

1. Opt out! Pull your child from this harmful program and encourage other parents to so as well.
2. Contact school board members and administration to have this program removed from your school.
3. Use social media to inform others.
4. Write a letter to your local paper to alert other parents to the dangers of this program.