



## A. CORE BELIEFS

There are two basic areas of understanding that inform us and guide us in our interactions with our students and with each other as a staff. The first is THE CIRCLE OF COURAGE and the second is NARRATIVE PRACTICES. Both of these principles are described below.

### 1. Circle of Courage

The Circle of Courage represents four key values that enable children to be nurtured in a climate of respect and dignity. It also embodies traditional Native American practices of shared responsibility for the raising of its young people. The circle is a symbol for creating a balanced environment that maintains the essential needs of the students in our care by valuing individual freedoms, building respect through inner discipline, and modeling respectful guidance as children continue to grow and learn. We understand these needs to be Belonging, Mastery, Generosity, and Independence.

#### a. Belonging

- 1) The need for human connection is cultivated through the development of trusting relationships.
- 2) When students feel they belong to the community of the school, they are motivated to become respectful and positive members of their social groups.
- 3) A felt sense of belonging to a positive, supportive community promotes cooperation, trust, healthy attachments, and positive peer relationships.

#### b. Mastery

- 1) The innate drive for mastery is fostered by teaching students effective strategies for coping with life's challenges.

- 2) When students have a felt sense of mastery, they feel capable of achieving their goals.
- 3) A felt sense of mastery promotes opportunities for achievement, success, creativity, resilience, motivation, and the ability to be an effective problem solver.

c. Independence

- 1) The students' free will is fostered by increased opportunities for responsibility and empowering them to make their own decisions within their communities.
- 2) Helping students explore the effects of their decisions on themselves, on others, and on their environment promotes autonomy and self-reliance within their community.
- 3) A felt sense of independence fosters self control, assertiveness, responsibility, and leadership all of which increases the connection between students and their community.

d. Generosity

- 1) The students character is nurtured by providing them with opportunities to show care and concern for the wellbeing of others.
- 2) By promoting and giving opportunities for generosity, students are provided with an invigorating sense of purpose in their life.
- 3) A felt sense of generosity promotes opportunities for altruism, caring, compassion, empathy, and selflessness.