

Counselor Corner

PBIS at Home

Are you experiencing power struggles at home when it comes to the kids getting their schoolwork done? Lots of families are experiencing this challenge right now. Here are a few ideas to help get you and your family through the next few weeks (and these ideas can help out in general):

Make a to-do list and give choices: help your child make a to-do list of all required assignments and household responsibilities. Once everything is written down, give your child choices. "You need to do one piece of schoolwork today. Which one would you like to choose?" "Would you rather do your math before or after lunch?"

Use specific positive praise: be sure to acknowledge when your child does something that you like/something that you want them to keep doing. Being as specific as possible gives your child more information. "I like the way you completed your assignment without complaining today."

Use when/then: instead of the classic "yes I am," "no you're not" argument, try when/then. This gives your child what they want, accomplishes what you want, and doesn't leave room for an argument. "When you finish your math assignment, then you can use the tablet." Sometimes this may also be if/then. "If you finish your reading before 4:00, then we will have time for a walk at the park before dinner."

Build in some rewards and fun: Make a paper chain to count down the days left of school. Make one link for each day left. On each one, write the number of days left. On some (or all if you choose) write a reward that your kid can get for completing their assignments that day. Some ideas for rewards: getting a small prize, making cookies, choosing a movie for family movie night, playing a family board or card game, choosing what's for dinner, staying up an extra half an hour, having extra play/computer time, a water fight. Let your child know that the link for each day is to be torn off after work is completed for that day. Of course, offering a reward to look forward to can be done without the chain, too.

For more information and ideas, check out this article!

<https://www.positiveparentingsolutions.com/parenting/positive-parenting-during-pandemic>

Dealing with Loss/Grief

Kids and adults are facing the loss of many things during this time – for some, the loss of loved ones, and for others the loss of routines/normalcy, being able to see friends and family, jobs, and even events or activities such as playing on a sports team, getting to celebrate the end of the school year or graduation with friends, or being able to celebrate a birthday with friends or family. They may feel loss over not knowing what the future (even the coming months or school returning in the Fall) holds. It's okay to feel a sense of loss over any of these things.

Here are some ideas to help deal with the sense of loss:

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF: FOR CHILDREN

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS OF THINGS TO DO TO HELP YOURSELF FEEL BETTER WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH!

MOVE YOUR BODY

Move your body. Play, run, jump, wiggle, dance, hit a balloon or yell into a pillow.



RECHARGE

Recharge your strength by getting lots of sleep, good food and water.



SIT AND BREATHE

Take some deep breaths. Try blowing some bubbles, smell the flowers, or just notice how fast you are breathing and try to slow it down. Breathe out a little longer than you breathe in.

SLOW DOWN

Try moving with super slow speed for a bit, sit in a quiet space or listen to soft music.

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Talk kindly to yourself like you would talk to a friend. Examples: "You can do this." "You're doing the best you can." "You will figure this out."



STRENGTH

Do something you're good at, whatever that may be, and celebrate the little things. Examples: Making it to school on time, remembering homework, helping a friend, scoring a goal at soccer.

FIND COMFORT

Choose an object or make something that comforts you. It could be as simple as a stone you find. Keep it with you to feel comforted whenever you need it.

FIND SUPPORT

Look for people you can talk to when you are feeling down. Examples: friend, family member, teacher, coach or counselor.

GET CREATIVE

Express yourself through art, writing, drawing, dancing or listening to/playing music.



ALLOW EMOTIONS

Remember that it's OK to feel sad or angry. You do not need to be strong all the time. Crying is OK, especially when you are talking or thinking about your special person.

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF: FOR TEENS

HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE THINGS TO TRY TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

MOVE YOUR BODY

Dance, run, play sports, clean, stretch or punch a pillow. A little movement goes a long way.

RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES

Try to get plenty of sleep, eat healthy, energizing foods and drink plenty of water.

REMEMBER TO BREATHE

Take some deep breaths. Start by noticing your breath and try to slow it down. Breathe out a little longer than you breathe in.

SLOW DOWN

When it feels like everything is moving too fast, take a minute to move slowly, sit in a quiet space or listen to soft music.

USE SUPPORTIVE SELF-TALK

Talk kindly to yourself like you would talk to a friend. Try saying: "you can do this", "you're doing the best you can in this moment", or "you will figure this out".

IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS

Do something you're good at, whatever that may be, and celebrate small wins. It could be as simple as making it to school on time, remembering homework, helping a friend or scoring a goal at soccer.

STAY CONNECTED

Choose an object or make something to remind you of your special person. It may be something of theirs or a special stone you find. Keep it with you to feel connected whenever you need it.

IDENTIFY SUPPORTIVE ALLIES

Look for the people in your life you trust who you can talk to and will show up to listen. You may need different people for different needs (someone to talk deeply to, make you laugh, and/or be a cheerleader).

USE CREATIVE OUTLETS

Express yourself through art, journaling, drawing, dancing, or listening to/playing music. Remember this is just for you, so don't worry about how it looks or sounds.

KNOW THAT BEING EMOTIONAL IS OK

Sometimes you just need to cry. Don't be afraid to release emotions and let it all out. Find safe ways to do this. Examples: cry with a family member/friend or squeeze a stress ball.

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<https://indd.adobe.com/view/924b5436-fca0-4a15-901a-9233134766e4>

- Make sure you have structure and routines at home that help the days feel more predictable
- Find creative ways to celebrate or acknowledge the events that didn't get to happen (i.e. a virtual get together, a celebration with your immediate family, having your own step up ceremony at home, having a special meal, etc.)
- Encourage kids to move (dance, do kids workout videos, GoNoodle movement videos, jumping jacks, or check out Mr. Verde's activity ideas on our Fun and Calming Activities page)
- Encourage kids to express themselves (draw, journal, "paint" using shaving cream, sing)
- Help kids stay connected to friends and family (using technology while supervised, calling/texting, or even mailing notes)
- Regularly check in with them about how they're doing (realizing that they may feel some loss more at different points, i.e. when step up, a sports championship, or dance recital would have been)
- If you feel that you or your child need more support, Shandria McCoy, our City Connects Coordinator would be happy to help connect you with community resources.

To learn more, visit:

<https://www.magellanhealthcare.com/documents/2020/04/covid-19-grief-and-loss.pdf/>

<https://www.caredimensions.org/blog/?pid=Helping%2DChildren%2DCope%2DWith%2DLoss%2DDuring%2DCOVID%2D19%2DPandemic-1329>

<https://www.mghclaycenter.org/parenting-concerns/how-to-help-young-people-cope-with-grief-and-loss-during-covid-19/>

For resources on dealing with the loss of a loved one:

<https://childrengrieve.org/resources>

In case you missed them, look at our previous Counselor Corners for ideas about:

Week 1 (4/2) – Calming Strategy (Break Spot), Videos About Explaining the Virus to Kids, Self-Care

Week 2 (4/9) – Managing Feelings, Technology Tips

Week 3 (4/24) - Home Reward System, Hand-washing Tips

Week 4 (5/1) – Giving kids specific positive feedback, task list for kids, Sesame Street and CNN Town Hall on the Coronavirus

Week 5 (5/8) – Taking breaks, Calming tools

Week 6 (5/15) – Transitions, timers, and sleep

Week 7 (5/22) – Praise, work completion, credit requirements

If you have any questions or need more information/support please reach out to us:

Ms. McCoy

City Connects Site Coordinator

mccoys@springfieldpublicschools.com

Katie Potito

School Adjustment Counselor

potitok@springfieldpublicschools.com

Erin Vorwerk

School Adjustment Counselor

vorwerke@springfieldpublicschools.com