Whiteford Elementary School
Counseling Corner

Supporting Mental Health at Home

When people think about health, many times, they are only considering physical health. Families and caregivers make sure their children are eating well-balanced meals and getting adequate physical activity, but understanding that a child's emotional well-being is just as important is crucial to their development. Being mentally healthy helps children learn to cope with life changes, as well as allows them to reach important milestones, both developmentally and emotionally.

Daily Affirmations — I am LOVED · I am a GOOD FRIEND · I am HELPFUL · I am TALENTED · MY VOICE & OPINIONS matter · I am BRAVE

ZONES OF REGULATION

BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
tired, sad, sick, moving slowly, disappointed, lonely	happy, calm, focused, content, read proud, excited, relaxed, feeling settled	frustrated, worried, overexcited, loss of some control, anxious, confused, stressed, distracted	angry, annoyed, jealous, terrified, yelling/hitting, elated, out of control

Why is this important?

When a child has a healthy mental well-being, they are more likely to think clearly, make positive choices, build friendships, and learn new skills. Additionally, children who have positive mental health can develop and build self-esteem, learn and practice helpful coping skills, set goals, and manage difficult emotions. Learning these skills and consistently working on them is hard work and does take practice. Focusing on our own mental health doesn't always come natural, but fortunately, there are things you can do as a parent or caregiver to consistently check in on your child's mental health and reinforce these healthy practices to ensure they can have a good quality of life both at home and in school.

What Families Can Do to Support at Home

1
Praise Their Character

Building affirmations into your daily home routine can help build self-confidence. It's important to reinforce and encourage positive character traits, such as kindness, empathy, and respect, rather than only focusing on physical traits or achievements.

Tip:
Create a poster of daily affirmations for your child to repeat every morning when they wake up.

2
Build a Trusting Bond

Safety and security are basic human needs, so creating a safe and trusting environment helps shape a solid foundation for children to foster positive mental health. Creating an environment where children feel safe to share their feelings, needs, and struggles will help to ensure they will grow into well-rounded, resilient, and mentally healthy adults.

3
Communicate Openly & Regularly

Talking to children openly allows them to develop problem-solving skills. Oftentimes, children use communication with their adults as validation for any feelings they experience. Offering non-judgmental, unconditional support increases the likelihood of them coming to you when they have a problem.

Tip:
Begin and end your days with your child by asking them open-ended questions. You can also use the Zones of Regulation chart to monitor their feelings!

4
Create Routines & Set Boundaries

Inconsistent schedules can cause a lot of stress and worry for children. Many children thrive when they have a consistent routine and know what to expect on a daily basis. Additionally, having clear boundaries is vital for children to know what is expected of them at home, in school, and in their communities, and it can also help alleviate any stress and feelings of overwhelm for all people involved when there are clear-cut expectations.