

Comprehensive School Health



Positive Mental Health Training for Schools in ASD-W

Mental Health is often thought of as the absence of mental illness. School based programs and services have traditionally focused on addressing concerns through the identification of risk-need factors to provide intervention and support services. Anglophone West School District has adopted a Positive Mental Health Approach. This approach recognizes that a state of psychological wellbeing is not only the absence of problems and risk-need concerns, but is also impacted by strengths present within students and their social settings that contribute to positive growth and development.



Dr. Bill Morrison and Associates have developed a number of resources to assist schools in their efforts to promote student mental health. Three project schools within the district have been selected to implement the Positive Mental Health Toolkit and are receiving training and support. Initial training for administrators and district level staff was held on April 28th. Further training will be offered to school based teams in the fall of 2015.

Resiliency

Resiliency is the ability to adapt to challenges and stressors, find balance and thrive in the face of these challenges. This aspect of mental health is very important to foster in children and youth since it allows them to cope with the many challenges that occur throughout life (www.jcshpositivementalhealthtoolkit.com).

Evidence shows that people who demonstrate resiliency are healthier, are happier in their relationships with family and friends, have greater success in school, and have less chance of suffering from depression.

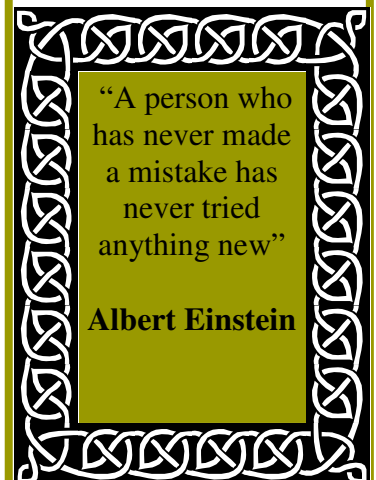
Tips to foster resiliency in children include:

- Give attention and affection
- Help children identify their feelings and also show empathy
- Be a role model—take care of your own health
- Display understanding and compassion
- Be positive
- Show your child/youth that it is okay to ask for help
- Encourage your child to keep trying a difficult task and that mistakes are okay
- Try to change your child’s negative thinking
- Participate in community project
- Involve your children when helping others.



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Welcome Spring!

Spring has finally arrived and along with spring comes thoughts of gardening! Whether it is vegetables, fruit or flowers; gardening gets you outdoors, gets you moving and allows your family to grow something to enjoy.



Gardening allows children to get out in nature and helps them get excited about their food and where it comes from. This interest in food can help promote a positive attitude toward healthy eating. Children who are involved in the process of growing their own food are more likely to have healthier diets (Journal of the American Dietetic Association). They also learn important skills to help them make healthy food choices when they get older.

From soil preparation, to planting, weeding and harvesting, there is always a task to be done during the growing season. Gardening gets you out in the fresh air and helps to get your blood circulating. This summer consider planting a garden as a family.

Some ideas to help you get started:

- Vegetables like tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, peas and beans are easy for beginner gardeners to grow. You can even do them in pots or containers.
- Herbs are very easy to grow and can be grown all year round in a sunny window.
- Try growing a crop of cherry tomatoes in a large, clean bucket with holes in the bottom to allow for drainage.
- Consider a small patio planter, a backyard vegetable garden or a plot in a local community garden.
- One of the best ways to get started is to meet some other gardeners who can be found in local garden clubs and local community gardens.
- Add a trellis for things to climb or tomato cages to keep tomatoes contained.
- Consider starting with Square Foot Gardening. Square foot gardening plots are easy to water and access. They are great for little ones because of the height and distinct boundaries.

For more information go to: <http://squarefootgardening.org/>.

Healthy Lunches



As part of a plan to become a Health Promoting School, Montgomery Elementary School offered a program focusing on healthy lunches for students and their parents.

Over the lunch hour, a short information session was delivered to parents based on the areas of interest that were identified in a pre-survey. Students then had the opportunity to make and sample some healthy lunch items. Many parents attended the sessions and students enjoyed making their own Freggie pizza wraps! Information and resources from the sessions are posted on the schools website for anyone who might be looking for new lunch ideas!

Easy TLC Salad



- 10 oz (284 grams) lettuce (such as romaine lettuce, spinach or mixed greens)
- 1 cucumber
- ½ cup (125 mL) cherry tomatoes
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) vegetable oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) vinegar
- 1 tsp (5 mL) sugar
- 1 tsp (5 mL) lemon juice
- ½ tsp (2 mL) dried oregano (or fresh from the garden!)
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) pepper

Wash and pat dry the lettuce, cucumber and tomato. Slice cucumber. Cut tomatoes in half. Place all vegetables in a large bowl. Mix oil, garlic, vinegar, sugar, lemon juice, oregano and pepper in a small bowl. Pour dressing over salad just before eating. Feel free to add other vegetables from the garden like carrot, radish or green pepper!

Physical Activity Increases Academic Scores

Research demonstrates a correlation between physical activity and academic performance. In the article “[Building a better brain](#)” Harvard Medical School’s [John Ratey](#), an internationally recognized expert in neuropsychiatry was quoted “*If you want to raise test scores, we have documented evidence — big time evidence — that the key is to include fitness-based activity in the day.*”

Regular physical activity and physical literacy (skills necessary to participate and enjoy the activity) are importance in fostering the confidence youth require to seek out opportunities to be active.

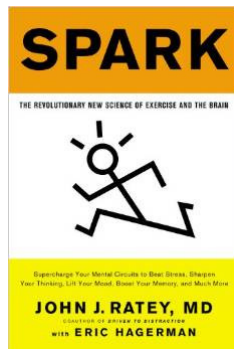
One identified barrier to getting kids moving may be the pressure to achieve higher grades. Often when grades fall, our response is to sit them down for longer periods of time to study.

The book “Spark” by John J. Ratey & Eric Hagerman explores the connection between exercise and the brain. It clearly demonstrates how physical activity helps to beat stress, lift your mood, fight memory loss and sharpen Intellect.

Consider implementing “Spark Breaks” into the classroom to get kids moving for short periods of time through the school day.

Taken from the Active for Life magazine.

<http://activeforlife.com/physically-active-kids-increases-academic-scores/#comments>



Aboriginal Awareness Week May 21-24, 2015



<http://www.pc.gc.ca/agen/aa/faits-facts.aspx>

HELP YOUR YOUNG CHILD SUCCEED IN SCHOOL:

TURN OFF THE SCREENS & TURN ON THE PLAY

Experts have long agreed that young children need lots of play to become the readers, writers and problem solvers of tomorrow. But nowadays, with the focus on electronic gadgets, cell-phones and other screens, children's play has become ENDANGERED. The latest research warns that screens draw children away from play and lead to LOST ground on brain development. So how do you help your young child succeed in school?

TURN OFF THE SCREENS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends NO screen time for children under two. After age two, TRUCE advises that young children have only very limited and thoughtfully planned use of screens. Why? Screen time has been linked to:

- DELAYED LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
- IRREGULAR SLEEP PATTERNS
- A DECREASE IN MATH SCORES AND OVERALL SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT IN LATER CHILDHOOD
- HIGHER LEVELS OF AGGRESSION.

TURN ON THE PLAY

Young children need to play—to PRETEND, BUILD, BOUNCE, CLIMB and EXPLORE their way through the world around them. Here's why:

- PLAY WITH BLOCKS AND OTHER HANDS-ON MATERIALS BOOSTS MATH AND SCIENCE SKILLS SUCH AS COUNTING, SORTING AND SEQUENCING
- PRETEND PLAY IMPROVES PRE-READING SKILLS SUCH AS VOCABULARY, COMPREHENSION AND RECALL
- PLAY WITH DOLLS, STUFFED ANIMALS OR EVEN A CARDBOARD BOX ENHANCES IMAGINATION AND LOGICAL THINKING
- PLAY WITH OTHER CHILDREN, AND WITHOUT SCREENS, BUILDS SOCIAL AND LANGUAGE SKILLS.



TRUCE helps teachers and parents deal with the harmful impact of media and commercial culture on children's play, behavior and school success. For research references and more information, go to www.truce4teachers.org. Versiones en español están disponibles en línea.

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Connecting with Nature

“**Forest Bathing**” is good for mind, body and soul! In Japan it is called **Shinrin-yoku**. **Shinrin** means forest and **yoku** means bathing, showering or basking. It is a simple practice of spending time in a forest to breathe in the forest air and take in the sights and sounds of the forest. Japan has been studying this practice for many years. Studies show that by spending time in a forest we can benefit from: a boosted immune system, improved blood pressure, better sleep and psychological benefits of more positive feelings and less negative feelings.



For those of us who enjoy being outside in nature it is not a surprise but now we have the research to show that it is beneficial for our mental and physical health. Just another reason to get outside in nature! (References; www.shinrin-yoku.org and www.motherearthnews.com)

Sun Safety

Having fun in the sun is one of the best parts of the spring and summer months, but it can also be dangerous. Children could develop serious sunburns or become dehydrated in the summer heat. Sunburns and spending time in the sun without sun protection has been found to increase the risk of skin cancer later in life. You can use the following safety tips to protect yourself and children from the sun:

- Ensure there is some shade around play areas or use a sun umbrella.
- Children should wear a sun hat with a wide brim and back flap, loose cotton clothing, and 100% broad spectrum sunglasses.
- Use sunblock with at least 30 SPF on all areas of exposed skin
- Don't forget the ears, nose, back of neck, and, tops of feet.
- Reapply sunblock every two hours, and after swimming.
- Encourage children to drink fluids (with no added sugar), especially water.
- Be a role-model for children and protect yourself from the sun as well.

Adapted from http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/sun_safety

Preventing injuries for SWIMMING



TOP TIPS

- Never leave children unsupervised near water.
- Learn to swim and tread water.
- Never swim alone. Every swimmer should be supervised, and this applies to pools, lakes, and rivers.
- Learn lifesaving skills (first aid and lifesaving courses).
- Put secure, four-sided fencing and barriers around residential swimming pools and open water.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs, even in small amounts, when swimming.
- Feet first, first time! Protect your neck and head – never dive into shallow or unknown water. Learn to do shallow dives. Twice your height is the safe depth of water for diving.
- Check the weather and water conditions, especially in rivers and lakes.
- Identify water-related hazards (such as docks, rocks, and logs) in your community so that other participants will be aware.

For more information on this and other sport and recreation injury topics, please refer to the following text: Tator, C.H. (Ed.) (2008). *Catastrophic Injuries in Sports and Recreation: Causes and Prevention – A Canadian Study*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press Incorporated



Parachute is bringing attention to preventable injury and helping Canadians reduce their risk of injury and enjoy long lives free from the fallout.

www.parachutecanada.org



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