

## School Counselor's Corner

January 2021



Here's wishing that the New Year will bring joy, love, peace, and happiness to you. Wishing you a Happy New Year 2021, from our Hamburg family to yours!

To kick off the new year in January we will be starting our Second Step curriculum.

*During the school year we have concentrated on teaching and reinforcing Bucket Filling behaviors. These behaviors focused on Kindness, Empathy, Respect and Anti-Bullying behaviors towards oneself and others. We celebrated the Week of Respect this past October for all students and presented the Anti-Bullying Summit virtually for middle schoolers.*

*We addressed Anti-Drug and Safety with Medicine as we celebrated Red Ribbon Week. In*

*November and December we concentrated on Responsibility, Gratitude, Emotion Identification and Management. Through this year we have utilized the Lion's Quest curriculum to address these topics.*

*K-5 completed a community service project by making our local veterans a Veterans Day Card with special messages of gratitude.*

*We hosted virtual presentations for 6th and 7th graders with Child Assault Prevention in December.*

*It has been a busy year and we will continue to focus on SEL for our students throughout 2021.*





## **Goal-Setting**

As we begin 2021 it is important to encourage our children to start the New Year in a positive way. The New Year historically is a time where we look to set goals for things we want to change. Our children may be looking toward the New Year as an opportunity for renewal. Goal-setting is beneficial in many ways. It is a life skill necessary for success and happiness. It teaches children to be responsible for their own success and failures, to prioritize and manage their time, improves their self-esteem and confidence, and helps children identify their strengths and abilities.

Here are some activities to help your child set and reach their goals.

1. **Draw out goals:** This is a great way to visualize goals and dreams. Have your child draw out their vision for their future 1 year, 5 year or even 10

years from now. Keep the picture and display it for your child to see often.

2. **Keep a journal:** Have your child write their dreams, thoughts, feelings, achievements, ideas and anything else they can think of.
3. **Create a vision board:** Ask your child to find photos that represent each of their goals. They can glue it to the vision board and see it come to life as they attain their goals they have set for themselves.

These activities can be displayed in a prominent area of the house for all to see. This will boost self-confidence and allow your child to see their dreams as they come to life.



### **How do I stand in your shoes?**

Understanding how another person feels or “standing in their shoes” is an important social skill for children to learn. The ability to have empathy for others will help them interact and respond to others appropriately. Two ways for a child to understand how another person feels is:

1. Think of a time they had the same experience and think of how they felt.
2. Imagine how they might feel in the same situation.

It is important for children to understand that not everyone will feel the same way in a situation and that nonverbal cues might help us understand how a person might be feeling. You can encourage your child to build empathy skills by:

### **Model how to value feelings:**

Children are watching others to learn appropriate ways of behaving and interacting, and are known to be influenced by the behaviors they see around them. You can be a good role model by acknowledging other people’s feelings and showing understanding and sympathy when someone is sad, upset, distressed, frustrated or in need of help.

### **Setting an Example:**

Acts of kindness and charity are excellent examples of ways to teach

your child empathy. Consider regularly engaging in community service or other activities that engage in the community. Even better, consider doing this with your child. Show interest in others with different backgrounds who are facing challenges.

### **Connect Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviors:**

When talking about feelings connect behaviors with feelings for children so they understand cause and effect. Teaching children about cause and effect can also be done by stories, play acting or reading books. Talk to children about the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the characters. What might the characters do next? Connect these scenarios with the child’s own experiences. For example, if the character is sad because she misses her parents, connect that feeling to a time your child felt a similar feeling about something. This helps your child better understand the connection between feelings, thoughts and behaviors. For older children, ask them to “step into the mind” or take the perspective of another person.

Wishing you the best New Year Ever!

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