



Epping School District Mental Health and Wellness Newsletter Fostering Social and Emotional Development at Home

May 6, 2020

Dear Epping School Community,

Teachers across the district have been hard at work providing students with engaging lessons to complete at home. And we know parents have been hard at work as well trying to keep kids engaged in school and on track with reading, writing, math and all the other academic subjects. However, another very important part of education, namely fostering social and emotional development, is harder to do through remote learning. This is where parents can play a key role. Social emotional learning involves self-awareness, managing emotions and behaviors, social awareness and empathy, building healthy relationships, problem-solving, and decision-making. These are skills that research has found to be essential to success in school and work and in helping our children thrive as adults.

We need to make sure that our children continue to build and practice these skills in meaningful ways at home, especially considering that distractions and anxieties from our current situation are at an all-time high. Rest assured, it does not require fancy lesson plans, worksheets or long-involved activities. The biggest difference that parents can make is not WHAT they do, but HOW they do it. Below you will find some strategies that you can utilize to help your children continue their social and emotional learning while at home. Feel free to reach out with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Sarah Wagner and the Epping Counseling Department

FOSTERING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT HOME



Give the gift of presence. It is not how much time you spend with your children that matters, it is the quality of your attention when you do spend time with them. Be fully present through active listening:

- Give your full attention – try to eliminate distractions (like your phone)
- Show that you are listening - nod, say “I see”
- Notice any feelings – does your child seem frustrated, sad, worried?
- Reflect back what you hear/observe – “I understand that you want to see your friend. It sounds like you are sad about not being able to.”



Talk about feelings. Check-in with your children. Ask them about their feelings. Help them name their emotions if it is hard for them.



Teach empathy. Model sympathetic feelings toward others. If you see someone in distress (in real life, on TV, in a book, etc.), talk with your children about how that person must feel. Even a very short conversation can be effective.



Encourage kindness and service to others. Helping people in your community and acts of kindness are great ways to develop empathy and compassion for others. Check out this website for some ideas: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>



Promote cooperation and problem-solving. When your children have a problem or experience conflict, try not to jump in and solve it for them. Encourage them to come up with solutions. If it is a conflict with you, try to work together to solve it. Also, family games are a great opportunity to practice problem-solving and collaboration.



RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

Families First is offering opportunities for parents to connect with other parents online to help decrease the feeling of social isolation we are all facing. These groups are informal with no agenda except for sharing stories and ideas, venting frustrations and reminding ourselves that we are not alone as we get through this challenging time together.



Tuesday Evening Parent Recharge
weekly at 6:30 p.m.
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/540259112>
Meeting ID: 540 259 112

Thursday Morning Parent Recharge
weekly at 9:30 a.m.
<https://zoom.us/j/334557303>
Meeting ID: 334 557 303

Counselor/Psychologist email and office hours:

EES

Julie Kratimenos: Julie.kratimenos@eppingsd.org,
9:00am-12:00pm
Marianne McDonough: mmcdonough@eppingsd.org,
8:30am-10:00am, 2:00pm-3:30pm
Kathy Stanley-Berting: KStanley-berting@eppingsd.org, 8:00am-10:00am, 1:00pm-2:00pm

EMS

Sarah Wagner: swagner@eppingsd.org, 8:30am-10:00am, 1:00pm-2:30pm
Nick Degruttola: ndegruttola@eppingsd.org, 9:00am-12:00pm

EHS

Sarah Wagner: swagner@eppingsd.org, 8:30am-10:00am, 1:00pm-2:30pm
Julie Morin: jmorin@eppingsd.org, 9:00am-10:30am, 1:00pm-2:30pm
Melorah Bisallion: mbisallion@eppingsd.org
10:30am-1:30pm

Community Resources:

Dial 211 for statewide resources
Waypoint confidential support and advice for families: 1-800-640-6486
Seacoast Mental Health Center: 431-6703 and 772-2710
Unemployment assistance: www.nhes.nh.gov
Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-237-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text 741741
Community Partners: 516-9300
HAVEN: 994-SAFE (7233)