



Newmark Education

# Newmark Parent Update - Counseling & OT Tips

February 3, 2021



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## Newmark Counseling / OT Tips

Dear Newmark Parents,

The author John Steinbeck once said, "What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness." Winter time can be a difficult season for many, including those that experience seasonal affective disorders. The cold temperatures, the early sunset and darkness, the lack of outside activities and the feeling of social disconnection or isolation may feel especially unsettling this year. However, winter gives us an opportunity to embrace the quiet and calmness following the holidays and to focus on reflection and planning for our year ahead.

### **Counseling: What We Can Control**

As we settle in to this season, remaining focused on what we can control helps to maintain our emotional wellness and positive outlook. For example, we can't control the cold weather, but we can decide to embrace cozy blankets, hot chocolate, soothing candles and warm pjs! This [infographic](#) gives us a visual reminder of what we can control and read about [The Four Things You Can Control Starting Today](#) by Kendra Harvey.

### **Occupational Therapy: Tips To Stay Active**

The Pandemic has had a significant impact on our overall physical activity. In general, we are all living lives that require less movement and there is little to motivate us to be active, especially now with the

weather being cold. However, this has an impact on our overall health. In OT, we have noticed a significant decline in the endurance and strength of many of the students. Many students report feeling tired and out of breath after short bursts of activity.

While finding ways to incorporate movement into your child's day can be challenging, the benefits of movement and an active lifestyle include both improved physical and mental wellbeing. It improves attention and focus, helps to strengthen your muscles and bones, increases your energy level, reduces pain, and supports better sleep. Try these suggestions:

- **Go for a walk** – use a timer for children who may be resistant. Maybe start with 10 minutes and work up from there. You can walk around the house, around the block or around the backyard.
- **Obstacle course** - either inside or outside. Use paper plates, painter's tape, empty milk containers to step or jump over, crawl under a chair, run around the sofa.
- **Balloon Volleyball** – blow up a balloon and use a line to tap the balloon over and count how many times you can volley before it falls. Your child can tap the balloon against a wall or count how many taps they can keep it up before it hits the ground.
- **Play hide and seek** – it is fun for everyone and requires very little set-up/clean-up!
- **Scavenger Hunt** - send them to different locations where they have to do some kind of exercise.
- **Indoor snowball fight** – not sure what to do with all those papers your children no longer need from school? Scrunch them up into a ball and throw the “snowballs” at each other.
- **Movement Bingo** – create a [movement bingo board](#) and then play! (there are tons of them on Pinterest). Prizes are great motivators!

### **Functional Living Skills**

We encourage you to remain focused on teaching and practicing functional living skills at home. Some winter-based functional living skills include: [shoveling snow](#), dressing for cold weather, [preparing for power outages](#) and preparing a hot beverage (hot chocolate!). View more on our [Functional Living Skills Video Library](#).

If you have any questions, please contact us at 908-753-0330 or by email:

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Sincerely,

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