

October 2020

Pondering Parenting

Every month SMFCSD's Counselor Wellness Team, will share with you stories and guidance based in the 3R's: Routines, Relationships and Regulation, to help your family navigate the everyday puzzles that arise in supporting your learner(s).

Learning about Your Learner

By Nancy Wallin, School Counselor

The Challenge:

Are laptop lids in your house being slammed shut? Have you noticed that your student is more emotional - all of their feelings are on the surface? Do you feel like you have gone back to school yourself? Sounds like school life during a pandemic. We are here to help.

One of the first ways to tackle these challenges is to raise your own awareness about your 'knee jerk' reactions to your child's expression of emotion. Remember, when your student was learning in a classroom there were struggles. Comprehending new concepts, navigating friendships and interacting with adults were some of the daily experiences your student encountered. You heard about some of them, and some were just part of your child's learning experience that went without mention.

Well, now you are seeing each moment of struggle. You are witnessing your child growing as a learner. It's not easy — growth can be challenging and it's difficult to tolerate the discomfort of watching your child contend with novelty. It's okay.

First and foremost, it's imperative to let your child tussle with learning. Their teacher is there to shepherd them during school. Instead of participating in the class time, help your child reach out to their teacher during office hours if they need support. Guide them in the phrasing of questions that they need to ask. Resilience is created through trial and error, and mistakes are important to learning.

Of course, there is a space that you don't want your child to fall into — not being able to keep up, or not complete work —but we are encouraging you to remember the importance of student independence.

Regulation

We believe that Regulation is the basis for success. Regulation is the ability to manage impulses and big emotions. Moving our bodies and using our senses help us do this.

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- Encourage your child to stand for some of their classes
 - Remind your child to squeeze their arms, hands or shoulders to activate their nervous system
 - Offer 'shocks to the system' in the form of an ice cube on their neck, kinetic sand to play with or sandpaper to touch. This activates their autonomic nervous system.

Relationships

We believe that strengthening Relationships between caregiver and child can mitigate the challenges of transition.

- Participate in movement activities with your child (jumping jacks, dancing, hopping, cross body toe touches, etc.)
- Make eye contact with your child while participating in activities
- Create a daily special time with your child. Allow them to co-create the activity with you. It can be 10 or 15 minutes and can support both of you.

Routines

We believe that Routines that are consistent, expected and created with your child will support resilience building during difficult times.

- Pay attention to specific times that your child might need extra support and co-create activities that occur consistently (snack at 9:10, walk around the block at 10:15, etc)
- Maintain household routines, such as getting dressed in the morning or making lunch. Mimic the routines of a typical school day
- Create new routines that your child can participate in, such as helping cook dinner, write the menu, or set the table.

Additional Resources

Videos:

- [Elementary: Routines](#) (available in English, Spanish, Bengali, and Chinese)
- Ask the SMFCSD School Psychologist: [Managing Bedtimes and Chores](#)

Articles:

"Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home" [English](#) [Spanish](#)