January 2023

THE COUNSELORS' CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the
Elementary Counseling Department

What's in this month's issue:

THE IMPACT OF POSITIVITY FOR STUDENTS

In a 2018 study by Stanford University researchers looked at 240 children ages seven to 10 and found that "being positive improved their ability to answer math problems, increased their memories and enhanced their problem-solving abilities." Study author, Abigail Johnson Hess, goes on to state, "Schools across the country should dust off their 'If you believe it, you can achieve it' posters because scientists have discovered the brain pathway that directly links a positive attitude with achievement."

The research specifically pinpoints the ways in which a positive attitude improved the functions of the area of the brain responsible for memory. Memory is a core ability needed for all learning processes. The greater the memory, the greater the learning.

In the article linked *The Impact of Positivity for Students*, Melani Hess explains how powerful positive thoughts and practices can be for our students. She first discusses the impact on physical health including stronger immune responses and improved heart health. Positivity has so many more benefits including mental health benefits. Kids who are positive thinkers and practice positivity tend to be stronger problem solvers and have better coping skills and increased creativity. The academic benefits for kids include more effort put into schoolwork and increase success in school.

Parents are a student's first teachers and can model their attitudes and behaviors. Even though this article is geared towards students' benefits, we can all take notice of the information and strategies that can benefit all of us. In the article linked below, the author discusses practical, everyday strategies that we can all practice at home to increase positivity.

At school, positive thinking is discussed with students both in SEL class as well as in across the curriculum. Many educators may use something called Positive Affirmations to easily incorporate positive thinking into their day, as well as the student's day. Take a look at the article below to learn more about positive affirmations.

Abigail, J.Hess. (2018, February 5). (New Study from Stanford University finds that positivity makes kids more successful. CNBC. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/05/stanford-university-study-positivity-makes-kids-smarter.html).

DID YOU KNOW?

The SEL classes include lessons that teach students to use positive self-talk, set goals, practice new tasks, handle frustration, be honest when making decisions, and develop a sense of career awareness.

TRY IT AT HOME!

Goal Setting Activities for Children

1. Make a Bucket List

1. Gather your family together, grab a piece of paper and some markers.
2. Brainstorm a list of accomplishments, experiences, or achievements goals.
3. At the end of the year, you can look over all of the things your family has accomplished!

2. Make a Vision Board

1. Take some old magazines and ask your child to cut out pictures that represent their hopes and dreams.
2. Paste these pictures onto a poster board and decorate it with colors, glitter, stickers, etc.

3. Ask Fun Questions

1. Ask "What would you do if you won the lottery? If you had a superpower, how would you use it?"
2. Discuss that they can take their fate into their own hands by making a plan to achieve their hopes, goals, and dreams.

4. Interest Map

1. Older kids can learn a lot about themselves by paying attention to their interests.
2. Do they like art, science, writing or sport? Write down all their favorites interest. See if they can find patterns in the things they enjoy doing.
3. Once they see their interests mapped out they can create goals.

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS FOR KIDS

Positive affirmations are a powerful tool to gift to your child from a young age. Not only do they foster a positive self-image and growth mindset, affirmations also battle negative self-talk and assist in elevating a child's overall mood and well-being.

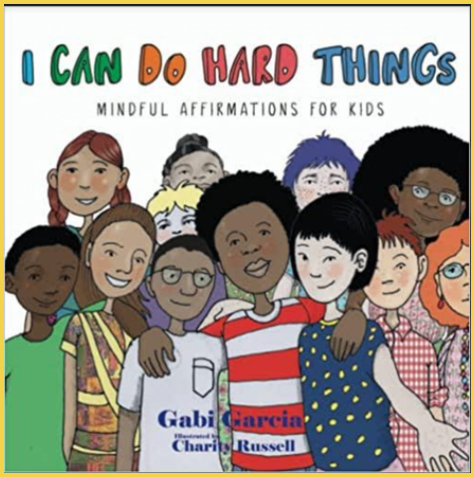
Affirmations can be verbally recited, written and/or listened to. However you choose to help your child implement affirmations, work to include them into their daily routine. Create them with your child or use a pre-scripted option. Here are some to start with:

For more information and examples of affirmations:
https://www.centervention.com/morning-affirmations-for-kids/
https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/positive-affirmations-for-kids/

SOCIAL STORY ABOUT GOAL SETTING

Click here to view a social story about "Goal Setting Gracie"

SEL BOOKS OF THE MONTH



What kids tell themselves matters! It becomes their inner voice. It can help them connect with their power within. Help your child tap into their inner strength and resilience when challenges arise. *I Can Do Hard Things* introduces children to the practice of using mindful affirmations for support and encouragement when they need it.