



Newmark Education Parent Alert

March 8, 2023

Counseling & Occupational Therapy Spring Tips

Dear Newmark Parents,

Spring is here and we couldn't be happier to embrace the promise of weather that allows us to get outside, increase our physical activity and connect with nature. Spring is a season of renewal that is full of hope and an opportunity to create new beginnings. Lady Bird Johnson said, "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." Here are some tips from our Counseling and Occupational Therapy departments to help your child.

Counseling: Focus on Nature and Well-Being

The World Health Organization defines mental health as: "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to her or his community." Studies have found that spending time in nature can provide numerous benefits to one's overall state of well-being. Interacting with nature can help reduce stress and anxiety, improve cognitive functions, lower blood pressure, increase self-esteem, promote social interactions and improve mood.

For those of us whose moods are impacted by the winter season, spring brings an opportunity for engaging in some activities that are naturally mood-boosting. Biking, taking walks and having a picnic with family are just some of the ways we can improve our mood and mental wellness. This [article](#) details the benefits and provides ideas about how to engage with nature for improved mental health.

Occupational Therapy: Let's Go Outside!

There may be some of you who were wishing for a more wintery winter, but for others, there is an excitement that Punxsutawney Phil (the groundhog) was wrong! With milder weather, we have the opportunity to get out of the house and connect with our community. When we go out into the world, we can introduce our children to different types of leisure activities that allow

them to explore possible new interests and socialize in a different way. Outdoor family activities can be a great way to practice skills that are worked on in school. For example, practicing body and spatial awareness when navigating a new environment. Students can also practice skills like bilateral coordination, strength and endurance when you do something like mini-golf or play games on the boardwalk. Picking fruit at one of the many farms can encourage fine motor strength and crossing the midline. Going to the zoo can give them the chance to use their map reading skills. It may be difficult to come up with activities to do outside. Here is an [article](#) from Jersey Family Fun which provides many ideas and locations to help you get out and spend some time enjoying the outdoors.

If you have any questions, please contact us at 908-753-0330 or by email. Happy Spring!

Sincerely,

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