

Monthly Newsletter

FAMILY TIMES

VOL. 2 ISSUE 3 • NOV 2022



Moore Public Schools
MENTAL HEALTH TEAM



Caregiver Corner

by Rendy Janssen, LMFT

Consent

When the word consent comes up people often automatically think of sex, and while consent is an important part of sexual interactions, consent is much more than that. Teaching consent at an early age helps children learn bodily autonomy and responsibility. Consent gives the opportunity to ask permission/give permission. For a long time, we have all been taught no means no, but perhaps you have seen the movement towards 'Yes means yes' in order to ensure that there is active agreement. Some ways to practice active consent in your own home:

- Ask for hugs/kisses from children (and wait until they say yes)
- When doing homework/reading ask, "can I read this to you?" or can I help with this?
- Dealing with loss, ask "Can I share this with your teacher or school counselor?"
- Model that consent is an ongoing process: "Do you like these tickles, or do you want me to stop for now?"
- Teach and encourage your child to ask for consent when playing with peers, "would you like the red or blue car?"

Remember that consent for kids is about teaching permission, boundaries and autonomy.

Sources: [Safesecurekids.org](https://www.safesecurekids.org/); [edutopia.org](https://www.edutopia.org/); [talkwithyourkids.org](https://www.talkwithyourkids.org/)

Community Events

by Elizabeth Asplin, CTRS/L

November

**4th- Fall Festival Arts & Craft Show at
6th Payne County Expo Center
Stillwater, OK 74074**

**5th Geekapalooza: STEAM Festival for
Kids at Girls Scouts of Western
Oklahoma Camp Trivera, OKC**

**12th- OKC Zoo Safari Lights-This winter,
30th go wild and fill your holiday
season with the magic of light**



Mental Health Discussion

By Summer King, LPC & LADC/MH

Did you know showing gratitude improves your mental health?

- *Expressing gratitude can improve your mood.* People who regularly express gratitude for the positive things in their life are shown to be happier overall, leading to lower rates of stress and depression.
- *Showing gratitude can make you more optimistic.* Studies show that those who express gratitude regularly appear to have a more positive outlook on life.
- *Sharing gratitude can improve social bonds.* People have reported feeling more loved and connected to others in their lives when they

routinely practice gratitude or those around them practice gratitude.

- *Practicing gratitude can improve your physical health.* People who actively express gratitude tend to be more engaged in activities to take care of their physical health which leads to higher energy levels, better sleep, and stronger immune system.

So in a season of being thankful, how do you increase gratitude in your family? As with many things this is something for you to model with your children and being vocal around showing thanks and having an attitude of gratitude with things you encounter. Here are some ways

to practice gratitude with your family:

- Start your day by writing down one thing that went well the previous day and why. Writing it down is important to allow you all to reflect back on actions and events – at the end of the year you could have a huge list of positives you have focused on throughout the year.
- When you find yourself feeling upset or frustrated, hit the pause button to reset your thinking. Is there something positive about the situation you can learn or grow from? Can you get out of that frustration by thinking instead of something different you are

thankful for?

- Go around the dinner table and have each person state something they are thankful for and be specific. This gives an intention for conversation and an opportunity to talk about the day in specific ways as well as address any lows for the day together.
- Share your gratitude with others by writing a note to someone you are grateful for – this could be a colleague, family member, teammate, etc. and pass along this gratitude to others.

Source: [The Mental Health Benefits of Gratitude](#)



Family Connections

By Elizabeth Asplin, CTRS/L

Volunteer: Gather the family and go volunteer out in the community. There are several ways to give back. Go to the food bank and help organize, go pick up trash at your neighborhood park, go pet animals at the local shelter to help them socialize. Volunteering as a family can be such a fun and rewarding bonding experience.

Leaf art: Go to the park or your yard and find different shapes of leaves. Once you have them gathered you can place them under blank paper and start coloring on top of the paper. You will be amazed how beautiful your leaf rubbing will turn out!

Fall Cooking: Fall is finally in the air and it's time to break out some of those favorite chilly weather recipes. Cooking together not only teaches important life skills and mathematics but teaches how to make things for others. From soups, casseroles and desserts, everyone has a go to recipe in the fall.



Behind every young child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first.”

– Matthew Jacobson

Academic Tools to Support Learning

By Katy Creecy, MSW, LCSW

Caregivers can encourage children to write in a variety of ways. Journaling can help kids process their daily experiences, but they can also be more directive. Create a Journal Jar with random questions for your child to answer in writing (e.g., “If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?”) If your child loves the outdoors, they can keep a Nature Journal to record observations of plants, rocks, and insects. Here are some other writing suggestions:

- “Convince Me” letter: Children write out their views about a specific disagreement with their caregiver (e.g., bedtime, allowance) using facts to argue their point.
- Postcard or letter to a loved one.
- Review It: Children write a review after visiting a new place.
- Explain It: Empower your child to write a “how-to” guide and let them be the expert.
- Recipe: Children write out the recipe while you cook a favorite dish together.

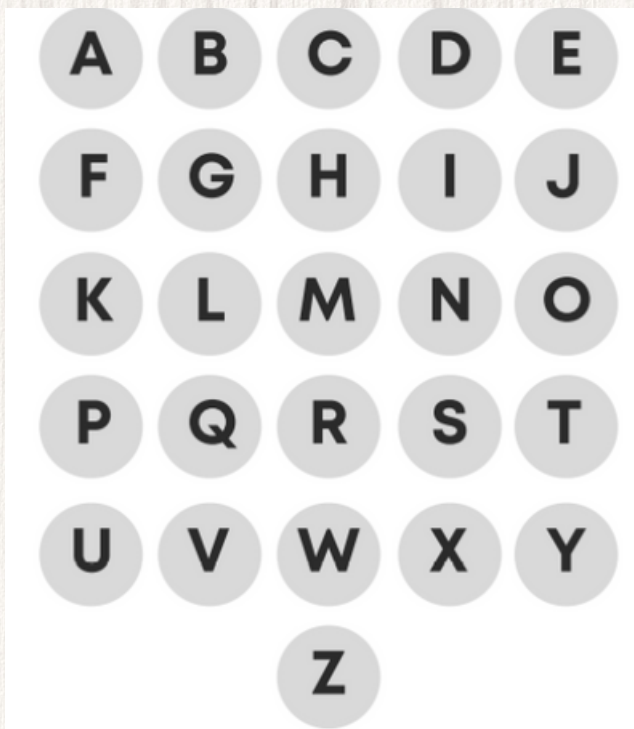
Source: Reading Rockets

D.I.F.Y– Do It For Yourself

by Davene Findlay-Williams, MSW, LCSW

Ideal self-care vs Reality

We all have this idea of what self-care should look like, but in reality, most times it may be as simple as completing a task. To clarify, when I use the term self-care, I don't just mean taking a bath & treating yourself. I mean doing things each day that give you a plan of action to live your best life, mentally & physically. Creating habits & practices that bring you and your family benefit. Your ideal version of self-care may have come about from what society views as self-care. Things like getting facials, taking long baths, going on trips etc. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that these are not great forms of self-care, but not everyone has the money or time to accommodate these types of self-care. Instead, try reshaping your mindset to silence outside influences when it comes to self-care habits, and try to make it a constant practice. While it would be great to consistently have the time to get 8 hours of sleep, workout, travel, meditate, spend time outside, spend time with family & friends daily, it is not reality for most parents. Instead try prioritizing, and wake up each day & ask yourself what feels good that day. Create healthy habits until they become a lifestyle choice. Finally, choose one thing that you will do for yourself once a month that makes you happy, and stick to it, no matter what.



ABC Grounding Strategy

by Elizabeth Asplin, CTRS/L

- Looking around the room or space that you are in, try to find something that begins with each letter of the alphabet.
- Too easy? Try to find the smallest of details.

APPLE NACHOS



Ingredients:

- 5 apples (Gala, Honeycrisp or Fuji recommended)
- 2 tablespoon peanut butter, almond butter, or nut butter of your choice
- ¼ cup chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Wash and slice apples. Arrange one layer of apples on a plate.
2. Drizzle half of the melted nut butter over apples.
3. Evenly sprinkle chocolate chips over apples.
4. Repeat process with remaining apples, nut butter and chocolate chips. Serve immediately.

Source: [Momma Fit Lyndsey](#)



Setting Up a Child's Account

By Taylor Wright, LPC-NCC

No one cares more about your child's well-being and success than you do. In today's digitally fueled world, that means guiding him or her not just in the real world but in the virtual world as well. By teaching your children to use technology in a healthy way, they can build healthy skills and habits that will make them successful digital citizens in the future.

Children in the elementary school age range will likely be using technology on a daily basis, especially with the push for technology in the classroom and having one-to-one access for every student. As they still look to you for guidance and boundary setting, this is a pivotal time to establish and reinforce the appropriate use of technology. A great place to start is by setting up a child's account.

Children in the elementary age range may need to use a computer for homework. The built-in parental controls in Windows (called Microsoft Family) and macOS (called Parental Controls in system preferences) can help you set time limits and limit apps and web usage that you as that parent deem appropriate for your child.

If you keep devices in a central location, such as a family room, you'll be better able to monitor your kids' tech usage and be more engaged with them when they go online. While setting up child accounts and keeping devices visible to all eyes in the family, it is important to remember these are just tools and structures that you are establishing in your household. They will help prevent some situations but the best preventative measure you can use is building connections with your child, establishing clear boundaries, and keeping the line of communication open with ongoing conversations about safety.

Source: [Smarter Living](#)

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