

FAMILY TIMES

Provided by the MPS Mental Health Team

Caregiver Corner

BY RENDY JANSSEN, LMFT

After School Slump

A common complaint from parents of kids of all ages is difficulty with kiddos' behaviors, particularly right after school.

Things that can help: a snack, some outside/active time to burn off energy, alternatively some down time for your student to decompress for a bit, and taking a break before starting any homework that they may have. Some kids may want to talk and tell you about their day, but many need some time to decompress. Giving your child some time to wind down and relax before asking them to jump right into homework, chores or other responsibilities can help them transition with a positive attitude.



Family Connection

BY ELIZABETH ASPLIN, CTRS/L

Get Your Color On!

Find your favorite coloring book or free draw with your child.

Make & Create Valentine's Day Cards

Make cards for each other & write about what you love & value about each other! Take it to another level and pick out people in your circle and write/create them a card.

Dance Party!

Crank up the tunes and dance the night away. Show your kiddos some of the awesome dance moves from your childhood!

Community Events

Date | Event

4th First Friday Gallery Walk:
Paseo district- 6:00pm

4th Yoga in the Park: Andrews
Park in Norman- 6:00-
7:00pm

5th Fishing Day in OKC: OKC
Parks- All Day

26th Metropolitan Library
Annual Book Sale:
Fairgrounds

It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.

-MAYA ANGELOU



Academic Tools to Support Learning

BY KATY CREECY, MSW, LCSW

Tips for helping children with homework:

1. Homework Schedule—build consistency, avoid interruptions, and check assignments at the end.
2. Rank the Assignments—help prioritize work based on due date, importance, or difficulty level.
3. Don't Hover—allow kids to develop independence.
4. Check Correct Problems First—build confidence through initial praise.
5. Never Let Homework Drag On All Night—allow a reasonable amount of time and communicate with the teacher.
6. Success Strategies for Textbook Assignments—read questions before reading the passage, record textbook passage as your child reads along.
7. Be Aware of Negative Non-verbal Messages—pay attention to your own facial expressions, body language, and posture.
8. Avoid Finishing Assignments for Your Child—help your child develop efficacy & allow teachers to observe possible challenges & needs.

Read more here: [Homework Tips](#)

Mental Health Discussion

BY SUMMER KING, LPC & LADC/MH

We know that any child benefits from a nurturing, trusting relationship with a safe adult. It is important that anyone who is involved in the care of a child understands the “whole child”. Dr. Siegel has explored love as being essential for helping children grow and thrive. He explains how our attachments with parents and caregivers can impact our relationships throughout life.

Sources: Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development (tcu.edu)

The science of love in childhood | UNICEF

Regulation Skill- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Ease your state of mind in stressful moments. If you are feeling stressed or anxious, bring your attention back to the current moment.

1. Notice 5 things that you can see around you.
2. Notice 4 things that you can touch around you.
3. Notice 3 things that you can hear around you.
4. Notice 2 things that you can smell around you.
5. Name 1 thing you like about yourself.





Easy Banana Pancakes!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- generous pinch of salt
- 2 very ripe bananas
- 2 medium eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 250ml whole milk
- butter, for frying

DIRECTIONS

- Mix the flour, baking powder & a generous pinch of salt into a large bowl.
- In a separate mixing bowl, mash the very ripe bananas with a fork until smooth. then whisk in the eggs, vanilla extract and milk. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Slowly pour in the wet ingredients & whisk together to create a smooth, silky batter.
- Heat a little butter in a large non-stick pan over a medium heat. Add 2-3 tbsp. of the batter to the pan and cook for several minutes, or until small bubbles start appearing on the surface. Flip the pancake over and cook for 1-2 minutes on the other side. Repeat with the remaining batter, keeping the pancakes warm in a low oven.
- Stack the pancakes on plates and top with the banana slices, syrup & a handful of pecans.

Source: [BBC Good Foods](#)

Tech Talk

BY DAVENE FINDLAY-WILLIAMS, MSW, LCSW

Age Appropriate Technology for Children

Much like television, the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) believes technology use should be limited for young developing minds. I personally believe in a “everything in moderation” approach. That said, it’s also important to realize that as a parent, it’s solely up to you and what you believe is best for your child. As no child is the same, nor is any parent.

3-4 Years: From 3-4 years old your child can now swipe and understand the effect. They enjoy apps with easy puzzles and games. Now is the time to consider investing in some of those LeapFrog toys or perhaps a tablet just for the child.

5-7 Years: Now the scary complicated stuff begins, from 4-5 they can begin to use the internet under supervision. By 5 kids can usually use a mouse and keyboard easily. Gamers everywhere can rejoice as kids can begin to indulge in active video games with the family. It is also a time to begin restricting the amount of time spent using these media devices as well as teaching them safe searching on the internet. Once kids begin to read and write their communication game really levels up and therefore so does their media use.

8-12 Years: Somewhere in between ages 8-12 the highly debatable question “Mom, Dad, can I get a cell phone?” will come up (I know, it’s crazy, my first phone was for emergencies only when I was in my first year of college!) As far as I can tell, there is no perfect age or answer to this question. A good approach that is recommended is to ask yourself, what will it be used for? Realize that a certain amount of emotional maturity is required (something that even some seasoned adults lack). Educate yourself and your child on cyber bullying, social etiquette and safety, and parental security settings.



D.I.F.Y.- Do It For You

BY TAYLOR WRIGHT, LPC-NCC

Exercise is another fundamental piece to self-care as not only does it improve physical health but also mental health. You almost certainly already know that an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic miseries such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and an earlier death. What you may not know are all the physical and mental health benefits of exercise. Exercise has been shown to reduce anxiety, depression, negative mood, social withdrawal, and improve self-esteem and overall cognitive function. Some of the primary health benefits from regular exercise include improved sleep, better endurance, stress relief, increased energy and stamina, reduced tiredness which can in turn increase mental alertness, weight reduction, reduced cholesterol, and improved cardiovascular fitness.

But how? Put simply: Exercise directly affects the brain. Regular exercise increases the volume of certain brain regions—in part through better blood supply that improves neuronal health by improving the delivery of oxygen and nutrients; and through an increase in neurotrophic factors and neurohormones that support neuron signaling, growth, and connections. Of critical importance for mental health is the hippocampus—an area of the brain involved in memory, emotion regulation, and learning. Now, how often do you consider the contribution of physical exercise to your mental health? Exercise is well known to stimulate the body to produce endorphins and enkephalins, the body’s natural feel-good hormones which can make problems seem more manageable. The simple act of focusing on exercise can give us a break from current concerns and damaging self-talk.