

FAMILY TIMES

Provided by the MPS Mental Health Team



Caregiver Corner

BY RENDY JANSSEN, LMFT

How many times have you picked your child up from school or sat around the dinner table and asked them about their day only to hear that it was “fine”, “good”, or “okay”? Your child answered your question and yet you know nothing more about what their day was actually like. This may leave you frustrated or feeling like your bid for connection with your child was ignored or dismissed. Most kids want to share about their day and here are some questions to ask that can help you get the information you really want to know. Give these questions a try and see if you can connect with your child a little easier. Share about those things from your day as well.

What was the best part of your day?

The worst part of your day?

What is something new you learned or worked on today?

Who did you play with at recess/what did you play?

What specials did you go to today and what did you do while you were there?



Family Connection

Game Night!

Dust off those board games! Twister, Uno, Sorry, Candyland and so much more! Board games are sure to bring the family all together for some face to face time to build connection for the whole family!

Take a Walk Together!

Sometimes we just need to get up and move! Go on a short or long walk and enjoy each others company! This time together can build connections, build healthy family habits, and provide a safe space to talk about silly things or the hard stuff.

Community Events

Date | Event

- 1st-12th Exhibit in the Dark: Sam Noble Museum Tuesday-Saturday 9am-5pm, Sunday 1pm-5pm
- 3rd First Friday Gallery Walk: Paseo Arts District 6pm-9pm
- 10th Friday Night Bites: Moore Multipurpose Pavilion Amphitheater 6pm-9pm
- 17th Movies in the Park-High School Musical: Lions Park 7pm-9pm
- 16th-26th OK State Fair: Fairgrounds

Children don't say, "I had a hard day at school today. Can we talk?" They say, "Will you play with me?"

LAWRENCE J. COHEN



Academic Tools to Support Learning

BY KATY CREECY, MSW, LCSW

Families can find creative ways to infuse math skills into their daily routines while building connection. Mealtime is a great opportunity to boost math skills by encouraging kids to count, measure, estimate, compare, and recognize shapes as they help you prepare dinner. While cleaning up, kids can even count dirty dishes or estimate how many dishes can fit in the dishwasher.

Source: Brookes Publishing Blog

Mental Health Discussion

BY SUMMER KING, LPC & LADC/MH

All children have worries and fears from time to time during different parts of their development. Anxiety disorders may be diagnosed when a child does not outgrow typical fears and worries or they interfere with school, home, or other activities. Some common types of anxiety are separation anxiety, phobias, social anxiety, general anxiety, and panic disorder. Anxiety may show up as fear or worry but especially when young people aren't able to talk about that we may see behaviors like being irritable or angry. Some other areas for parents to remain alert to are trouble sleeping, headaches, or stomachaches.

Sources: Anxiety and Depression in Children | CDC

Regulation Skill- Belly Breathing

Self-regulation is a skill that is developed throughout childhood that helps children meet their needs. A few examples are sitting still during the school day, waiting until after dinner for dessert, and putting on a sweater when they are cold. Additionally, if it has been modeled by their caregivers, they begin to regulate their own emotions and emotional responses. The following is a regulation skill to help start a foundation of deep breathing.

1. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
2. Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four, making sure your belly is expanding and not your chest.
3. Exhale through your mouth for a count of four. Continue this breathing cycle for a few minutes.
4. Feel the stress leave your body while your mind becomes calm.





Frozen Yogurt Fruit Bites

Ingredients: 1- 5.3 ounce container of vanilla Greek yogurt & 1- 1/3 cup fresh raspberries (or your favorite berries)

Combine ingredients in a bowl & mash with a fork. Using a small spoon, place the mixture into silicone molds or put into a baggy and cut a small hole into one corner and place small drops onto a baking sheet. Place directly into your freezer and freeze for 4-6 hours or until bites are solid. Pop bites from molds and enjoy!
Source: weelicious.com

Tech Talk

BY DAVENE FINDLAY-WILLIAMS, MSW, LCSW

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, children ages 8-12 in the United States spend 4-6 hours a day watching or using screens, and teens spend up to 9 hours. Our children are exposed to violence and risk-taking behaviors, sexual content, substance use, cyberbullies and predators. Too much screen time may lead to: sleep problems, lower grades, less reading, not enough, physical activity, mood changes, less family fun time, and less relaxation.

It is important for parents to familiarize yourself with programming to make sure it is age-appropriate., be aware of advertising and how it influences choices, encourage your child to learn other activities such as sports, music, art, and hobbies that do not involve screens, set a good example with your own safe and healthy screen habits, teach children about online privacy and safety, encourage using screens in ways that build creativity and connection with family and friends, and finally consider your child or teen's maturity and habits. The right plan for one family may not be a good fit for another.

Positive and healthy screen use is possible with proper guidance and consistency.

Source: aacap.org



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

BY TAYLOR WRIGHT, LPC-NCC

You may be asking yourself— so what? Why does it matter if my needs are met? The best answer comes in the form of an old proverb—you cannot pour from an empty cup. When we neglect self-care, all other areas of our lives are neglected as well. We cannot provide to others when we are struggling ourselves, at least not to the best of our ability. Here are four questions you can ask to help you prioritize self-care without adding more stress.

- Are there changes I want to make?
- What activities bring me joy?
- Where can I add self-care to my busy schedule?
- How will self-care make me happier?