November 2023

THE COUNSELORS' CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the
Elementary Counseling Department

What's in this month's issue:

HOW TO HELP KIDS LEARN TO FAIL

As educators and parents striving to encourage and ensure student well-being, we often work with children who seem to give up too easily. Some children are excited by a new challenging task, seeing it as an opportunity to test themselves and improve. Others see the challenge as insurmountable, and don't even want to take that first step. But before we label either of these types of learners, we need to realize that all children are capable of tackling challenges in their learning, and in their lives. Some children just need to realize they can!

Not learning to tolerate failure leaves kids vulnerable to anxiety (Arky, 2023). It leads to meltdowns when the inevitable failure does occur, whether it's at school, at home, or in the community. And perhaps even more important, it can make kids give up trying—or trying new things. Unfortunately, as the world puts increased pressure on kids to be winners, parents and educators can feel compelled to enable them in every way possible, which results in more and more kids who become distraught over even the smallest misstep.

Therefore it's imperative that both teachers and parents normalize the idea that it's okay to fail at first, or not be the best at something the first time you try a task or challenging activity.

It's inevitable that students will encounter a number of setbacks and obstacles in every aspect of their lives. No one is perfect, and neither is life. The first time students fail, it hurts and can be discouraging. However, bouncing back from failure teaches them to be more resilient in the future. While it's normal to feel that things that come easily are more enjoyable, the truth is that the more we work for something, the more we appreciate it in the end. The value of hard work is something that is learned best by experience—and failure can be the best teacher. When we fail, it can motivate us to do better and try harder. Through this process, we can begin to see the value of our efforts instead of focusing solely on the outcome.

Perseverance in the face of a difficult challenge can also promote creativity. When students fail, they have the opportunity to learn even more than they would have if they succeeded. When trying to succeed at something they previously failed, they don't use the same approach. They recognize the need for a new strategy and forces them to go back to the drawing board and search for improvements.

Source: https://childmind.org/article/how-to-help-kids-learn-to-fail/

WAYS TO PRACTICE PERSEVERANCE AS A FAMILY

Perseverance is a skill that we need throughout our lives. Perseverance is simply defined as not giving up in the face of challenges or disappointment. A child's ability to persevere is a predictor of their future success in accomplishing goals and overcoming obstacles.

- Set small attainable goals to build stamina. This allows your child to meet small goals and build toward bigger goals
- Normalize mistakes and use them as opportunities to grow
- Encourage a growth mindset
- Discuss feelings and strategies with your child when challenges arise
- Provide praise and encouragement when your child is working toward something
- Give them the opportunity to deal with minor setbacks

Thenoux, F. (2022, December 16). 5 ways to practice perseverance as a family. PBS. https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/5-ways-to-practice-perseverance-as-a-family

DID YOU KNOW?

Throughout our SEL curriculum students will learn perseverance by identifying and practicing strategies to cope with stress using positive self-talk, self-regulation skills, and problem-solving techniques.

TRY IT AT HOME!

Embrace challenges.

An uncomfortable feeling brought on by a struggle is actually a good thing and is a sign that your child is on the cusp of a new stage. Remind yourself that these are "growing pains" and say, "It's okay to be uncomfortable." Getting comfortable with being uncomfortable is a great step toward supporting your child's development.

SEL BOOKS OF THE MONTH