February 2024

THE COUNSELORS' CONNECTION

The Newsletter of the
Elementary Counseling Department

What's in this month's issue:

HELPING CHILDREN LEARN THE ART OF APOLOGIZING

Apologizing can be a tricky skill for children to master. Here you will find some tips to help turn a forced "I'm sorry" into a genuine expression of empathy.

Develop Empathy: Encourage your child to think about how the other person may be feeling. Accomplish this by asking wondering questions such as, "I wonder how you might feel if someone did/said that to you?"

Accept Responsibility: Support your child in understanding that an apology is not only about purposeful actions, but also about taking responsibility for accidental wrongdoings. It's okay to make mistakes but it is also important to acknowledge and apologize for them. Accepting responsibility means saying, "Yes, I did it," and understanding that all actions have consequences.

Discuss Next Steps: By combining what your child has learned about a situation through empathy (I've hurt someone), and accepting responsibility for causing those feelings, they are ready to offer an apology that is more than just an "I'm sorry." Meaningful and successful apologies often include an offer to help fix/repair the situation or inquire about what is needed to feel better.

Identify Situations That Do Not Warrant an Apology: Not every situation necessitates an apology. Help your child differentiate through discussion and role-play. If someone is hurting your child because they were unwilling to do what was being requested, that is not grounds for an apology. Additionally, if a peer wants your child to do something unsafe or against the rules and your child refuses, there is no need to apologize.

When Your Child is the Recipient of an Apology: Just as it is important to know how to engage in an apology, it is also equally important for your child to understand how to respond. Children (and adults too) will often say, "That's ok," when they are on the receiving end. However, being hurt or mistreated is not ok and it is important to foster this understanding. A better response to teach is, "Thank you. I accept your apology."

To read more, visit:
https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/5-steps-to-teaching-kids-to-say-im-sorry

TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY

Teaching accountability and responsibility can become quite challenging for children to understand. However, children must learn this skill from a young age to be successful both academically and socially. Oftentimes, when we talk about accountability and responsibility, we are almost always using a negative connotation, implying that the person is being punished or is in some sort of trouble. However, it's important to frame accountability and responsibility as admirable and a means of learning. Below are tips and helpful ways to instill accountability in our children's lives from a recent article from Tutor Doctor:

Don't make excuses for them: If your child finds themselves in a situation that is avoidable and created by their own doing, it's important to allow them to learn from it rather than avoid the situation.

Model appropriate behavior: Even as adults, we make mistakes and require us to take responsibility! It's important to try our best to lead by example, showing our children how to respond to situations even if it may not be easy.

Follow through: Oftentimes we remind our children that there are consequences to their actions. If our children continue to misbehave, they will be grounded! However, sometimes our identified consequences may not be seen to fruition. It is important to always try our best to follow through. If we are not consistent or find ourselves helping them too much to avoid the direct repercussions of their actions, we are taking away much of their accountability, and as a result, decrease their understanding of responsibility.

Teach them to see failure in a positive light: Nobody likes to fail! It often feels bad, and strong emotions can often accompany failure. However, it's important to remember that setbacks in life can help us to develop resilience and coping skills. Moreover, it develops our children's ability to independently problem solve when they find themselves in similar situations in the future. Finally, it gives our children the confidence to know that everyone makes mistakes and that's okay!

Click Here to read the full article

TRY IT AT HOME!

Use A Chore Chart to Teach Responsibility

Chores can instill an important sense of responsibility as children grow. Chores can help your child to feel connected and valued in your family. Chores build confidence, reach responsibility, and help children to build connections and to mature.

DID YOU KNOW?

Throughout our SEL curriculum students will learn how to make caring, responsible, and constructive choices, as well as take responsibility for personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

SEL BOOKS OF THE MONTH