

Conejos Connections

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Thoughts from the Principal

Happy September Chamiza!

September is National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness Month. While these topics can feel heavy, mental health awareness at the elementary school level is all about building strong connections, expanding emotional language, and ensuring our children know they are never alone. With the school year in full swing, changes in routine can stir up a wide range of emotions—from excitement to anxiety. Taking care of our children's minds is just as important as taking care of their bodies, and building healthy emotional habits starts early.

Here are three simple, age-appropriate ways to talk about mental health with your elementary student this month:

1. Expand Their Emotional Vocabulary

Young children often lack the words to describe complex emotions. They might say their "tummy hurts" or act out when they are actually feeling anxious, frustrated, or left out. Help them label their feelings by normalizing all emotions. You can say, "It is completely normal to feel sad, angry, or worried sometimes. What does a worried feeling feel like in your body?"

2. Ask Specific, Open-Ended Questions

When checking in after the school day, swap out generic questions like "How was school?" for specific, open-ended prompts that invite deeper conversation. Try asking:

- "What made you smile at recess today?"
- "Did anything feel hard or frustrating today?"
- "Who did you sit with at lunch, or who did you play with?"
- "What is a mistake you made today, and what did you learn from it?"

3. Model Healthy Coping Strategies

Children learn how to manage stress by watching the adults around them. Be transparent about your own feelings in a kid-friendly way, and show them how you handle tough moments. For example, you might say, "I had a really busy day at work and feel a bit overwhelmed, so I'm going to take a few deep breaths and go for a quick walk to help my mind rest."

We Are Partnering with You

Our school counselors, teachers, and staff are working daily to cultivate a safe, caring, and inclusive environment. If you notice sudden, persistent changes in your child's sleep patterns, eating habits, mood, or interest in activities they usually love, please remember that you do not have to navigate it alone. Reach out to your child's teacher or school counselor so we can partner together to support them.

Thank you for everything you do to foster a compassionate and supportive community for our students!

~Principal Dudley

Chamiza Mission Statement

At Chamiza Elementary, our mission is to instill the love of learning to create lifelong learners who are academically, socially, and emotionally strong and who know how to advocate for themselves. We achieve this through purposeful communication, consistent teaching, and providing life experiences that help our students grow.

Attendance

To report an absence, log on to parentvue or call our attendance line at 505-897-5174 and then press 2. Please report all absences. Then, on the next day at school, please provide the clerk with a copy of a doctor's (or other) note stating the reason for the absence. Absences are excused if they are for illness, medical, health or legal appointments for the student, limited family emergencies, family deaths, religious commitments, Tribal obligations, deployment of a military parent/guardian or limited extenuating circumstances as approved in advance by the school principal.

School Lunches

The first school lunch is provided free of charge to students. However, some students may still be hungry and may want additional milk, an extra entrée, or a second full meal.

Families can create a free account at MySchoolBucks.com to add funds to their student's account for additional items.

Additional meal prices are:

- Milk: \$0.60
- Main entrée: \$3.00
- Full meal tray: \$4.00

Upcoming Calendar Events

8/31-9/4 - 5th Grade Field Trip - STARBASE
9/2 Instructional Counsel @7:30 am - Community welcome and encouraged to join.
9/7 Labor Day No School
9/10 PTA meeting @ 5:30 pm
9/16 Instructional Counsel @7:30 am
9/16 PreK PD - No school for PreK only
9/22 Fall Picture Day
9/23 Open House @ 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
9/25 Jog-a-thon
10/2 Balloons Aloft @7:15