

St. Joe's Counselor's Corner-May/June 2016

--Jennifer Moyer-Taylor

****HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MAY****

K-Friendship Groups 1st-4th -Snack and Chat
4th-Upstanders 5th-Differences between normal conflicts and bullying 6th-Final Projects
7th/8th-Peer Mediation Program Parenting Class-Monday Nights

IT'S ELEMENTARY (K-4)-Teaching Self-Management

An excellent resource at www.parenttoolkit.com offers some great tips on teaching kids self-management. Here are a couple ways to help your child develop this skill. For one, help him/her how to deal with stress. Discuss strategies that could help him/her feel better-such as taking a walk together, playing outside, listening to music or another activity that he/she enjoys. Secondly, you can share your own struggles with your child to teach him/her about resiliency. "When I did not make the soccer team, I practiced and practiced and then I got a spot on the team the next year." Thirdly, talk to your child about the process it would take for him/her to reach their dreams. Lastly, compliment your child whenever he/she delays gratification. This is an important skill and will serve him/her well in the future.

IN THE MIDDLE (5-8)-Decision-Making Skills

Decision-making is an important skills for the middle schooler. Here are some strategies to help you encourage decision-making skills. The first tip is to define safe and smart choices with your middle schooler. Strategize what she/he could do if they are stuck at a friend's house and want to go home to avoid a negative situation. Secondly, support your middle schooler's decisions. Even for the decisions you don't agree with. Give your child the opportunity to make amends if his/her decisions hurt you or someone else. Lastly, bring your middle-schooler into discussions about family issues. Involve him/her into discussions about dinner, dealing with issues impacting other family members, etc. This may foster a higher comfort level and open the door for him/her to share future decisions that are about school or friends in the future.

My kindergartner has trouble playing well with others.

ASK THE COUNSELOR...

Q- My kindergartner seems to have trouble playing with his friends. How can I help him?

A-Kindergartners are learning social skills and still need structure and help when navigating a playdate. It may help to have a mix of structure and unstructured time together. I would also limit the amount of time on the playdate to 2 hours the first few times. This can help the playdate be a success. Also there are a couple great resources for children who have difficulty with social skills. Two wonderful books are *Good Friends Are Hard To Find* by Fred Frankel and *The Unwritten Rules Of Friendship* by Natalie Madorsky Elman and Eileen Kennedy-Moore.

Thank you!

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