

St. Joe's Counselor's Corner-September 2016

--Jennifer Moyer-Taylor

****HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SEPTEMBER****

K-3-Social-Emotional Learning/Self-Awareness **1st-3rd** -Snack and Chat

4th-Girls' Groups **5th-6th**-Life & Leadership/Self-Awareness

7th/8th-Peer Mediation Program Training September 22nd 3-6:00 PM

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

An excellent resource at www.parenttoolkit.com offers some great tips on teaching kids self-awareness. Here are a couple ways to help your child develop this skill. Self-awareness encompasses empathy, kindness, respecting differences, and fostering curiosity. You can help your child develop these skills by doing community service together, weave lessons of kindness into your daily routine, pointing out feelings in photos and t.v. characters, provide opportunities to engage in creative play with friends.

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

Decision-making is an important skill 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!

Jennifer Moyer-Taylor