

PEARL RIVER PARENT CONNECTION

A newsletter brought to you by PRSD School Clinicians

Fall 2020



Fostering an Attitude of Gratitude

As we begin the holiday season it is important to take a moment to reflect on all the good things in our lives. While 2020 has certainly been a year of change, disruption, loss and stress it has also taught us to remember what is important. Research has shown that people who experience gratitude have more positive emotions, such as joy, love, and happiness; have fewer negative feelings, such as bitterness, envy, and resentment; have increased feelings of connectedness and improved relationships; experience greater satisfaction with school and improved academic achievement; and even have better physical health than people who don't take the time to notice and appreciate the good things in life. Parents can help their children develop the attitude of gratitude through some simple acts and activities. Here are some simple easy ways to encourage and express gratitude every day.

Model practicing gratitude. Emotions are contagious. Express thanks to family and friends who have helped. Consider writing a note to someone who has made a difference in your life.

Share gratitude as a family. Take time during meals for family members to share at least one thing each person is grateful for. This can be balanced with one thing that was difficult that day but starting with the positive reinforces positive connections and builds resilience.

Create a Gratitude Jar. Decorate a jar and have family members fill it with positive affirmation, people/ things they are grateful for.

Consider as a family to donate items or time to an organization for people in need. Helping others is always a great way to experience how kindness can make a difference in others lives and help us to remember how lucky we are.

[SEL Gratitude video](#)
Resource Nasponline.org

Communique Handout November 2009
[Gratitude Mindfulness activity](#)

Managing behaviors during a pandemic

Disciplining and/or parenting our children may look different during a pandemic. Children's lives often revolve around seeing their friends and exploring the world. Children often benefit from structure, routine and predictability. Access to social situations and predictability is much harder to attain during a pandemic. Young children don't always know how to cope with these feelings, so they may come out as behaviors. You may see more "over reactions" than usual. For example, crying over a small rip in a paper or having the wrong type of macaroni for lunch. Here are some tips for handling misbehavior in children and adolescents:

- **Respond to misbehavior with empathy.** Then, remind your children of rules and expectations.
- **Validate feelings-** "Oh, buddy, you're having such a hard time," or, "Oh, wow, you seem really angry right now".
- **Consider, for instance, how you approach your children when they are sick.** You're probably much more patient and tolerant of their outbursts, because you know they're not feeling well. The situation now isn't that different: When kids act out during a crisis, they are essentially saying, "I really need help right now". "I'm having a hard time,"
- **Address behavior-** After they (and you) have calmed down, address why their behavior wasn't acceptable. You can say, "The way you talked to me hurt my feelings," or "It's OK to be mad, but it's not OK to hurt your brother,"
- **Problem solve a solution-** Ask them what they think they should do next to remedy the situation. Should they apologize or clean up the mess they made?
- **Identify strategies that will help them the next time-** Could they take a few deep breaths or go yell in their room? Could they ask you for help or a hug?

Resource: Discipline Looks Different During a Pandemic, Melinda Wenner Moyer, NY Times April 17, 2020



Household Items that can be used as Fidgets during remote learning

1. Chip clips
2. Magnet clips (Oxo brand are very sturdy) that attach to the fridge that are also squeezable to open- shut. if you put one on your finger it doesn't hurt. you can also clip it to your clothing.
3. Play-doh- small tubs are nice because it is just a little bit. The container itself- opening and closing it can be a fidget.
4. Empty containers with snap top lids/ twist top lids (yogurt, mayo, mustard, pb, jelly)
5. Make a stress/squeeze ball out of balloon and flour/rice
- 6 Paper clips and alligator clips on and off a piece of cardboard could be a thing
7. Zipper bag (zip lock) with the moveable zipper
8. Rubber/elastic bands around a wrist
9. Use a torn tee-shirt to make a chair fidget. Strap a long piece of tee-shirt material across the legs on the front of the chair for student to kick against
10. Several Beads on a piece of string or pipe cleaner.
11. Combine soda tabs on a keyring, pipe cleaner or piece of string.
12. Glue/tape small piece of Velcro to underside of desk/table
13. Large nuts and bolts to twist up and down

