

PEARL RIVER PARENT CONNECTION

A newsletter brought to you by PRSD Clinical Staff

June 2020

Dear Parents and Families,

The end of the school year can be difficult for some students, but for this year, that has only been amplified. Without knowing it at the time, students had their last day of in-person classes months ago, and have had to forgo typical end of the year activities and celebrations. This is definitely less than ideal for so many students.

With the school year coming to a close, we wanted to share a few tips for providing closure as we wrap up the school year. Please find several tips and strategies below for some ideas, as we head into the summer, on what you can do and say to help your child.

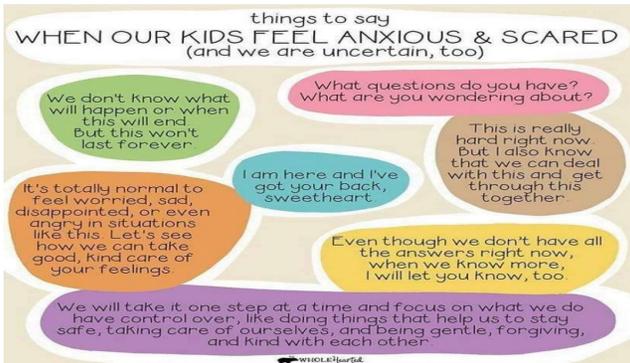
Things to Remember

- This school year has been different than anything your child has experienced before. While the end of the year might be a fun time for your child normally, you may notice that he/she is dealing with more difficult emotions this year.
- The end of the year is often filled with celebrations, and fun activities that your child gets to experience with friends. This year, your child was unable to experience those events, which may leave your child grieving these times.
- Further, these changes may have caused a wide range of emotions. Depending on the age and ability of your child, they may not be able to articulate how they are feeling.
- Instead, these emotions may come out in this misbehavior, frequent tears, or being argumentative. If this happens with your child, try to show a little extra grace and remember this may just be how they're expressing their frustration, anxiety, and sadness that they may be feeling.

What You Can Do:

- With all those things in mind, let's talk about some things that families can do to make this transition easier for children.
- Although your child may have difficulty expressing how they feel, it's important to still talk about what feelings they may be experiencing during this time.
- You can ask them directly how they're feeling, share how you feel, or even invite your child to draw pictures about what they are doing or how they are feeling during this time.
- Encouraging and modeling this, your child will have a chance to express their own feelings, but they understand that it is okay to feel nervous, angry or sad during this time.
- Another powerful activity can be encouraging them to write letters to their friends or teachers that they won't be seeing for a while. This can provide some of the closure that they need. It can also be helpful to write a letter to the school year in general. Although this would be symbolic, giving them a chance to reflect on both the great things and the hard things will allow them to process what they're going through.

What You Can Say:



- The first thing to remember is to acknowledge that your child's feelings are valid. To do this, you can say things like “I know this is hard,” or “Missing your friends and teachers must make you feel sad.”
- Remind your child that you are there to support them. A great way to do this is by using the word “lets.” For example, “Let's talk about this,” or “Let's think about what we can do.” Using this terminology reminds them that they are not facing this alone.

- Lastly, I want to encourage you to help your child reflect on, and talk about, the school year. It may seem like this would bring up more negative emotions, but allowing a child to share what they enjoyed, and what they may have missed can be a great way to help them safely process what has happened.

Helping Children Talk About Race and Social Injustice:

- In light of the recent events in our country parents may be struggling with how to initiate a conversation with their children about social justice and racism. Here are a few ideas to think about and references to assist you in beginning a conversation with your children.
- Children are tuned in to the concept of Fairness. This can be a starting point for a conversation. What does Fairness mean?
- Ask your children what they know about recent events, protests etc.
 - What do they think about the events that have occurred?
 - Have any of their friends been talking about it?
 - What have they heard or seen on T.V. ?
- Be simple, brief, and as honest as you can but avoid down playing the events such as this will never happen here. Don't be afraid to say I don't have an answer.
- Most importantly let your child know you love them, you are doing everything you can to keep them safe and you are available to listen and answer their questions.
- Books can be a great springboard for starting a conversation. Here are some book suggestions for your consideration.
 - A Kids Book About Racism- Jelani Memory
 - I'm Gonna Push Through - Jasmyn Wright
 - Unequal City- Carla Shedd
- Please find helpful resources below:
 - [Releases “Talking About Race” Web Portal | National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)
 - [How to celebrate diversity in early childhood](#)
 - [5 Actionable Resources for Raising Anti-Racist Kids – Our Home Becoming](#)
 - [How to talk to kids about race and racism, according to experts](#)