



Counselor Connection

Monthly Newsletter for Parents and Families
Volume 4.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Can you believe it is 2021? Many challenges were thrown our way during 2020. I'm sure many of us can't wait for a fresh start! The start of a new year is the perfect time for us to set New Year's Resolutions. We get excited to set goals for ourselves but often wonder how we are going to keep them alive! Below I have some tips for you to help make it easier.

- Make sure your resolution is specific! The more detailed you are, the easier it will be to focus on what you need to do to be successful. For example, instead of saying "I will exercise more"...Be specific! "I will exercise four days a week for 30 minutes each day."
- Write your goal down on paper! It sounds silly but its as simple as that. People who write down their goals, have a higher chance of accomplishing them! It makes them feel accountable. Put your goal on the fridge, on your mirror, on a calendar, somewhere in writing so that you will see it each day!
- Share your resolutions with others! We are more likely to accomplish our goals when we make them public. Sharing our goals with others makes us feel accountable and makes it much more difficult to back out! Tell a family member or good friend about your resolution and they can help you stay on track!
- Plan! Plan exactly what you are going to do to achieve your goal. Brainstorm what exactly achieving your goal will look like and the steps you have to take to reach success. I tell my students if you have a goal of getting a good grade on your math test you have to make a list of what exactly needs to be done. For example: study (what does that look like - be specific!), get a good night's sleep the night before, eat a healthy breakfast the morning of and ask the teacher a question if you don't understand, etc.
- Check in with yourself! Sometimes we get overwhelmed with the goal we set and realize it was unrealistic. Instead of giving up completely - re-evaluate, tweak, and revise your resolution to make it work for you!
- Celebrate small successes! Use a journal to help keep track of your progress. Reward yourself when you make successful baby steps! This will help keep you motivated and working hard.
- Remind yourself it's okay to make mistakes and slip up. It happens, no one is perfect. If you get derailed, it matters how you handle it. Get right back on track. Think about what you can do differently next time to prevent it from happening again, rather than dwell on the mistake.
- Believe in Yourself! Having a positive attitude is everything! If you think positively and believe you can do it, you more likely will be successful. If and when you do accomplish your resolution make sure to celebrate your success and be proud of yourself.

Character Counts!

During the month of January, we will be learning about Tolerance. Learning happens best when it is done both at school and at home. Below are some ways that you can help your child continue to learn about the importance of being tolerant of other people and their differences!



Read Together!

Different Just Like Me by Lori Mitchell
Whoever You Are by Mem Fox
Teach Your Dragon About Diversity by Steve Herman
The Sandwich Swap by Rania Al-Abdullah
The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss
Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr



Talk it out!

What does Tolerance mean?

Talk about someone who is different from you and how your differences are a good thing.

Discuss ways that you can show acceptance at school.

Discuss what the world would look like if everyone were the same.

Below are some tips to help you teach your child about Tolerance:

- Pay attention to how you speak to others. Are you being tolerant? Demonstrate respect for other people. Kids pay close attention to the words you say and the way you act. Be mindful that your child is listening and watching you. Think carefully about what you say before you say it. Avoid joking and degrading name calling. Promote respectful behaviors in your home by demonstrating empathy and compassion through your words and actions. Treat others with kindness and respect and your child most likely will too.
- Your child will notice differences among other people and may have questions and want to talk about it. If your child has questions, answer honestly and respectfully. It is okay to discuss these questions in a respectful way. Respond to their questions even if you aren't sure what to say. If you don't know how to respond, tell your child you will come back to them with an answer soon. If you ignore their questions, your child will think its not okay to talk about differences and that it is an uncomfortable topic.
- Choose to watch movies or television shows with your family that value differences or choose to read stories that focus on this as well. Media is very powerful. When watching something that is prejudicial, talk about it with your child and help them understand the harm and hurt that can be done.
- Value the differences within your own family dynamics. Accept and celebrate the differences you all possess. Talk about the differences you have such as hair color, skin color, interests, likes and dislikes. Make sure to talk about these differences in a respectful manner and explain that differences are a good thing.
- Involve your child in situations where diversity is present. Have them participate in a sport, recreational activity, or summer camp, where they can be exposed to diversity.
- Honor your family traditions and celebrate them but also make time to learn about others! Setting time aside to learn and explore other cultures and traditions can be fun and exciting!
- Encourage confidence! A child with positive self-esteem will most likely embrace other people's differences and value them.

Family Activity:

Have each family member trace their hand on a piece of paper. Once the hand is traced, write words or draw pictures inside that represent who you are. Think about what makes you unique, what makes you special and what makes you, YOU. When you are done writing or drawing, decorate your hand any way that you'd like. When you are done decorating and coloring your handprint, cut it out. Once it is cut out, take turns sharing what you wrote or drew about yourself with your family members! Then display them somewhere in your home where you can see them!



Thank You for your Support!!



Thank you to those who donated items for our annual Food Drive! The elementary building collected 440 items this year! All items were distributed to the Gasport Food Pantry before the holiday break. The Gasport Food Pantry was extremely grateful for all of your help collecting those items! We can't thank you enough for all of your donations!

Once again, "The Mitten Tree" was a huge success! The community came together and supported 48 families this past holiday season, including 128 children! We want to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts to all that helped in any way. Your kindness is very much appreciated. We are so fortunate to have such an amazing and caring community. Even through challenging times, the power of our small community is evident.

