



FCPS Social Work Connections Newsletter

Winter 2017

Wes Smith conducts chair yoga with students at Churchill Road Elementary School

The Cycle of Resiliency

By Laura Thieman

Resiliency, returning to its Latin roots, can be explained as the “act of rebounding.” The word itself was first utilized by resiliency pioneer, Dr. Garmezy, earlier in the 20th century to describe children who seemed to thrive despite significant adversity and challenges. But instead of honing in on their stressors, he focused on the buffers or the “protective factors” which supported the children in rebounding. Stress presents itself in many forms and is in some ways similar to a child staying on a bike by learning “to ride” a particular challenge. The “bike” could represent forgetting an instrument, a friendship struggle, an upcoming math test, losing a soccer match, or sending out college applications. It could also represent poverty, domestic violence, loss of a loved one and countless other difficulties.

Helping our children to remain on the “challenge bike” involves seeing and tolerating our children’s difficult emotions, including disappointment, uncertainty and sadness. It also involves supporting them in developing both internal and external resources to draw from so they can learn to thrive. In other words, resiliency can be “taught” much like math, science, and writing skills, practiced over time and reinforced. One area that we can demonstrate our responses as adults and help our kids pedal towards resiliency is to foster a growth mindset. People with a fixed mindset believe that they are born with fixed traits and cannot change, whereas people with a growth mindset believe that their character, abilities and intelligence can be developed with effort, learning, and persistence. Sometimes knowing what to say can make all the difference in how you respond to failure, disappointment, or mistakes.

Instead of (Fixed Mindset)...	Try Thinking (Growth Mindset)...
I'm not good at this	I can learn this with time and effort
I give up	I'll will keep trying
I Can't make this any better	I Can always improve
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
This is too hard	This may take some time

Sometimes it is hard to remember how wobbly we adults first felt when we learned to ride a bike, trying to keep track of balancing, pedaling and steering all at the same time. As we allow our children to wobble, regain their balance and stay seated despite their challenges, we support them in cycling towards resiliency.

References

Konnikova, Maria. (2016, February 11). *How People Learn To Become Resilient*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/the-secret-formula-for-resilience>

Tartakovsky, Margarita. (2016, May 17). *10 Tips For Raising Resilient Kids*. Retrieved from <https://psychcentral.com/lib/10-tips-for-raising-resilient-kids/>

From Social Work Services Leadership:

By Mary Jo Davis and Carrie Mendelsohn

We want to express our sincere gratitude for the dedicated work our social workers provide to students, families and faculty during this busy time of the year. Enjoy the upcoming winter break and spend some time laughing, relaxing and enjoying leisure time with your families and friends. We wish everyone a safe, peaceful holiday season and we look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year!

So You Want to Watch TV?

By Connor Fleming Neiderer

With the cold days ahead, and time off for the holidays, managing the time your kids spend in front of phone and computer screens can be tough. Here are some tips and resources to help!

- ◆ Make a reward system that encourages your children to earn screen time
- ◆ Bring the game off-screen. Be creative and try to play it in the real world!
- ◆ Find apps that encourage outdoor activities, like star gazing and bird guides.
- ◆ Use apps created around hands-on activities, like KidScience and Curiosity School. Look for high-quality, educational apps that encourage your kids to use their brain such as Flow Free, SpellTower, and DragonBox.
- ◆ Make a list of unplugged activities with your kids so finding something to do is easy and always available!
- ◆ Last but not least, here are some apps to track/restrict screen time:
 - unGlue, Net Nanny, ScreenTime, BreakFree, OurPact, Flipd and Offtime (Android), Moment and bSocial (iOS)

References:

Natural Beach Living. (2017, June 2). *Holiday and Summer Screen Time Rules for Kids*. Retrieved from <https://www.naturalbeachliving.com/screen-time-rules-kids/>

iGameMom. (2016). *12 Apps to Control Screen Time-Android and iOS*. Retrieved from <https://igagemom.com/smartphone-addiction-apps-to-control-screen-time/>

Holmes, K. (2017). *Brain Food Games: The Best Educational Apps for Kids*. Retrieved from <https://happyyouhappyfamily.com/best-educational-apps-for-kids/>

Holiday and Summer Break
SCREEN TIME RULES
 by naturalbeachliving.com

Have you...

- Brushed your teeth
- Brushed your hair
- Dressed for the day
- Had breakfast
- Made your bed
- 20 minutes of reading time (book or magazine)
- 20 minutes of writing, coloring, or drawing
- 30 minutes of outside play
- Made/built something - Lego, Crafts, Block play, Art

DON'T FORGET TO BE AWESOME!

Save the Date

13th Annual Special Education Conference

Saturday, April 21, 2018

Hayfield High School

This year's conference focuses on building inclusive practices to support development of 21st Century skills and Portrait of a Graduate attributes for students with learning challenges, special needs, and disabilities. Check back in February 2018 for full details about the conference, list of workshops, and Exhibit Hall.

Healthy Minds Fairfax

A new Fairfax County initiative, Healthy Minds Fairfax, is working to identify high quality resources, supports, and opportunities for families to help further social, emotional, and healthy growth for all youth and young adults across Fairfax County. Its new website, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax/>, identifies services for mental health and substance abuse issues, offers prevention resources to enhance awareness and reduce stigma, as well as intervention services and supports. Part of this initiative includes Healthy Minds, a collaboration between FCPS' Office of Intervention and Prevention Services and the Prevention Unit of Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. Articles related to youth mental health and wellness plus information about special events and other news will be posted weekly. Subscribe to *Healthy Minds* blog at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/VAEDUFCS/subscriber/new?qsp=VAEDUFCS_1.