

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

May 2014 | Volume 1, Issue 1

INTRODUCTORY ISSUE!

Welcome to the first edition of the Counselor's Corner! Mrs. Fabina, the counselor for grades 5-12 and Ms. Schweitzer, the counselor for the Elementary School, have collaborated to provide regular information regarding counseling related activities in the school and community. We will provide information about social skills training, special events, and other topics of interest.

Social Skills Training at the Elementary School

Although social learning happens on a daily basis on all levels, social skills training as a class takes place in the 3rd and 4th grades parallel to the Computer Course. Topics are planned by Ms. Schweitzer in advance but will remain flexible so that other important topics that may come up can be integrated or expanded upon. The topics will be taught through role plays, group discussions, worksheets, games, and reading materials. Some of the goals are to strengthen the group, to develop empathy and conflict resolution skills, to recognize and deal with feelings, to prevent bullying, and to strengthen a sense of respect and responsibility.

The students of the 3rd grade have recently explored the topic of peaceful conflict resolution. We described various scenarios that may cause annoyance and then individually and collectively came up with peaceful resolutions. More specifically, we rehearsed specific ways in which students can politely and clearly state when something bothers them. The students were asked to think about how they feel, why they feel that way, and how they want the situation to change. For example: "I felt hurt and disappointed because you made a joke about me. I would like for you to act like a better friend and to stop making jokes about me." Of course, it was also discussed what should be done if the other student ignores the request. At this point, the students were reminded that they can ask for help from a teacher or from the counselor.



In 4th grade we have been working on avoiding conflict by exploring the conflict mistakes we all make sometimes. The students were asked to fill out a self-assessment to think about which habits they might have acquired for dealing with conflicts. Next, we discussed which habits are helpful in solving a conflict and which habits are harmful. The students then picked one habit to improve upon and to apply new strategies to correct the bad habit. This way, we hope the students are aware of things they have been doing that actually escalate a conflict instead of de-escalating it

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS: CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR CHILDREN

The following children's books on the topic of conflict resolution allow you to delve into these ideas more at home:

- No, it's mine! By Shimrit Nothman
- It's mine! By Leo Lionni

Klara Fabina
Ulrike Schweitzer

act.now (Active Competency Training) for grades 5-8

Since 2007, Mrs. Fabina, in cooperation with the Social Learning Group, has coordinated the Social Skills Training program called **act.now** for students in grades 5-8. This program was created by a group of staff, parents and students to promote social competencies as part of the school's permanent curriculum. The 90-minute-training sessions focus on topics that our students deal with on a daily basis: friendships, bullying/cyberbullying, stress, rumors, cliques, respect, transitions/change, and others. Topics are discussed in an age-appropriate manner using discussion, role play, visual aids, work sheets, and other methods. We choose the topics based on current need, the students' feed-back, as well as information from teachers and parents that is gathered throughout the school year. Although the topics that are discussed in the sessions are predetermined, the trainers have the flexibility to make adjustments as appropriate to address a particular issue that may come up during class discussions. The training sessions are conducted by the staff of the Family Support Center, a non-profit organization that works with both private and public schools offering a full range of professional services. Almost all our students in grades 5-8 have had two training sessions this year and are getting ready for the third session in May.

RESPECT AT HOME SHOWS UP AT SCHOOL

Respect for authority at school has an impact on academic success. Students who lack respect aren't only hard to teach, they can disrupt learning for their classmates. While the school also addresses behavior and pedagogical issues, the best place to teach your child respectful behavior is at home. Insist on basic manners. You might even focus on a "manner of the week". Pay attention to what your child watches on TV, too. Don't let them take cues from rude characters they see in shows and movies or read about in books, instead, discuss disrespectful behavior when you see it in others.

(from "Firm, Fair & Consistent", available on the DSW website)

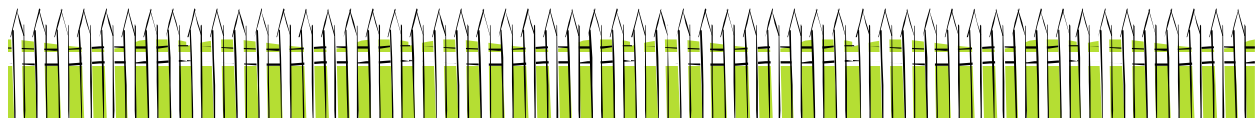
REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS CRITICAL

As the Summer Break approaches, some kids may start to slack off at school. They may claim attendance and timeliness is not that important. But research shows missing school is harmful- even for preschoolers. So unless your child is sick, it's important to:

-Be on time. Missing part of the day disrupts the whole class. When kids are late, teachers must interrupt learning to help them settle in. The late student also misses out on the opportunity to settle into class in a relaxed fashion and thus has a bad start to the day. Continue with your regular school routines, such as packing school supplies at night and waking up at the same time every day.

-Be prepared. To make sure class time is most productive, help your child feel relaxed and focused. Make sure they finish homework, go to bed on time, and eat a nutritious breakfast.

(from "Firm, Fair & Consistent", available on the DSW website)



UPCOMING INTERESTING PARENT WORKSHOPS IN THE AREA



Raising Socially and Emotionally Intelligent Children Workshop

May 21, 11-12:30pm <http://www.skillfulparenting.org/parenting-class>

Help parents become emotion coaches by supporting young children as they develop an understanding of their emotions. \$85 per person

8720 Georgia Avenue, #1000
Silver Spring, MD 20910

ACTIVE PARENTING - THURSDAY, MAY 22 10-12PM

<http://www.skillfulparenting.org/parenting-class>

3 sessions, \$150 per person; Optional book \$15; couple = \$270.00

Parenting class in 3 sessions to help parents meet the challenges of the school age stage of their children. The long-term goal is to help raise cooperative and responsible children, who will be productive members of the society in which they will live.

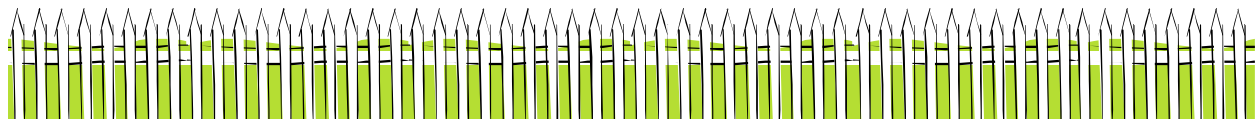
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Silver Spring, MD 20910

Power Tools for Power Struggles - THURSDAY, MAY 22 7:00-8:30 P.M.

Ridgeview Middle School, 16600 Raven Rock Dr., Gaithersburg 20878

Frequent power struggles between parents and children can seriously hurt relationships. Battles over chores, homework, television and internet use can take away from family time. Learn better ways to handle these common problem areas. Presented by the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP).

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentacademy/workshops.aspx#may>



Positive Discipline Workshop. 7 to 9 p.m.

Eight hour series is scheduled in four weekly sessions of two hours each, 4/29, 5/6, 5/13 and 5/20. Not many connect the word discipline with the term positive, but under the direction and expertise of Dr. Rene you'll learn how to use techniques to instill positive, healthy behaviors. The Workshop is designed for parents of children 1 to 10 years old. Preregister. \$\$ Lake Anne Nursery Kindergarten, Reston, VA.

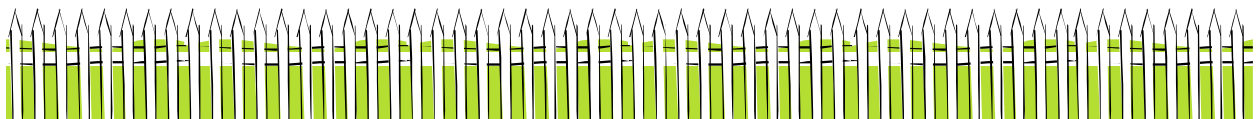
<http://www.washingtonparent.com/parentonly.php>

Parent Preschoolers. 9:45 to 11:45. Also 4/10-6/12, 7 to 9 p.m. Parents of kids ages 2 1/2 to 5. Understand your child's development and what it means to be an effective parent in today's world. Learn to set limits and solve behavior problems calmly and consistently; use positive discipline methods to address tantrums, power struggles and other misbehavior; foster cooperation and responsibility; and rediscover the joy of parenting. Preregister. \$\$ Parent Encouragement Program, Kensington, MD

<http://washingtonparent.com/parentonly.php>

Parenting 5 to 12 Year-Olds. 9:45 to 11:45 a.m. Also 4/8 to 6/10, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Parenting, while it brings much joy, is hard work. This class will make it easier and much more satisfying by giving you a sound framework for positive parenting and proven skills to correct whining, backtalk, defiance and the whole range of misbehavior. Learn how you can be closer and have more fun as a family while also motivating your children to be more cooperative, self-disciplined and successful. Preregister. \$\$ Parent Encouragement Program, Kensington, MD

<http://washingtonparent.com/parentonly.php>



SUMMER WORKSHOPS & CAMPS FOR KIDS

Jewish Social Service Agency

Handling Angry Feelings. A Special Workshop Series for Children

Anger is a normal emotion, but it can be overwhelming for many children. In this workshop, children will examine their "boiling points," practice ways to keep self-control, use "power talk" and "positive self-talk" instead of acting out, and complete an "anger contract," (with input from parents) for real-life application.

For Boys and Girls Ages 8-9

Date: 3 Tuesdays, July 1 – July 15; 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Leader: Stanley Fagen, PhD.

For Boys and Girls Ages 10-11

Date: 3 Wednesdays, July 2 – July 16; 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Cost: \$150 for the 3 session series

Registration: 301-816-2633

Location: 200 Wood Hill Road, Rockville, MD

info on <http://www.jssa.org/socialskillsgroups>

McLean School of Maryland Summer Camp Program. Building & Fostering Friendships (BFF)

This exciting program is based on the latest research, proven methods for improving children's social skills, and JSSA's successful Social Skill Therapy model. The camp's mission is to improve each child's ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with peers and builds a solid foundation for making and keeping friends within a relaxed, fun and creative environment. The admission process will include a child interview and a screening. This camp program is appropriate for children who can benefit from learning and practicing social skills but who can also participate successfully in less-structured activities. Typically developing children with social skills deficits, children with social challenges related to anxiety disorders, children with ADHD and high-functioning Asperger's may be appropriate for this camp program.

Social Skills topics covered include:

- Friendly behaviors: initiation of friendships, listening, taking turns and sharing
- Making conversation, responding to others, working as a team
- Impulse and emotional self-control
- Inhibition and delay
- Anger management
- Handling teasing, relaxation/stress management and more

Session Dates

July 14-25 (Grades 5-6)

9:00am-12:00pm (half day)

9:00am-3:30pm (full day)

REQUIRES TUITION- more info on <http://www.jssa.org/socialskillsgroups>

