

EXTRA SPECIAL EDITION

PARENT NEWSLETTER

Winter 2019-2020

Welcome to the *Winter Extra Special Edition Newsletter* for 2019-2020. Each issue contains information for parents and caregivers regarding children in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program in our district.

5 Healthy Homework Habits

5 Healthy Homework Habits Recommended by Teachers

adapted from article by Parenting Today Staff

Teachers know that the best time to develop healthy homework habits for your family is before homework becomes a problem. Parents who approach their children's homework with a clear strategy are preventing problems down the road. Students who haven't developed effective homework habits tend to lack the motivation to study, misunderstand how to study, and fail to see the long-term benefits of putting forth an effort at home and at school. The good news is that it's never too late to develop healthy homework habits; your family can start these five teacher-recommended steps at the start of a new school year, a new term, or even upon returning from winter or spring break.

Keep track of important due dates together

Sometimes life gets in the way of finishing every homework assignment on time. But when missing and incomplete homework becomes a regular occurrence, your child is missing out on the opportunity to get important feedback from his or her teacher before the class moves on to the next, more challenging learning activity. The best way to stay on top of important due dates is to write them together on a family calendar in your kitchen or living room. Refer to the calendar together each day to see what needs to be finished soon, and to make a plan to get it finished on time.

Schedule time for homework every night

Different schools have different homework expectations. Work together as a family to schedule homework time into your afternoons and evenings. Create a schedule that works around extra-curricular activities.

Set up a study station

In the world of smartphones, tablets, laptop computers and social media, even the most well-intentioned young person can easily be distracted from their homework. Moving your child's study space to a common area, like the kitchen table or a desk in the living room, can help you ensure that your child is using their time effectively. Make sure the homework space is equipped with everything your child needs, like pencils, erasers, pens, a calculator and a dictionary. Ideally students should have one set of supplies for home and a second set for school. Periodically stop by your child as they're working to see if they need any help with their homework and to ensure they're on the right track.

Make connections to your family's real life

Homework is much more meaningful when students can see a connection between what they're doing and their own lives. Look for opportunities to incorporate the topics that you see them exploring into your family's daily life. If your child is learning fractions, hand him/her the pizza cutter! If he/she is studying Spanish verbs, take him/her to an authentic Mexican restaurant and ask him/her to order in Spanish for the entire family! You can also talk to your children about the relationship between what they're learning and what you do in your own job so that they can see concrete evidence of the value of their studies.

Find a healthy balance

Homework is important, but it isn't everything. Don't let the pursuit of academic excellence take away from your child's other interests, like athletics, music, art or community service. Children and teenagers also need unstructured time with their friends in order to develop important social skills, and for older teenagers balancing homework with a part-time job can help them develop independence and financial management skills that will be essential in the future. Give your child the best start possible by finding a balance between homework and the other things that will allow them to grow into happy, healthy, well-rounded adults.

While each of these healthy homework habits is beneficial on its own, incorporating all five into your family's routine is the best way to ensure that your children succeed at school and develop a lifelong love of learning.

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"The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do."
Walter Bagehot



Tips for Helping Your Child with ADHD When Upset or Angry

Adapted from article 5 Don'ts When Your ADHD Child is Upset or Angry by Robert Myers, PhD

Parents dread having to deal with meltdowns. Parents of children with ADHD may face more meltdowns than other parents. Often it takes less to trigger an anger episode that lasts for a longer period than with other children. Working with them on relaxation techniques like taking deep breaths or counting to ten *at the first sign* of being upset can help. It is important for them to practice these when they are calm!

These kids often aren't fully tuned in to what is going on around them and miss important information that causes them to misinterpret a situation and then react to what they think is going on rather than what really happened. When you are having a discussion with your child, pause frequently to make sure they are getting your point. Ask questions to make sure they understand and encourage them to ask you questions as well.

Some kids lack the ability to be flexible causing them to go into meltdown mode when there is a change in routine, or an expected event does not happen. For instance, a boy may be having a great time "rough housing" with his dad but does not want to stop when dad feels it has gone on long enough. This can become ugly and lead to fewer such play situations. Agreeing to use a timer and stop when the timer says to stop rather than dad might help avoid this.

Some tips for coping with a meltdown:

1. Don't Lose YOUR Cool - Take a few deep breaths.

Deep breaths trigger the relaxation response and will lower your own anxiety/anger level and make it possible for you to think clearly and model appropriate behavior for your child.

2. Don't React – Respond

If you and your child have already agreed on how meltdowns will be handled with a behavior plan, make sure the plan is being followed. If you do not have a plan in place, then you can respond by saying "WE have a problem here. Let's see how we can solve the problem *together*." Find out what the child's concern is. See if there is a way to address it. It is not giving in if you modify a situation in a way that is more accepting to the child while still meeting your needs as well.

3. Discuss

Ask, "What is making you upset?" *Listen carefully* and respond understandingly such as "I see you want or don't want..., what's up?" Find out what your child is concerned about. It is good for us to listen to our children's perspective on difficult situations. Sometimes problem solving can avoid a major meltdown.

4. Encourage

You can say, "I know you are upset right now but I also know you can do a good job of calming down. I love how you are getting better at this each time."

5. Don't Give Up – Stay Committed

Raising a child with any type of special need requires a tremendous amount of patience and strength to endure and continue to handle tough situations when they come up. Be sure to have a break from time to time to do something fun and relaxing. Also, try to view the whole situation from the 30,000 foot level to see the progress you have made so far and that meltdowns now and then can just be little bumps in the road to helping your child learn to cope with the day to day events they encounter.

If you have truly committed to following a behavioral approach under the guidance of a mental health provider and are not seeing progress, please don't hesitate to discuss this with your child's physician. A referral to a psychologist for a comprehensive evaluation may uncover other conditions that may need to be addressed. Sometimes ADHD may be misdiagnosed, or a child can have more than one disorder which needs to be addressed.

When talking to a professional, you should be able to tell them when and where these episodes happen and what took place just before the meltdown; these are valuable clues that a well-trained clinician can use to modify your approach or discover an underlying skill deficit that can be improved or addressed.

From NIH Publication: Children with ADHD need consistent rules that *they can understand and follow*. If rules are followed, give small rewards. They often receive, and expect, criticism. *Look for good behavior...point it out, and praise it!*

Parent - Child/Teen Communication

Adapted from Child Development Institute article [Guidelines for Parent - Child Communication](https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/how-to-be-a-parent/communication/#gs.n8lx8h)
<https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/how-to-be-a-parent/communication/#gs.n8lx8h>

Good communication is an important parenting skill

Parenting can be more enjoyable when a positive parent/child relationship is established. Whether you are parenting a toddler or a teenager, good communication is the key to building self-esteem as well as mutual respect.

Basic Principles of Good Parent - Child/Teen Communication

- *Let your child know that you are interested and involved and that you will help when needed.
- *Turn off the television, put the mobile phone &/or newspaper down when your child wants to talk to you.
- *Unless other people are specifically meant to be included, hold conversations in private. The best communication between you and your child will occur when others are not around.
- *Do not embarrass or put your child down. Embarrassing your child or putting him on the spot in front of others will lead only to resentment and hostility, not good communication.
- *Physically get down to your child's level to talk. Make good eye contact.
- *If you are very angry about a behavior or an incident, don't attempt conversation until you regain your cool. You cannot be objective until you calm down. It is better to stop, settle down, and talk later.
- *If you are very tired, you will have to make an extra effort to be an active listener. *Genuine active listening is hard work and is very difficult when your mind and body are already tired. Listen carefully and politely. Don't interrupt the child when he is trying to tell his story. Be as courteous to your child as you would be to your best friend. Don't be a wipe-out artist, unraveling minor threads of a story and never allowing the child's own theme to develop. This is the parent who reacts to the incidentals of a message. i.e., the child starts to tell about what happened and the parent says, "I don't care what they are doing, but you had better not be involved in anything like that."*
- *Don't ask why but do ask what happened. If you have knowledge of the situation, confront the child with the information that you know or have been told. Assist in planning some specific steps to a solution.
- *Show that you accept the child himself, regardless of what he has or has not done.
- *Encourage your child to keep communication open by accepting and praising his/her efforts to communicate.

Words of Encouragement and Praise

Children, including teens, thrive on positive attention. They need to feel loved and appreciated. Many parents find that it is easier to provide negative feedback rather than positive feedback. By using positive words and phrases daily with your child, you will find that he/she will start paying more attention to you and will try harder to please you.

Some Words of Encouragement and Praise to Try with Your Child

Excellent; Marvelous; At-a-boy; That's right; Correct; Wonderful; I like the way you do that; I'm pleased with (proud of) you; Good work; Great going; Good for you; That's the way; Much better; Good idea; Great job controlling yourself; I had fun _____ with you; You are improving at _____ more and more; You showed a lot of responsibility when you _____; Way to go; I appreciate the way you _____; You are great at that; I like the way you _____ with out having to be asked (reminded); I'm sure glad you are my son/daughter; Now you've got it; I love you

Show/Signal How You Feel

Smile, Nod, Pat on shoulder/back, Wink, High five, Hug, Laugh with (not at)

What is the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)?

The Florida Inclusion Network collaborates with all districts, schools, and discretionary projects to provide customized services and supports ensuring all students with disabilities have the same educational, social, and future opportunities as their peers.

What services does FIN provide?

FIN uses a data-driven problem-solving approach with districts and schools to focus on inclusive practices; provides professional development, technical assistance, coaching and resources to increase and maintain knowledge and skills; and shares information to help build collaborative relationships between families, schools, and districts.

Who are FIN services for?

FIN services are available for families, educators, administrators, and community members.

How can FIN help?

Your FIN facilitator can provide you with information and resources that can assist you as you begin planning with the school for your child's inclusive education.

Additionally, your child's teacher(s) or school administrator(s) can request FIN services (e.g., school-based consultation, professional development, technical assistance, and resources) for school teams and staff members. The goal of the Florida Inclusion Network is to provide assistance that will support positive outcomes for ALL students with disabilities at your child's school. Our services are free to all Florida schools. **Contact FIN:** Caren Prichard ~ caren.prichard@paec.org or Emily McCann ~ emily.mccann@paec.org

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with fear, he learns to be apprehensive.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident.

If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.

If a child lives with recognition, he learns it is good to have a goal.

If a child lives with honesty, he learns what truth is.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself and those about him.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with friendliness, he learns the world is a nice place in which to live to love and be loved. (Anonymous)



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Serving Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Walton, and Washington counties

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