Social and emotional learning at Home!

With the holiday break and the changes in phases students have been spending more time at home. Being aware of your child's social and emotional needs is just as important as their schoolwork. I wanted to provide families with some information, resources, and tools to help support their child even when they are not in school.

What is social and emotional learning?

"Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (Casel, 2020).

Why is Social and Emotional Learning Important?

Decades of research studies demonstrate the following benefits of SEL:
- Sets the foundation and provides long term benefits well into adulthood.
- Improvement in students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, relationships, academic performance, and perceptions of classroom and school climate
- Decline in students' anxiety, behavior problems, and substance use
- Long-term improvements in students' skills, attitudes, prosocial behavior, and academic performance (Casel, 2020).

Techniques you can use at home!

Starfish Breathing

- Have your student spread out fingers on one hand. This will be our Starfish hand!
- Place the index finger of their other hand onto the base of the thumb of the Starfish hand.
- Begin slowly tracing fingers starting with the thumb. As they go up the finger breathe in and as they go down their finger breathe out.

Breathing techniques help to regulate the mind and body. It also provides a brief break for students who can become overwhelmed with emotion. Reminding students to take a breath before reacting can help with emotion regulation.

Mindfulness 5-4-3-2-1

● Have kids look around the room and identify 5 things they can see, 4 things they can touch, three things they can hear, 2 things they can smell, and 1 thing they can taste.

  This mindfulness technique can be used as a grounding exercise when kids need help managing big emotions. This technique can work well if your student is already upset and needs help regulating their emotions.

Journal Writing

● Setting a timer and having your student write for 5-10 minutes can help them express feelings and thoughts. You can also encourage your student to discuss their thoughts afterwards if they would like to share.
● You can also provide open-ended prompts:
    ○ What are some things that make you feel mad? Sad? Happy?
    ○ Describe a time and situation you needed help.
    ○ What is something you are good at? Something you want to get better at?
    ○ What are some goals you have in school or at home?
    ○ Write about a time you disagreed with a friend. How did you handle it?
    ○ What are some qualities that you want in a friend? How would you describe a good friend?
    ○ Write about a time you had a conflict. How did you feel? How did you resolve it?
    ○ What is something you have done this year that you are proud of?

The Power of "YET"

● If your student becomes frustrated or discouraged. Try reassuring and encouraging them by adding in the word "yet"
    ○ Example: If your student says, "I don't know how to do this math problem" try adding the word "yet" to the end of their sentence.

  Adding the word "yet" encourages a growth mindset and reassures your student that our brains get stronger by trying new and challenging things!

Identifying Emotions

● Oftentimes children struggle with identifying and verbalizing emotions. Having an easy to use emotion chart can help them identify their feelings while associating the feeling with a facial expression. This provides them with building social skills by being able to recognize the emotions of others.
● Ask your student to identify how they feel and then prompt them to answer why they may feel that way. Ex. "**I feel** proud **because** I got an A on my math test"

HAPPY	SAD	MAD	BRAVE	EMBARRASSED	FRIENDLY	SORRY
DISAPPOINTED	FRUSTRATED	SILLY	HOPEFUL	LEFT OUT	EXCITED	JEALOUS
CURIOUS	CRANKY	SENSITIVE	PROUD	INSECURE	GRATEFUL	LOVED
GUILTY	UNCOMFORTABLE	SHY	HURT	SURPRISED	SCARED	KIND