

November 2010

Dear Families:

The cold days of winter are here and I want to remind everyone that it is important to be safe and healthy during the cold and flu season. Remind your children that it is important to wear their coats out to recess. Also, if your child does get a cold or has the flu, please keep him or her home until the student is well enough to come back to school healthy.

The parking lot! It sounds like an innocent enough topic, doesn't it? Well, just spend a little time watching what happens in our parking lot before and after school and you quickly realize that things can get pretty crazy out there. If you drop off or pick up your child, please remember a few simple but very important rules for our parking lot:

- In the morning, please pull forward to our parent greeters to drop off your children.
- Students and parents should use the crosswalk (we have crossing guards posted there for your safety).
- Be patient and wait your turn.

We want everyone (parents included) to be safe in our parking lot. Elementary school children are small, and if they dart out into the parking lot to get to mom or dad, they put themselves in danger. Parents, please set a good example for your children by using the crosswalk and parking in designated spaces. Thank you for your support.

Lastly, below is an article that I would like to share with all parents that talks about teaching kids to be resilient. I think there is some great advice that we can all benefit from. Having raised two children, I understand how important resilience is in helping them become independent and confident adults. As a staff we strive to help our students become independent, safe and healthy here at school. Please take the time to read this important article.

Tim Stonich
Principal

Article reprinted from FamilyFun.com:

Even though your natural parenting instinct might be to run interference when your children experience turmoil, softening a blow by managing a difficult situation for them, it might be more important that you cultivate attributes of resiliency. Then when your children do face hardship that you can't protect them from, they won't, from fragile character, permanently retreat, display needy behavior, and cease to mature along their developmental timeline or become depressed. Here's how:

BUILD EMOTIONAL STRENGTH: When your child responds with fear, anger, disappointment or sadness, identify the emotion he's feeling, convey understanding or empathy, and stay with your child until he returns to his emotional equilibrium.

BUILD PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS: Once emotions subside, identify the problem and ask your child what she can do to solve the problem. Validate the child's ideas, offer a few suggestions yourself but don't dominate. Encourage your child to use her own resources to manage the situation even if her solution may seem somewhat immature to you.

DEVELOP AN INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL: When your child faces hardship, don't victimize him with a "poor you" approach. Instead, validate the difficulty of the situation but exude confidence that he can figure out a way to manage the situation effectively.

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO ELICIT SUPPORT: When troubles arise, assist your child to ask for help from a teacher, coach, clergy, friend, community support person or expert. Then take this attribute one step further, by prompting your child to help others.

SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S HOBBIES: Don't view hobbies as a frivolous pastime. See them as a source of pride that your child can call on when part of her world seems to be falling apart. Your job is to show interest and assist your child to cultivate the hobby on her terms.

OFFER AN OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF LIFE: Your modeling is most effective here. When problems arise, recognize them but point out any silver lining in the troubled cloud. Help your child see that in time things will get better and life will again offer many moments of happiness.

ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATION: Learn to listen to your children and encourage them to express their feelings and opinions. Invite them to describe troubling situations.

PROMOTE ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL EXCELLENCE: Do your best to talk positively about the benefits of these two pursuits both in and out of school.

Certainly there needs to be a balance for children between stressful events and having enough protective factors in place to help them cope. For any child, when troubles outweigh the protective factors, even the most resilient child can develop problems.

And in order for children to bounce back from difficult childhood situations, it's essential for them to have a close relationship with at least one healthy adult in or outside the family. And it is up to that person to help the child gain the belief that he or she has everything necessary to be successful and overcome adversity. Children given responsibility at home and at school learn firsthand that they are worthy and capable. If you challenge but don't overwhelm your child, the result is good behavioral health and resiliency.