

SEL NEWS

From the APCSD Social Emotional Learning Team

WELLNESS IN AP

One of the SEL Team's focal points has been on wellness events for the school district.

Algonquin Middle School kicked off the wellness events with a Warrior Wellness day modeled after a professional conference. A Keynote address was delivered to each grade level, students chose workshops on wellness topics, and speakers from outside organizations shared skills and information with students grades 6-8.

Averill Park High School was next with a week of Wellness messages organized by SADD, Wellness organizations had information tables in the cafeteria each day providing games and prizes for students engaging in wellness education activities.

The first week of May, students at Miller Hill/Sand Lake Elementary, Poestenkill Elementary, and West Sand Lake Elementary engaged in wellness activities through movement, conversation, classroom activities, games and stories. They have been learning about the importance of overall wellness as a key to success in both school and our community.

Information about SEL in APCSD can be found at on the district webpage [SEL Link](#) or by emailing Tracy Hacker, School Psychologist for SEL (hackert@apcsd.org) or Liz Young, School Counselor for SEL (younge@apcsd.org)



Feel Good Friday Bulletin Board at WSL

Seven Dimensions of Wellness

To develop a healthy habit, it is best to start early in life, to provide clear instruction and explanation, and to model the desired habit. When applying this to wellness habits we recognize that there are many aspects to wellness. Experts describe 4-12 dimensions of wellness. While these dimensions are written for adults we can translate them into activities, experiences and habits that allow our children to grow up with a holistic approach to, and appreciation for, wellness. Here is an article introducing 7 general dimensions of wellness.

- [Source document](#)

Working Together

Research shows that healthy habits develop best when schools and families work in concert. It might be fun to have your own Family Wellness Week. You could do a mindfulness or meditation activity as a family Monday, try a new food or exercise on Tuesday, go for a wellness walk or hike on Wednesday, take time to notice what you are thankful for on Thursday, and play a game and have some fun on Friday.



On Try it Tuesday, some of us learned how the brain learns new things and why mistakes are part of the learning process
LearnStorm Growth Mindset: The Truth About Your Brain

Here are some resources to help create a fun-for-all family members Wellness theme week.

Top Children's Books that inspire activity
<https://fit.sanfordhealth.org/blog/top-10-childrens-books-to-inspire-physical-activity>

Affordable wellness activities to do as a family
<https://www.piperwai.com/blogs/posts/8-affordable-wellness-activities-to-do-as-a-family>

"Would You Rather" questions are a fun way to learn about each other, ourselves, and to have some thought provoking conversations with people of all ages. Check it out

12 steps toward family wellness
<https://www.wholefamilyliving.com/improve-family-wellness/>

Spring Health and Wellness activities for families

Learning New Skills Changing Our Behavior

One of the things we talk about as parents and educators is how students learn new skills and behaviors: Explicit instruction

Improving and prioritizing our wellness can be accomplished by changing our behavior including changing how we think about behavior. Unfortunately, we often get caught up in a habit of noticing what we don't have, what we are doing wrong, and what we are missing out on. As parents and educators, we can fall into the habit of commenting on and correcting negative behaviors rather than explicitly commenting on the positive behaviors we observe in our children.

Wellness experts recommend using the cognitive behavioral strategy of shifting our negative thinking to positive thoughts in order to increase our recognition of positive behavior. So, rather than noticing what someone hasn't done...notice what they **have** accomplished. Cognitive Behavioral research has shown that by recognizing the things your child is doing well reinforces that positive behavior. Praise that is earned and acknowledged will increase the likelihood of more positive behavior. Experts recommend something called "**Behavior Specific Praise**".

Additional Resources

Preventative Teaching: A proactive approach

<https://www.smarterparenting.com/skills/preventive-teaching/>

Following Instructions: How to get kids to listen without yelling

<https://www.smarterparenting.com/skills/following-instructions/>

Correcting Behavior

<https://www.smarterparenting.com/skills/correcting-behaviors/>

Teaching accountability

<https://www.smarterparenting.com/skills/decision-making->



Examples of Behavior Specific Praise

"I love how you.."

"It is so helpful when you.."

"Great job (exact behavior)"

"Thank you for.."

"I like the way you.."

"You are so smart to.."

"When you ____ it makes me so happy."

"Wow! I can't believe you..!"

"Nice (exact behavior/task)"

"You're getting so good at.."

"You're doing a great job of.."

"It's wonderful that you can.."

Behavior Specific Praise doesn't mean that we never correct our children nor do we want to give empty praise. Children make mistakes and need instruction. They are not born knowing exactly how to behave. While praise is overall a good thing, behavior-specific praise helps your child identify exactly what behavior pleases you. As parents and educators, this extra step helps us connect and appreciate our children/students. Here are some video resources for parents of children K-12 that can be helpful in navigating challenging behavior.

[Behavior Specific Praise Video for parents](#)