

# Counselor's Corner

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## February/March 2024



### Encouraging Healthy Friendships

You can help your child have healthy friendships by encouraging them to:

**Find the right fit – don't just fit in.** Encourage your child to think about what they value and are interested in, and how those things fit in with the group. Ask questions like:

"What's the main reason you want to be part of that friend group?"

"What compromises will you have to make? Are they worth it?"

"What would you do if a friend insisted you act mean to other kids or do something you don't want to do?"

"When does it change from fun and joking around to teasing and bullying?"

**Stick to your likes.** If your child has always loved to play the piano, but suddenly wants to drop it because it's deemed "uncool," discuss ways to help resolve this. Encourage your child to participate in activities that they enjoy and that build their confidence.

**Keep social circles open and diverse.** Encourage your child to be friends with people they like and enjoy from different settings, backgrounds, ages, and interests. Focusing too much on whether your child is friends with the "right" kids or on the "right" teams or clubs can make them worry about status. Concentrate on quality friendships instead.

**Speak out and stand up.** If they're feeling worried or pressured by what's happening in their friend group, encourage your child to stand up for themselves or others who are being cast out or bullied. Encourage them not to participate in anything that feels wrong, whether it's a practical joke or talking about people behind their backs.

**Take responsibility for your actions.** Encourage sensitivity to others and not just going along with a group. Remind your child that a true friend respects their opinions, interests, and choices, no matter how different they are. Acknowledge that it can be hard to stand out, but that in the end, kids are responsible for what they say and do.

### February's Monthly Classroom Challenge



#### COPING SKILLS



During the month of February, we were busy learning about coping skills. We learned that positive coping skills are important because they help us to express our emotions in a healthy way that helps us to feel better. One thing you could do at home is create a "calm space" in your home. It can be a chair or a part of a room. With your child, decide what items should go in the space (e.g.: a blanket, stress ball, coloring pages). Let this place be a refuge that all family members can use!

##### Talk About It!

- Why do you think it is important to calm down when you are feeling upset?
- What are some things that make you feel upset?
- What are 3 things that you can do to help you feel more calm?
- Do you feel like you can talk to me if you are feeling upset? Why or why not?

### March's Monthly Classroom Challenge



#### FRIENDSHIP



In March, we learned that it is important to be a good friend because other people are important and valuable and it is important to treat them with respect. Qualities of good friends include being honest, kind, respectful, trustworthy, fun, helpful, etc.

##### Talk About It!

- Do you think you are a good friend? Why or why not?
- Are you happy with the friendships you have? Why or why not?
- Would you rather have one close friend, or five friends that you are not as close to?

### Executive Functions = School Success!

Executive functions are a set of skills that help us to plan, start a task, organize our time, remember instructions, and manage more than one task at a time. When executive functioning skills are weak, children can struggle in school and relationships. **The good news is, executive functioning skills can improve with practice!** Every month I will highlight one of the executive functions that help students succeed in school.

##### Why is it important?

They can help us to:

- pay attention
- ignore the things that distract us
- hold information in our working memory
- start and stay focused on a task
- regulate emotions
- prioritize things that are more important

##### When is there a problem?

When students have difficulty:

- starting tasks or finishing them
- prioritizing tasks
- following directions
- with getting frustrated easily
- recalling what was just said to them or what they just read
- with being impulsive
- with time management

### R.O.A.R.



Respect,  
Organization,  
Achievement,  
Responsibility



### Using Coping Skills Can Help Build Resilience!

Coping skills are strategies we use to manage feelings and handle stress. Coping is not something we are born knowing how to do; it is something we learn how to do with practice. It's never too early or too late to start developing healthy coping skills. Teaching your child to use healthy coping strategies will help them become more resilient (better able to handle life's ups and downs).

[Click here: Making a Coping Skills Toolbox](#)



### Story of the Month

A Little Spot Makes Friends

By Diane Alber

[Click here to hear the book!](#)

