

Resurrection Catholic Primary School

51 Gum Road, Kings Park, 3021 9366 7022



Friday, 1 May 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Who would have thought that this time last year, we would all be working or learning from home? The two words "social isolation", something we would barely have put together let alone be living is now our everyday reality. Yet here we are, over a month into it, and I still continue to hear people finding the positives in what can be a very challenging time. If anything, COVID 19 has provided us with time to reflect, time to reevaluate what is important and why our relationships with others are so important. As parents, you will be conflicted with a range of emotions and issues.

I wish to share with you an article I read last week written by Rebecca Branstetter, a school psychologist. I encourage you to read it as I am hoping that it will resonate with you as it has with me and bring some reassurance that under the circumstances, you are all doing amazingly well.

How to Reduce the Stress of Home Schooling on Everyone

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_reduce_the_stress_of_homeschooling_on_everyone

A school psychologist offers advice to parents on how to support their child during school closures. By Rebecca Branstetter | April 21, 2020

With nationwide school closures in effect, many parents are now monitoring home-schooling while at the same time trying to make a living in the midst of a terrible economic crisis. In this environment of broken routine and uncertainty, chances are your child is showing big feelings and challenging behaviours.

In my work as a school psychologist, I've been hearing from parents that despite their best efforts, their children are struggling with meeting home-school expectations. Kids who never showed behavioural or emotional challenges are experiencing issues, and kids who had some struggles before are showing an uptick of challenges. Here are three ways to support your child (and manage your own stress) during school closures that parents I work with have found helpful.

1. Simplify: Relax your home schooling and productivity standards to a level appropriate for a worldwide pandemic

If you're a parent suddenly trying to balance remote work and home schooling, your household might look a bit like mine right now. As I am writing this, I am also toggling back and forth between helping my third-grader with Google Classroom, trying to set up my kindergartener for some independent writing work, and fielding questions every few seconds (wait, what is the difference between scalene and isosceles triangles again?!?).

I've come to realize in these past few weeks that being super productive with my work as a school psychologist AND giving full attention to home schooling my children is not possible right now. Turns out, being a parent, teacher, and school psychologist are three different jobs that cannot all be done well at the same time.

Spending time wishing things were otherwise is an exercise in frustration. And since research shows that acceptance is an important trait in positive well-being, here are a few mantras about simplification you might want to try:

- ***I am not home schooling. I am doing my best to help my kids learn at home during a crisis.***
- ***I am not “working from home.” I am doing my best to work at home during a crisis.***
- ***I cannot be as productive as normal because these are not normal times. I will focus on what I can accomplish in just the next 24 hours and let go of what I cannot accomplish right now.***

Research shows that gratitude is another way to cultivate well-being. Even in challenging times, there is an opportunity to be grateful and to be accepting of what you can and cannot accomplish in a crisis.

Here's one simple strategy for you and your family members to start your day: Say, write, or draw (if your child is young) one thing you're grateful for, one thing to do, and one thing to let go of or accept.

Putting gratitude at the front of your day will set a positive tone for the day. And while you undoubtedly have more than one thing to do, focusing on ONE important task and letting go of impossible standards will keep you from feeling like you are falling short every day.

2. Structure: Keep calm and structure on

If you Google “How to support my child during COVID-19,” the top advice is to stick to a regular schedule, even when you're all at home all day. There's good reason for this. For adults and kids alike, routine and predictability are calming during times of stress. If you've tried to set a schedule and your children are resisting it, here are some reminders:

- ***Now is not the time to clamp down and control your child's day. Now is the time to collaborate with your child on a schedule that works for the whole family.***
- ***It is okay if your schedule does not go to plan every day. Every day is an opportunity to fine-tune what is working and eliminate what is not working.***
- ***Your job as a parent is not to recreate an eight-hour school day. Your job is to help your child feel safe and do their best with the distance learning plan the teachers have provided.***

It's worth reiterating that you do not have to recreate a full school-day schedule! Your family schedule may look more like what you would create over a summer break, including opportunities for fun, exercise, hands-on learning activities, and family connection. It is also important to build in “emotional checkpoints” during the day and involve your child in the schedule.

3. Support: Get ahead of the meltdowns (and teach critical social-emotional skills, too!)

When our children are experiencing big feelings, they may communicate them through behaviour. If your child is melting down over something that seems small to you, it may be a sign they are overwhelmed or flooded with emotions.

For instance, when my kindergartner fell into a puddle of tears and screamed at me because she didn't like the word-sorting activity that her teacher gave her to do, it wasn't really about the sorting activity. After she calmed down using her "Calming Menu" we had created earlier (hugging the dog is her go-to), she ended up sharing that she was sad because she missed her friends. Had I clamped down on compliance on the assignment, it would have been a missed opportunity for her to practice calming down and expressing her emotions.

The important takeaway message here is that children (and, indeed, adults!) do not have access to their thinking and reasoning skills when they are flooded with emotions. If your child cannot focus on school tasks, or you are seeing them melt down, tantrum, or withdraw, it's likely because they are having a hard time meeting an expectation while under stress.

The antidote? Empathy. Research shows that empathy can calm the nervous system and re-engage the thinking and reasoning side of the brain. When you are in the middle of a meltdown, you might remind yourself of this using the following mantras:

- ***My child is not giving me a hard time; they are having a hard time.***
- ***Behaviour is communication, and my child is "telling" me they need support.***
- ***The teachable moment about behavioural expectations is never in the "hot" moment. I must calm my child through empathy first.***

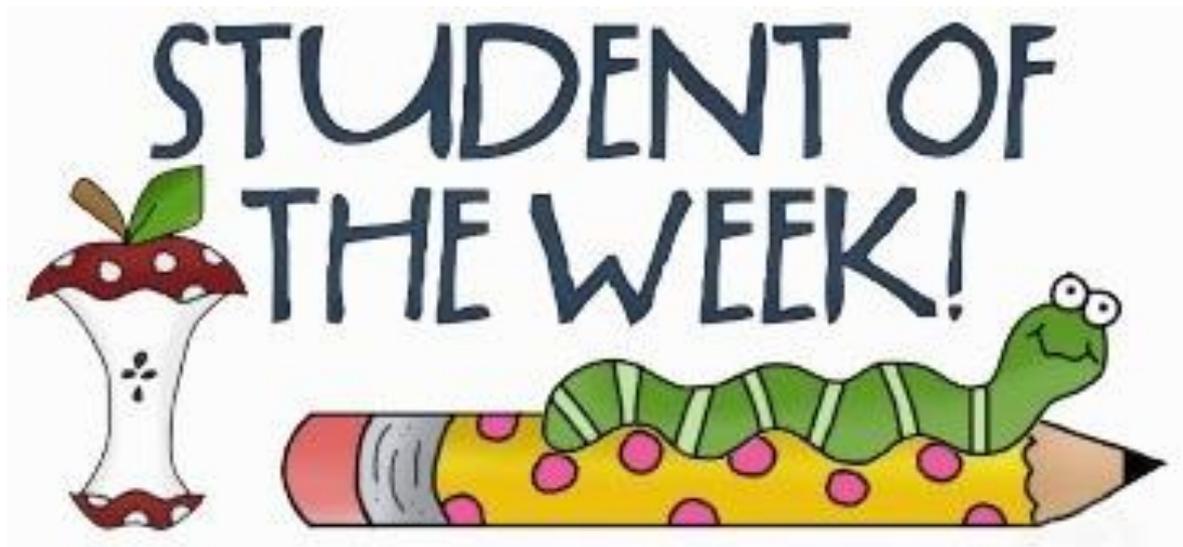
The reality is, your job right now as a home schooling parent is less about academics, and more about creating safety, belonging, and acceptance. Your kids can learn about academics from teachers. The most important skill you can teach is how to manage big feelings under stress. Here are some techniques that may be helpful in teaching critical emotional-regulation skills:

- Develop a list of calming strategies BEFORE you and your children need them. Post them on your fridge where all family members can readily use them.
- For research-based and easy-to-do connection activities that teach social-emotional skills, visit Greater Good in Education and pick a few to try with your family.
- Get support yourself by picking one self-care practice on the Greater Good in Action website so you can parent from a place of calm and model for your child how to solve problems together. Kids learn by watching us, so taking care of yourself is teaching your child how to cope.

Therefore...

The staff would like to take this opportunity to show gratitude to all our students who have been doing the best they can this week and to acknowledge the efforts of our parents who have been undertaking the task of helping their own children during this time of social isolation both emotionally and academically.

We would like to acknowledge especially the following students who have engaged in their learning this week and are being recognised with this week's **Student of the Week Awards**.



PEP:

Adut Koklec- For confidently answering questions about the story 'Duck' and drawing a picture of the characters. Well done Adut!

Tobi Millare- For confidently answering questions about the story 'Duck' and sounding out words when writing a simple sentence. Well done Tobi!

PDC:

Vihaan K: For using picture clues in the story What Jumps, to make the connection to how the different characters jump.

Michael U: For being able to name many different sea creatures, in and outside of the text.

PSB:

Kung T - For developing his confidence to talk using a clear voice and counting forwards to 40 with Signora Grech. Well done Kung Then, I am so proud of you!

Alyssia P - For identifying numbers before and after beyond 20 and taking on feedback to improve. Amazing effort Alyssia, I am so proud of you!

1KZ:

Selena H- Selena is approaching home learning with a positive attitude and enthusiasm. She is presenting her work on Seesaw each day and at a very high standard. Great effort Selena.

Martin P - Martin is enthusiastic about his learning online and is willing to answer questions that are posed during whole class discussions and with his teacher. He is also posting his work on Seesaw every day. Well done Martin.

1AH:

Kohoe T- For being dedicated and completing home learning tasks whilst still getting plenty of physical activity as well as being creative. Congratulations on your balanced approach to learning.

Evelynne D- For being dedicated and completing all home learning tasks whilst still getting plenty of physical activity. Congratulations on your balanced approach to learning.

1TN:

Essabella C: For being on time in every session and excelling in reading with expression every day. Keep up the great stamina for reading aloud!

Adit A - For trying to be logged into each session and applying new reading skills and strategies to decode unfamiliar words.

2AF:

Brandon N- For using a variety of decoding strategies and persevering when reading unfamiliar words. Brandon is developing his fluency by reading a variety of familiar and unfamiliar texts and is self-correcting. Well done Brandon!

2BM:

Christopher T - For being online and ready to learn every day and for always trying his very best with his work. Chris has been reading with great fluency and expression this week. Well done Chris!

2AO:

Jeriel J - For his beautiful artwork in a read and draw exercise and for writing a thoughtful response to the story 'My Grandad Marches on Anzac Day'. Well done Jeriel.

Max R - For being on time and ready to learn every day and for writing a wonderfully imaginative story as part of his home learning. Well done Max!

3MD:

Regina L - For approaching home learning tasks with dedication and pride. Well done Regina.

3MD:

Aturo D - For his amazing beatboxing rap about doubles facts. Awesome job Aturo.

3JT:

Charli G- For all your enthusiasm and dedication towards your online learning. Keep up the fantastic work!

3LF:

Lina M: for a fantastic rap about double facts. The actions and rhyme were very entertaining. Well done Lina.

4LD:

Dylan E-S - For outstanding procedure writing and video applications of the procedure writing tasks and explanations of the need to be in the correct order.

4JM:

Stephanie A - For tackling online learning with a positive mindset and a problem solving attitude.

4SB:

Layton T- For being a motivated learner by completing all of his online tasks and contributing to class discussions.

5MS:

Mason M - For helping others with tech issues when in our online meetings.

5SS:

Thomas D - For being an independent and motivated learner during this time and for completing all set tasks to the best of his ability.

5MG:

Amelia T - For being punctual to every session, completing all set tasks, posting her work on Seesaw and being an independent learner during this time.

6SG:

Amos T- for seeking clarification with tasks set and working productively as he is taking greater responsibility for his own learning.

6TF:

Almeeyah B - For being proactive during remote learning, taking responsibility for her learning and communicating positively with the whole class.

6SC:

Avila F - For being punctual and prepared for her online lessons and asking questions to clarify tasks.

We would also like to especially congratulate AJ in 4JM who has created Resurrection history. He is the first Resurrection student to achieve a Silver medal in Athletics.

Mathletics is an engaging online Maths resource we have implemented as part of our student numeracy learning experience. For AJ to have achieved a Silver medal, AJ needed to score five bronze medals (1,000 points over 1 week) over five different weeks. Hopefully AJ is the first of many Silver medallists at Resurrection and if he continues to apply his learning and remain focussed, he will soon achieve the illustrious Gold medal. Well done AJ!



Future Planning....

There was much planning undertaken to prepare our school for off-site instructional learning. We believe that the effort taken at the time is paying off with almost all of our students engaged in the learning program.

We are now entering a phase where we begin to plan for the return of our students regardless of when that will be. The primary task is to ensure that when our students return, our students, the school and staff are set up for success and to provide a safe and healthy environment for all.

There are matters that are being thought through so as best to meet the needs of our community. Things such as Student Reporting, Parent – Teacher Meetings, School Uniform when students return, 2021 Prep Enrolments & school access to parents, visitors and contractors during school hours.

Over the next few weeks, we will provide greater detail and information regarding all these matters so that you continue to be kept informed and up to date.

May you each remain warm and remember that we are living in unusual times, but we also have a real opportunity. Being in close quarters is a chance to step back and focus on connection. In stressful times, *children will be protected if they are connected*. When all this is done and our children go back to school, we hopefully can say that we have given them the gift of connection and some new social-emotional and problem-solving skills.

Wishing you a warm and safe weekend. Remember, next weekend is Mother's Day!

Mr Desmond Noack
Principal