



CST CHATTERBOX

Why Kids Who Learn and Think Differently Need to Stay Motivated

Many kids who learn and think differently have negative experiences in school—and on a daily basis. A child who has trouble focusing might forget homework and get marked down for it day after day. Or, a child who struggles with math might get lots of wrong answers on a worksheet and choose not to turn it in out of fear. Bad experiences like these can be frustrating and make your child feel defeated or like they aren't "good enough." So what helps kids who learn and think differently continue to push themselves to improve?

The Importance of Motivation: Motivation is a drive. It's the forces that keeps kids going even when they face a difficult task. Usually, there's a reward involved. Positive feedback or a good grade also revs motivation. A motivated child who feels rewarded by praise and a positive outcome is more likely to keep going again and again even when something feels tough.

Motivation and Kids Who Learn and Think Differently: But kids who learn and think differently typically face more challenges and setbacks than their peers. And improvement may come more slowly or less frequently even when they work hard. This can take a toll on motivation. If a child studies for a test and still doesn't do well, they might be motivated to try again the next time. But, if the child keeps on doing poorly, again and again, they may start to think, "Why bother studying for the next test? It's not going to make any difference." Instead, if a child can find the motivation to try again, they will be more willing to stick with a difficult project or task over the long run.

Support feelings of success: Feelings of success aren't limited to the end or completion of a project. With a little help from you at the start of a big task, your child can have positive moments and feelings of success along the way. For example, if your child has a big paper to write, you can download a graphic organizer and help with the outline. That extra support in the beginning may help your child feel more engaged in the entire writing process.

Focus on effort, not outcomes: If your child does well on a test, don't just share your excitement over the grade. There are many more helpful ways to give praise. Ask about how they prepared for the test. Perhaps more importantly, make sure you do the same if they don't do well on the test. Reflecting on how they prepped for the exam may uncover different ways of studying for next time. This can motivate your child to try out a new approach at the next go-around.

Avoid a "fixed mindset." Instead, foster a growth mindset. A "fixed mindset" is the belief that if you're not naturally great at something you'll never be great at it. Instead, focusing on "the next time" can help your child develop what's called a "growth mindset." This is the belief that you get Frame the discussion around the next steps to take. You want to help your child keep moving

Recognize success. No matter how your child does at something, find at least one positive thing you can say. Examples include: "You were a great team player today,"

Spring 2021

Volume 7, Issue 2

May 2021

Inside this issue:

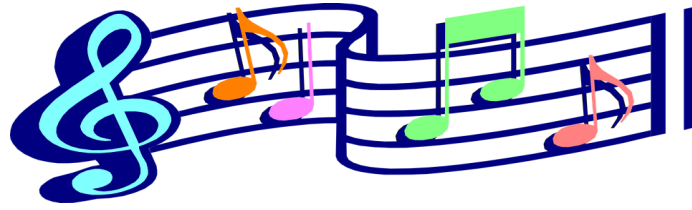
Tense? Distracted? Try
some Music! 2

Community Resources 2

Stress Awareness 3

Get to Know Your CST 4
- Armi Clancy

TENSE? DISTRACTED? TRY SOME MUSIC!!



Music has been proven time and time again to bring about positive results! Like strengthening concentration and memory. Or channeling emotions and achieving a more relaxed state. Whether you prefer classic, hard or heavy metal rock, rap, country, or classical masterpieces, music may help you focus and study. It can help you keep track of time. Your self esteem may improve as well.

Suggestions:

- When doing reading or writing activities listen to music that doesn't have lyrics.
- When studying for a test listen to something classical.
- Do not listen to a radio with the music being interrupted by talking.
- Create a playlist so you don't have to keep searching for songs.
- Keep the volume of the music at a moderate level.

Here's just one link which provides relaxing, positive background music. There are so many more!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-mCWwRYl3E>

Community Resources!

Parents have expressed interest in events and activities focused on special needs children that are taking place in the area. We hope the following will interest you and/or your child!



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/childrens-mental-health-awareness-day-virtual-part-1-tickets-146404986255>

Children's Mental Health Awareness Day **May 6, 6:30-7:30**

The Virtual Part 1 of our 2 part event to raise awareness for Children's Mental Health in 2021.

The Allaire Community Farm will bring us on a tour of their animals who have been rescued and now call the farm home from 6:30p-7p! Youth and professionals will discuss the animals' stories and how the Allaire Community Farm works with those animals to help them feel safe just like our local mental health community works with youth!

After the tour, we will stream an at-home art project that kids can do! After signing up for this event, you will receive an email to coordinate how we can get those art supplies to you for each interested youth! Register using the link:

2021 SPAN Parent Leadership & Advocacy Virtual Conference **May 11 & May 14, 1-4:30 PM**

The SPAN Parent Leadership and Advocacy Virtual Conference is a statewide conference for and about meaningful Parent Leadership across New Jersey's education, health, mental health, family support, human services and child welfare systems. Youth-Focused topics include:

- Using Social Media for Organizing and Advocacy Youth –
- Building and Supporting Youth Voice
- Leadership Opportunities
- Critical Elements of Collaboration between Parents and Schools
- Cultural Reciprocity – Embracing Diversity in Advocacy

- Learn the Signs. Act Early
- So You Want to Become a Support Parent?
- Using Technology for a Child during Remote or Hybrid Learning

Register using the link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/speak-up-take-action-create-change-improving-systems-for-families-registration-138444379867>

Nature Connection for Children's Mental Health **May 26, 7:30-8:30**

Over the last couple of generations, children have become increasingly disconnected from nature, with worrisome implications for their physical and mental health, cognitive development and educational outcomes. In this webinar we will take a deeper dive into how nature supports children's mental wellbeing including strengthened self-esteem and confidence, enhanced positive emotion and reduced negative emotion, stress reduction, restoration, social benefits, and resilience. We will share tips for getting the most out of nature activities to promote children's mental health. Register using the link:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8653049170919032079>

April was Stress Awareness Month

Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with these situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life.

Long-term stress can prove to be more than just a mental issue. From headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious issues like stroke and heart disease can come as a result of stress.

Stress in young people doesn't always look like stress in adults. But like adults, children and teens can find healthy ways to cope. Together, young people and their parents can learn to spot the signs of excess stress and, with the right tools, manage it.

For young children, tension at home is a common source of stress. Children may be troubled by family discord or divorce, for example. Big life changes, such as a new stepparent or new home, can also be hard on a child. That's true even when the changes are happy ones, such as the arrival of a new sibling.

School is another frequent source of concern for kids. Young children might be stressed about making friends, dealing with bullies or getting along with their teachers. They might also be anxious about tests and grades.

Recognize the Signs of Stress:

Irritability and anger: Children don't always have the words to describe how they are feeling and sometimes tension bubbles over into a bad mood. Stressed-out kids and teens might be more short-tempered or argumentative than normal.

Changes in behavior: A young child who used to be a great listener is suddenly acting out. A once-active teen now doesn't want to leave the house. Sudden changes can be a sign that stress levels are high.

Trouble sleeping: A child or teen might complain of feeling tired all the time, sleep more than usual or have trouble falling asleep at night.

Neglecting responsibilities: If an adolescent suddenly drops the ball on homework, forgets obligations or starts procrastinating more than usual, stress might be a factor.

Eating changes: Eating too much or too little can both be reactions to stress.

Getting sick more often: Stress often shows up as physical symptoms. Children who feel stress often report headaches or stomachaches, and might make frequent trips to the school nurse's office.

Stress Management for Kids and Teens:

Sleep well. Sleep is essential for physical and emotional well-being. Experts recommend nine to 12 hours of sleep a night for 6- to 12-year olds. Teens need eight to 10 hours a night. Sleep needs to be a priority to keep stress in check. To protect shut-eye, limit screen use at night and avoid keeping digital devices in the bedroom.

Exercise. Physical activity is an essential stress reliever for people of all ages. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least 60 minutes a day of activity for children ages 6 to 17.

Talk it out. Talking about stressful situations with a trusted adult can help kids and teens put things in perspective and find solutions.

Make time for fun — and quiet. Just like adults, kids and teens need time to do what brings them joy, whether that's unstructured time to play with building bricks or uninterrupted hours to practice music or art. Also, while some children thrive bouncing from one activity to the next, others need more down time. Find a healthy balance between favorite activities and free time.

Get outside. Spending time in nature is an effective way to relieve stress and improve overall well-being. Researchers have found that people who live in areas with more green space have less depression, anxiety and stress.

Write about it. Research has found that expressing oneself in writing can help reduce mental distress and improve well-being. Some research has found, for example, that writing about positive feelings—such as the things you're grateful for or proud of — can ease symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Learn mindfulness. In a study of a five-week mindfulness training program for 13- to 18-year-olds, researchers found that teens who learned mindfulness experienced significantly less mental distress than teens who did not.

(www.apa.org)

Shared Services Child Study Team

Wharton Borough Schools
973-361-3010

Mine Hill Township School (CAS)
973-366-0590

Rockaway Borough Schools
973-625-8601



The Shared Services Child Study Team has made it a goal to increase communication and Special Education knowledge with parents as well as teachers and administration within the three school districts. As part of this goal, you will now be receiving newsletters from the team three times a year filled with information on special education practices/law, community resources, special needs tips, etc. We hope you find this helpful!

Leslie Mozulay, LDTC

Stephanie Dzikowski, LDTC

Stacy McCoy, School Psychologist

Brooke Hanenberg, School Psychologist

Armi Clancy, School Social Worker

Get to Know Your CST

Armi Clancy, the School Social Worker, has been a part of this shared services Child Study Team since 2010. She actually lived in Wharton area for a number of years during her childhood. When she applied for a job at Morris Hills Regional District, she didn't know that they would send her to be stationed at Wharton Borough!

Upon starting this job, she had only one child, and now, she has five. She feels very fulfilled being able to work with children, particularly special needs students, while being so close to home. She is able to be home in time to help her own kids with homework and the like. It feels like the best of both worlds.

When Armi began her career, she had interned at a foster care agen-



Armi Clancy, School Social Worker, with her husband and five children

cy in Bronx, NY, and she worked at charter schools in Harlem. Her next position was at the elementary school of Mendham Borough. Being in such different environments gave her a great spectrum of experiences, but she loves working in her current setting because it combines all the issues she faced in her prior schools. She loves working through extraordinary challenges, but she also loves addressing the simple importance of helping a student have a good day right where they are.

As a social worker, she finds the importance of viewing students holistically. Students are not just scores on a standardized test or a grade on a report card; they are part of multiple systems. It's important to understand their family, culture, physical, and mental health among other things!