

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Hi, Oak Hill parents! It is good to be back together as a school community. I look forward to sharing insights and building our “parent community” together in the days ahead. In the monthly Counselors Corner newsletters, we will stay connected through resources and quick tips on **social and emotional** related topics. We hope to not only be a resource for you, but to continue to build on the strong foundation from which our students began - you!

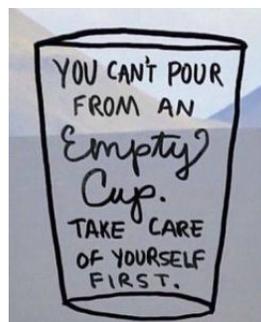
Oak Hill School Social Emotional and Spiritual Learning

At Oak Hill School, we have a long tradition of teaching children character development. We also believe in the importance of teaching children social and emotional (SEL) skills. The SEL skills build upon character traits through our Christian foundation. Together, we call this curriculum “social, emotional, spiritual learning (SESL).”

Our SESL curriculum is designed by the committee lead Elizabeth Derck (dean of students and fourth grade teacher) and Sarah Mathiesen, OHS school counselor, as well as committee participants. SESL lessons are taught in our daily school schedule including flag raising, morning meeting and advisory time and curriculum.

SEL skills are incredibly important. Studies have shown that children need these skills now more than ever, and that [family involvement](#) is key to the mastery of the skills. We are thankful for your support of our students in this area.

Healthy Roster - For Parents?!



Parents, we know first hand how stressful and challenging the recent time has been for everyone. Perhaps now, more than ever, it is important that we take our own “temperature check.”

How are you doing - really? How are you managing your own stress? How do you connect to your kids and family?

We must [encourage ourselves and each other](#), particularly during life's challenges. This is how we all build resilience and strength to get through. It is important that we take care of us so we can take care of our children.

OHS School Counselor

Please reach out if you have needs or questions. You may reach Sarah Mathiesen, OHS school counselor at mathiesens@oakhillsschool.org or office phone (615-298-9531).

Practical Tips for SEL at Home:

Affirmations: (positive, encouraging words for your children)

- "I am so **excited** for you as you start out the new school year!"
- "You have been so **brave** and **strong** as you start school back. I am **proud** of you!"
- "I appreciate how you have been so **flexible** during this challenging time."
- "I **love you!**"

Conversation Starters: (find time to chat with your child)

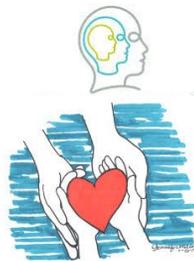
- "I'd love to hear more about your day."
 - What was something that went well? What was a struggle that you had, and how did you overcome?"
- "Did you know that we have superpowers?! My superpower lately has been _____. Hmm, what is one of your superpowers?" (Wearing a mask to keep everyone safe is a great example!)
- What is something that you are looking forward to tomorrow? (Help them anticipate the future with hope).
- Emotional check - in:
 - Parent share: "I've had lots of feelings lately as we start school back - excited, worried, tired. What was a feeling that you had today?"
 - "I care about you and want you to know that all of your feelings are okay. It's a lot to figure out sometimes. I'm here for you!"
 - "What is a "high and a low" feeling that you had today?"

Social Emotional Learning - Activities at Home:

- **Plan special time together** as a family each week. This is a particularly important aspect to the structure of the day as we start out a new school year.
- **“One Day Soon”** - Make a bucket list as a family of fun activities (trips, events, outings) that you would like to do after COVID limitations are lifted.
- **Feelings Jar** - plan time at least once per week where everyone in the family shares a feeling. A fun way to do this is to create a “feelings jar” at home for the dinner table. Have your child help you make emoji faces or feelings words to keep in the jar. Everyone pulls one out and shares.

Additional SEL and Parenting Resources:

- [UNICEF](#) - article on supporting your child's mental health during return to school.
- [Parent Cue](#) - parenting blog, app and podcasts based on developmental stages including a [Back to School Plan for your family](#).



[Child Mind Life](#) - evidenced-based resources on social and emotional health



[Confident Parents Confident Kids](#) - wide range of resources for parents, children and families on topics related to social and emotional well-being.

Podcasts:



[NPR: Life Kit - Parenting](#) - wide-range of topics such as education, race, grief, empathy and more.

[What to Say to Kids When the News is Scary](#) (tornadoes, CoronaVirus)



[Raising Boys and Girls](#) - Nashville's local ministry Daystar founders'