

WELLNESS CORNER

The Health and Wellness Advisory Committee consist of a group of professionals who focus on reviewing and promoting health policies that support the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of each student. The committee understands that there are many factors that influence a child's well-being and the importance of good communication between those directly involved in the child's education and development. To this end, we write monthly articles related to health and wellness which appear in the newsletters that you receive from your child's school. We are open to your input and ideas and understand the critical role that you play in creating a growth and health mind set for your children.

The start of a new academic year may elicit a range of emotions. Children may feel excited, fearful, curious, confused, angry, or some combination of these or other feelings. Whether your child is returning to the same school or starting at a new school the change can be a welcomed opportunity or an overwhelming and terrifying event. This may be true for both the parent and student.

To facilitate the transition, it is important to remember the basics of good health. These recommendations apply to both parents and their children.

Listen to your children and each other, really listen. Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Try to see things from their perspective. Reflect back on what you are hearing them say to ensure that you have accurately captured their experiences. Recognize that emotional issues greatly impact one's overall health. For example, a child who complains of a stomach ache may have a virus, illness, anxiety, social pressures, family issues, and/or other medical or psychological issues. It is important to validate one's feelings and to explore strategies to use those feeling in a productive way. Avoid telling others that they shouldn't feel the way they do and shaming them about having a particular feeling.

Establish good sleep habits. Get your family members locked into an age appropriate sleep-wake cycle several days prior to the start of school and maintain it throughout the year.

Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water. Our brains and bodies need fuel to run. The better the fuel (food), the better the performance, and the less likely one is to get sick.

Provide opportunities for ample **exercise and outdoor play**. Being physically active and having outdoor experiences is vital to learning and healthy growth and development. Sports and other activities can bolster social skills and teach a host of life lessons. Not all play, sports, and activities need to be nor, should they be structured. If they are structured, the quality of the experience is dependent upon the quality of the leadership and the program.

Please reach out to the Wellness and Advisory Committee should you have questions and feedback for us. You are welcome to join our meetings which happen about 4 times throughout the academic year. Help us build and sustain a strong foundation for each child in our district.

Submitted by Greg Petrosky, EdD, Psychologist, Health and Wellness Advisory Committee Member