

STRESS HAPPENS. HEALTHY BOUNDARIES CAN HELP.

THERE'S
A HERO
IN YOU

YOU
ARE
BRAVE

YOU ARE
A ROLE
MODEL

2019 AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Brought to you by Kohl's Cares® and Beacon Health System

If you would like more information, please visit www.stresshappens.org or follow us on Facebook and Instagram at Beacon Community Impact for tips and tools.

It's AUGUST and school is starting! That means in the next few weeks your children will be learning how to negotiate a lot of new situations—new schools, new teachers, new peers and friends, new schedules and new content to learn and understand. How can you help your children maneuver through these potentially stressful changes and prepare them for a great year of learning?

It's important to recognize that your children may be experiencing some anxiety and fear about these new challenges. You may even be experiencing some fear about what your children will face and if you'll be able to help them. The good news is we all experience fear. It's natural and healthy to admit we're afraid. We don't have to be ashamed of it. It's actually better for our bodies and minds to admit the fears than to stuff the emotion or pretend it doesn't exist.

Even if it feels awkward to talk about it, asking your children about the fears they may be experiencing helps improve their mental and physical well-being. They will be glad you asked—because it shows you care about them and their feelings. They will also understand that everyone experiences fears and it is possible to learn how to talk about it.

Once your children feel free to admit they're afraid, you can work together to unpack and deal with their fears. By asking specific questions about what scares them and not laughing at their responses, they will feel safe, loved and accepted. This is a great time to also share times you've faced fear in the past and how you dealt with it—successfully or unsuccessfully. As they learn from your mistakes or achievements, they will be better prepared to face their own personal challenges.

Here's an example: Perhaps your child struggled in math last year and now shares that he is afraid of failing with his new math teacher. This is really valuable information—even if math wasn't your best subject or you're a bit afraid of math yourself. You can use this information to ask what you can do to help. You can also contact his new teacher or look for ideas on the internet to build your child's math

skills (e.g., Kahn Academy). You might also look for local resources to use like free tutoring at the downtown SJC public library. Since research tells us children would rather get in trouble for misbehaving than to look stupid, your actions and willingness to listen will help your child's fear from growing into a bigger problem.

Boundaries help protect what we value, and making regular time to talk with your children about their emotions is a great boundary to establish! This boundary shows your children that you value them and you care about what they're feeling and experiencing. These conversations will help build your relationship and give your children opportunities to learn and practice healthy ways of caring for themselves.



TIPS:

The July issue had tips on how to set boundaries around screen time, which are helpful throughout the year. We'll be talking more about social media in future issues because more information is emerging on how it can be healthy or harmful for your children. Stay tuned for those important updates!

