

Minutes from the November 7, 2017 PTA meeting

Updates from our co-presidents:

The book fair is going on right now. Thank you to all who have volunteered. Please stop by and check it out. There is a great selection of Spanish books.

Thursday is a PTA luncheon for the teachers for parent teacher conferences. If you are interested or willing to donate drinks or desserts, please do so.

An updated copy of the budget is here. There was some overage from the BOSS kits. They'd like to propose that the excess money in the budget from the BOSS kits be shifted to innovation grants that teachers can apply for. They got a lot of requests for awesome innovation grants and would like to be able to fund them. There was a motion to amend the budget. It was seconded. It passed unanimously.

Guest Speaker Caroline Bernhardt-Lanier (from PEP) came to speak about managing stress and pressure:

Positive Discipline Principles:

- 1) Focus on Strengths
- 2) Affirm Contributions
- 3) Treat with Respect

There are two kinds of stress:

- 1) Good stress (eustress)
- 2) Bad stress (distress)

Reactions to stress:

- 1) Tightness
- 2) Sweat
- 3) Headache

This is because our brain sends cortisol and adrenaline to our bodies.

Causes of Stress in Kids:

Three domains:

- 1) Academic/Extracurricular Activities
- 2) Social
- 3) Family/Personal

Some signs children are stressed:

general irritability; sensitive to demands; obsession with good looks/material goods; chronic dissatisfaction, etc.

Developmental Stress in children's lives:

Fluctuating hormones, Changes in the brain, Process of separation; process of individuation

Children learn how to manage stress by watching their parents. It's important for parents to manage their stress.

Strategies for Reducing stress:

- Just say "No" to over-scheduling
- Solve the little problems
- Cultivate a positive outlook (How often are we whining and complaining and focusing on what is negative rather than cultivating the positive?)
- Practice relaxation and mindfulness techniques
- Exercise and get enough sleep

How do we as parents add to children's stress?:

Being unpredictable

nagging

not allowing enough time for children to complete things

being critical

being disengaged

being demanding/controlling

How do we help with stress?:

When the adult is interested in the child, provides supportive correction, is confident, affectionate and playful, respectful, and provides appropriate physical contact, then the child feels cared about, secure, capable, loved, valued, relaxed.

1) Look at the stressors in your life and sort them into big problems, medium sized problems, and small problems. Then focus on the pleasures and sort them similarly (big pleasures, medium-sized pleasures, small pleasures)

2) Emotion Coaching:

Make a guess at the emotion the child is feeling ("It looks like you're feeling pretty furious with Jessica right now").

Validate the emotion/express empathy ("I'd feel pretty angry too if someone had stolen my idea for a history project.")

Encourage the child to problem solve. Keep the child in charge of the problem and the process ("What do you think you'll do about this? If you need any ideas, let me know.")

We want to build their resilience to empower and enable them. Never do on a regular basis for a child what they can do for themselves. As the kids get older, we shift from a manager to a coach or consultant.

3) Breathing-Explore resources online to help with making breathing part of your routine.

4) Help kids develop a positive outlook and celebrate gratitude. Have an evening each week where you share the things you appreciate about each other. Some families keep gratitude journals where each person in the family writes something he/she is grateful for. Discuss periodically, "What's something you did to make someone feel special today? What's something someone did to make you feel special?"