

Welcome! This newsletter is for families and is offered to you by The Fourth R program. The Fourth R is a healthy relationship curriculum that your child receives at school. The goal of the newsletters is to provide practical and usable information, resources, and strategies related to health education that aligns with what your child is currently learning in class.



The Fourth R Program – Healthy Relationships, Safe Choices, Connected Youth

The Fourth R promotes healthy relationship skills and reduces risk behaviors

Your child's health class consists of four units of study. This newsletter is related to the first unit of study: **Personal Safety and Injury Prevention**.

What is your child learning in health class?

- How to be a good friend
- The differences between a healthy and unhealthy relationship
- Recognizing the impact of bullying and violence
- How to be safe and respectful online
- How to reduce stress
- How to resolve conflict appropriately
- How to communicate effectively



Parent Involvement Matters

Your child is learning about accepting and respecting differences in individuals. Learning how to develop healthy relationships is an important part of your child's development. Relationships right now mean everything to your child. Talk to them about what a good friend might act like. Ask them how it feels to be friends with someone who is a good friend to them? As a parent, what do you do when your child comes home and tells you about someone at school who was not being a good friend to them or someone else? Use the opportunity to talk about what it means to be a good friend, and why someone might not be a good friend.

Sometimes, when someone is not a good friend, this can turn to bullying or harassment. Talk to your child about how a person might be feeling if bullying or harassment is taking place. Perspective taking helps young people see the impact of negative behavior. Youth find it difficult to report bullying concerns to an adult or teacher because they think this is "ratting". Let your child know that they are actually being a good friend to someone who might need support if they take a stand against hurtful behaviors. Remind them that there may be times when they need to talk to a trusted adult rather than try to handle everything on their own.

To Do:

Parent To-Do: Ask your child what is important to them in a good friend? You can start off the conversation by providing an example of what is important to you in your friendships ("To me, a good friend is someone...").

How does your child differ from you when you were their age?

Today's youth live and learn online. Youth spend a lot of time communicating online, hanging out online, learning from their peers through social media and media in general. In fact, they are "always-on" which means between uploading, tweeting, posting, texting, snap chatting, skyping, vining, and scrolling up and down news feeds, they are rarely disconnected. Despite this around the clock connection, youth can feel disconnected and lonely. Encourage and support offline relationships and activities.

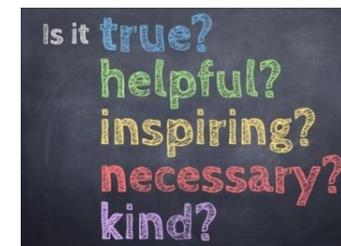


How to keep your child safe and respectful online?

Youth typically do not have the cognitive development yet to fully understand the consequences or implications of their behaviors on or offline. So responding to something they may have done that you do not agree with by saying, "How could you not know that would happen" ... is not helpful because for many of them, they *really do not know what could happen*.

Here are some safe social networking practices you and your child should discuss and do together.

- **Online friends should be offline friends.** Monitor your child's friend's profiles, and talk to them about names of people you do not know or recognize.
- **Avoid posting personal information online.** Your child might not think there is anything wrong with having their phone number, email, home address, or any other personal information online so discuss with them the reasons why personal information should stay personal.
- **Behave respectfully online just as you would in real life.** Young people need to remember that everyone has access to the Internet and nothing is ever truly deleted. Remind your child that they should treat others online as they would want to be treated, to respect other people's opinion, and that their digital behaviors are just as important as their real life behaviors.



Stress and Emotions

Stress is a normal part of life. It is a physical reaction we all have to situations where we feel scared, threatened, or upset. Stress can also result from very demanding circumstances such as doing well at school, playing a competitive sport, or friendships.

What does your family do to minimize stress and the uncomfortable emotions that result from this tension?

- ✓ **Get enough sleep.** Lying in bed with a phone, tablet, or any other electronic device does not count as sleep – encourage youth to unplug well before bedtime.
- ✓ **Get moving.** Keep active in any way that works for your family.
- ✓ **Break the routine.** Maybe everyone in the house needs one night where they take a break from the usual routine. Allow that break from the schedule and see what a difference it can make.
- ✓ **Make healthy meal choices most of the time.** Stress and food is closely related. Sugar and high-fat foods can take everyone on an emotional rollercoaster. Eat healthy whenever you can.



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