



FEBRUARY 2021:  
VOLUME 3

**Important Dates: February 5, 2021 and Friday, February 26, 2021 will be scheduled remote learning days.**

This time is to allow MLS staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Please remember to follow up with your student's teacher for important information relating to the schedule for these remote days



**Would You Rather Family Activity: [Video](#)**

**Would You Rather Game Card Links:**

- [Disney Edition](#)
- [All Ages Edition](#)
- [Superhero Edition](#)

## THRIVE IN THE HIVE: PARENT EDITION

**W**elcome to Thrive in the Hive: Parent Edition! Thrive in the Hive is a monthly mental health newsletter brought to you by **Access Counseling Services!** The goal of this newsletter is to provide you with education, interventions, and self-care tips in order for you and your children to take care of your mental health during a time when stressful changes are happening.

### Fostering Positive Relationships

**C**ovid-19 has presented many barriers in our lives over the last year. Some of these barriers include feelings of isolation, lack of predictability and struggling to adapt to changes. These difficulties have increased a need for our children to adapt to changes in routine and schedules and the need to foster positive and meaningful relationships is important now, more than ever. There are many benefits to nurturing strong relationships within the home, including; reinforcing the feeling of belonging, promoting the thought that home is a safe and reliable environment and the opportunity to model healthy and positive relationships for our children.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), "Families are often the first to notice mental health problems in children due to their intimate involvement in and monitoring of their children's lives. Parents and caregivers in particular serve as critical advocates and essential partners in the prevention and treatment of children's mental health concerns. Psychologists treating behavioral health problems in children and teenagers always make engagement of the family a priority as this has been shown to boost positive outcomes for children and families as a whole". As parents are often the first to notice when their child is struggling, an open line of communication can be crucial in allowing your children to feel safe to talk about their feelings or disclose when they may be struggling.

Lately, due to COVID-19, it may feel as though we are spending a lot of time with our children already as we are generally stuck at home. It is likely though that much of this time spent is not *intentional time*. To be intentional with our time means that we are being deliberate and conscious about how we are spending our time. If you already have some great ideas of how to spend



intentional time with your children, great! However, if you need a little help, I have provided you with a fun activity (for any age) to promote open discussion and relationship building (see the short video in the blue margin above). This time does not have to be productive; it simply has to be without distraction and *intentional*.

### 5 Quick Tips for Upcoming Remote Learning Days

1) **Set (and keep) a schedule-** Revise your schedule to fit your circumstances at home. Utilizing a timer can help to clarify how much time is dedicated for each assignment/class and timers can help to stay on track during designated break times. Identifying a daily to-do list can help your children stay on task for the day.

2) **Be prepared with materials-** Whether it's a pencil and paper, stable WiFi or log in information, being prepared with materials before beginning can help avoid falling behind.

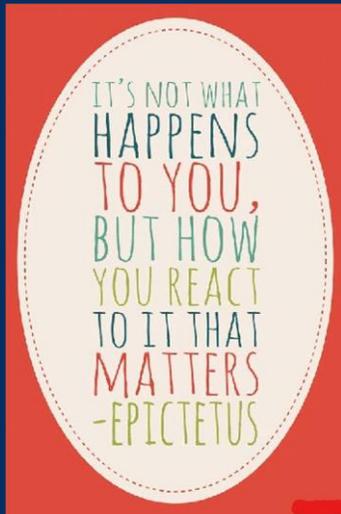
3) **Set up an environment-** conducive to learning- Ensure that there are not too many distractions, or that they are not too isolated. Work with your child to figure out what works best for them. Some background noise may be helpful for some children (ex: soft music), while others may work better in silence.

4) **Identify Barriers and Model Flexibility** – If there are issues, identify precisely why your child might be struggling: Is it focus? Motivation? Too much or too little structure? Do they need a hug additional reinforcement or for you to sit with them? This is a good opportunity to model problem solving skills and flexible thinking.

5) **Use School Resources-** Don't be afraid to contact your child's school for additional support. This is especially critical if your child has an IEP or 504 plan and requires additional support and services at school.

### Opening Up About Anxiety and Worries

**W**hen we are promoting consistent and open communication, it is not uncommon for children to talk about worries and stressors. The two short videos in the blue margin on the left were recorded by Morgan Robinson, MSW, LSW. Mrs. Robinson is a School Based Staff Therapist at Access Counseling Services who provides services to many children and families, focusing on a variety of issues-including anxiety. Mrs. Robinson shares some quick tips for addressing anxiety and worries, relating specifically to school worries. While these videos were created at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, the content is applicable still today. Please take a moment to view this video for tips and recommendations on how to talk about worries and anxiety.



Video: [Child Anxiety](#)

Video: [Parent Anxiety](#)

The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice.



**Amy Flora**

- PS-1<sup>st</sup> Grade

**Katrina Irons**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Elizabeth Barger**

- 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Sheryl Stenger (A-K)**

- 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Dara Laforest (L-Z)**

- 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Carrie Long**

- 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Kaitlyn Armstrong**

- Monroe Mental Health Coordinator  
(513) 539-8170 ext. 6101  
or  
(513) 649-8008 ext. 022

Link: [\*\*MLS COUNSELING WEBSITE\*\*](#)

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the resources provided please feel free to reach out to the Monroe Local Schools Mental Health Coordinator or your child's assigned school counselor.



Thank you for reading this month's edition of **THRIVE IN THE HIVE: Parent Edition** brought to you by **Access Counseling Services** and written by **Monroe's Mental Health Coordinator - Kaitlyn Armstrong, MSW, LSW.**

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