

Support While Sheltering In Place

10 Ways Parents Can Bring SEL Home

Social emotional learning (SEL) strengthens us as individuals and as communities, especially during uncertain times. When we practice and build our skills in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building and decision making, we are better equipped to navigate stressors, anxieties, and challenges. Sara Potler LaHayne outlines the following 10 ways parents can bring SEL home:

1. Take care of yourself, even when it feels like the last thing you can do right now.
2. Establish routines and intentionality.
3. Presence is not the same as being present.
4. Commit acts of service or kindness for others.
5. Engage in creativity together.
6. Celebrate what you can.
7. Practice active listening.
8. Help your child express and name emotions.
9. Practice social emotional learning daily.
10. Transition mindfully.

Find more details in the full article [HERE](#).



Talking to Kids About Alcohol and Other Drugs: 5 Conversation Goals



SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, has many resources on their website to assist parents with having difficult conversations with their children. One such resource is how to talk to kids about alcohol and other drugs. You can find the complete resource [HERE](#).

1. Show you disapprove of underage drinking & other drug misuse.

Over 80% of young people ages 10 – 18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink. Send a clear and strong message that you disapprove of underage drinking and use or misuse of other drugs.

2. Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success.

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Reinforce why you don't want your child to drink or use other drugs – because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're open and you show concern.

3. Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.

You want your child to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs with reliable information about its dangers. You don't want your child to learn about alcohol and other drugs from unreliable sources. Establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.

4. Show you're paying attention and you'll discourage risky behaviors.

Show you're aware of what your child is up to, as young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

5. Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding drinking and drug use.

Even if you don't think your child wants to drink or try other drugs, peer pressure is a powerful thing. Having a plan to avoid alcohol and drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your child about what they would do if faced with a decision about alcohol and drugs, such as texting a code word to a family member or practicing how they'll say "no thanks".

Keep it low-key. Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Plan to have many short talks.



When Life Hands You Lemons

The post below (author unknown) was referenced in a [blog](#) by the Arkansas Department of Education. Amidst the inconveniences, fears, and life adjustments that we've had to make due to the pandemic, there are many potential positive outcomes for our students.

What if our students emerge from this time with the following skills:

- What if they have more empathy, they enjoy family connection, they can be more creative and entertain themselves, they love to read, they love to express themselves in writing.
- What if they enjoy the simple things, like their own backyard and sitting near a window in the quiet.
- What if they notice the birds and the dates the different flowers emerge, and the calming renewal of a gentle rain shower?
- What if this generation are the ones who learn to cook, organize their space, do their laundry, and keep a well-run home?
- What if they learn to stretch a dollar and to live with less?
- What if they learn to plan shopping trips and meals at home.
- What if they learn the value of eating together as a family and finding the good to share in the small delights of the everyday?
- What if they are the ones to place great value on our teachers and educational professionals, librarians, public servants and the previously invisible essential support workers like truck drivers, grocers, cashiers, custodians, logistics, and health care workers and their supporting staff, just to name a few of the millions taking care of us right now while we are sheltered in place?
- What if among these children, a great leader emerges who had the benefit of a slower pace and a simpler life to truly learn what really matters in this life?

We want to support our students in every way that we can in regard to academics and social and emotional well-being. If they emerge from this time feeling supported in these areas and stronger in some of the skills listed in the passage above, then our district will have been successful in managing what none of us could have ever seen coming.

Screen Time During COVID-19

Over the last few weeks, we've all had to make adjustments to our lives for the safety of ourselves, our family, and our community. Parents and caregivers have added the role of teacher, counselor, chef, and technology specialist to their list of duties. Technology has become more important than ever as it has become our link to more than just entertainment and information. It has become our link to education and employment. With the increased use of technology, there are many who have concerns about the amount of "screen time" exposure for their children and themselves.

Common Sense Media has created [screen time recommendations](#) to consider as we continue to rely so heavily on technology through the pandemic.

