

Community Institute for Psychotherapy

1330 Lincoln Ave #201, San Rafael, CA 94901-2141

Phone (415) 459-5999 Fax (415) 459-5602 www.cipmarin.org

2021-2022 News & Notes



July 2021 News and Notes

Healthy Practices to Reduce Children's Stress & Boost Resilience

By Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT

The past 15 months have been a strain on all aspects of our daily lives. As situations shift, now is a good time to review the essentials of how to support the emotional health of the family, for children and adults alike.

Be sure children have adequate time and healthful nutrition. Establish daily routines so children know what to expect when. Make sure bedtimes are early enough for a full night's sleep, and mornings have sufficient time for children to dress, eat a full breakfast, and arrive on time to school, day care, or other activity, ready for the day. Encourage your children to identify and learn about healthy foods they like, helping them build good habits.

Give children the chance to play, explore, and pursue interests in their own ways. Free play is not idle or useless time, but the way children learn, discover, and work through important thoughts and feelings. For young children, choose old-fashioned toys like blocks, sand boxes, dolls, and stuffed animals that allow children to make up their own games, rather than electronic gadgets that don't allow for imaginative play. For older kids, art and writing supplies can foster their creative imaginations and encourage emotional expression.

Treat yourself and your family to quality time together. Make time to relax and be present for your children. Engage in fun activities, not just chores or routines. Play games, take walks, enjoy good movies together and talk about them afterward.

Let children know it's okay when things don't go as we'd like. There will always be disappointments and times when what we had hoped for doesn't happen. Knowing how to take these in stride and put negative experiences in perspective is a key element in resilience.

Community Institute for Psychotherapy

1330 Lincoln Ave #201, San Rafael, CA 94901-2141

Phone (415) 459-5999 Fax (415) 459-5602 www.cipmarin.org

2021-2022 News & Notes



Take special time to talk with your children: “How was your day?” Encourage them to verbalize feelings, which will help them learn to identify their feelings, become more aware of them, and better control them as a result. It will also help to alert you if problems begin to arise, especially about what happens outside the home, such as at school.

Check-ins and conversations are valuable for children’s emotional development, too, in reinforcing face to face communication, helping them learn body language and facial expression.

Be sure to let your children know they can talk with you about their concerns. Show them that you are ready to listen and want hear what they have to say. Let them know that their opinions matter.

Unwire. Set reasonable boundaries around social media and screen time. Establish “screen-free” zones and times in your home, such as at meals and other family times.

Avoid overscheduling so that children have the chance to relax and pursue their own activities, rather than rushing to be somewhere on time. Note that many scheduled activities emphasize competition and performance, rather than enjoyment of learning a new skill or participating with others. Be sensitive to your children’s own interests, whether sports, classes, or other activities, rather than selecting them for them.

If you have concerns about your child, talk with the child’s teacher(s), school counselor, and/or pediatrician. The sooner the situation can be understood and potential problems identified, the more easily and quickly they can be resolved.