



School Counselor's Corner

Mrs. Hoffmann, School Counselor | January 2019

Lesson Themes for January

Habit of the Month: Persisting

1st Grade: Don't Squeal Unless it's a Big Deal

2nd Grade: The Most Magnificent Thing

3rd Grade: Work Habits

4th Grade: Shark Tank Entrepreneurs

5th Grade: Goal Setting



How can we help our children problem solve in 2019

I hope everyone had a very happy New Year and a restful holiday. We're nearing the midpoint of the school year, and one thing that I, and teachers, have noticed is that a lot of our students have difficulty solving problems, or encountering difficult situations. As parents and teachers, we can help children better learn how to solve problems for themselves, and how to handle situations that may not go their way.

Don't step in to help: As much as you want to step in and solve the issue or problem for them, they'll never learn how to be self-sufficient if you're always smoothing things over for them. Research shows that there's been an increase in anxiety at the college level because, in their first experience as independent adults, students have never had to be self-reliant and manage on their own. While it may feel like we're helping our kids to step in and fix things for them, we're actually doing them a disservice. You can certainly help them sort through their options and figure out a plan of action, but try to hold back from jumping in and taking care of everything. The experience they gain will be the best gift you can give them.

Be realistic about the size of the problem: Oftentimes, to kids, every problem is a BIG DEAL. At school, one of the first things I'll say to students when they come to me with a worry or issue is to ask "is this a big problem or a small problem?" It gets them to think realistically about the issue and realize that maybe losing their lunchbox isn't the end of the world. It also helps you to understand their priorities; maybe what seems like a small problem to us truly is a big deal to them; asking and understanding why could help us to better support our kids.

Make a plan: After they've figured out if it's a big problem or small problem, make a plan. If it's a small problem, that means they can solve it on their own. Let them test out different solutions; if their initial solution doesn't work, they can try another. Try to hold back from jumping in with a possible solution yourself. You'll be amazed with some of the creative ideas they come up with. If it's a big problem, that might be the time to get help from an adult. However, going through that important first step of recognizing that they truly need help is essential. Their default answer shouldn't be "ask mom or dad". Check out these books that have characters who solve problems in creative ways - Stuck by Oliver Jeffers; Mrs. Toggel's Zipper by Robin Pulver; Princess Dinosaur by Jill Kastner

Habits of the Mind in the Library

Students can now look up books based on a specific Habit of the Mind. What a great way to bring the conversation into your home through the power of reading! Encourage your student to bring home a book about PERSISTING this month. A few of my favorites are The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires, and She Persisted by Chelsea Clinton

