

SEPTEMBER



PUMPKIN PATCH

The mobile pumpkin patch will be at JLH on September 27th from 9am-11am. The toddler classes, preschool & PreK will participate. The cost of participation is \$7, which can be turned into your child's teacher by October 18th. Each child will receive a pumpkin.

It's that time again....let's gear up for football season with...**Razorback Friday**...

Every Friday throughout football season dress your child(ren) in their Razorback gear to support the Hogs! Woo Pig!!



SPIRIT WEEK

MONDAY, September 18th – PAJAMA DAY



TUESDAY, September 19th – FAVORITE HAT DAY



WEDNESDAY, September 20th – SUPER HERO/BOOK CHARACTER DAY

THURSDAY, September 21st – MISMATCH & CRAZY SOCK DAY

FRIDAY, September 22nd -  RAZORBACK DAY

Happy Birthday!

Dakota – September 9th – turning 1
Gunnar – September 12th – turning 3
Bayley – September 13th – turning 5
Amelia – September 13th – turning 5
Kendall – September 15th – turning 3
Anya – September 18th – turning 5
Piper – September 18th – turning 4
Jack – September 29th – turning 4

Teachers

Ms. Alyssa – September 3rd

Scholastic Book Club

We are going to be passing out Scholastic Book Club soon! Ordering from them also helps to earn books for our classroom. You can either return the order form to your child's teacher or order online with the code Q88HW. The deadline to order is September 21st.

There is an article from Heather Shy, LPC on the back! Take a look...

The Struggle is Real – Compassion

From Kristin Neff, author of *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*:

In this incredibly competitive society of ours, how many of us truly feel good about ourselves? It seems such a fleeting thing – feeling good – especially as we need to feel special and above average to feel worthy. Anything less seems like a failure.....The problem is that by definition, it's impossible for everyone to be above average at the same time.....To see ourselves positively, we tend to inflate our own egos and put others down so that we can feel good in comparison.....Continually feeding our need for positive self-evaluation is a bit like stuffing ourselves with candy. We get a brief high, then a crash. And right after the crash comes a pendulum swing to despair as we realize that – however much we'd like to – we can't always blame our problems on someone else. We can't always feel special and above average. The result is often devastating. We look in the mirror and don't like what we see (both literally and figuratively), and the shame starts to set in. Most of us are incredibly hard on ourselves when we finally admit some flaw or shortcoming. "I'm not good enough. I'm worthless." It's not surprising that we hide the truth from ourselves when honesty is met with such harsh condemnation.

But, here's the good news. This is a pattern we can actually change. Again, from Kristin:

Our brains and bodies have the innate capacity to both give and receive care. It's part of our genetic inheritance. Not only does survival depend on the fight-or-flight instinct, it also depends on the "tend and befriend" instinct. In times of threat or stress, animals that are protective of their offspring are more likely to pass their genes successfully on to the next generation, meaning that caregiving behavior has a strong adaptive function....Evolution ensured that mammals could both give and receive nurturance, so that parents wouldn't abandon their children after birth and children wouldn't wander off alone into the dangerous wild. The emotion of care comes naturally to us, because without it our species would not be able to survive. This means that the capacity to feel affection and interconnection is part of our biological nature. Our brains are actually designed to care.

We know from John Bowlby that:

....early attachment bonds with parents affect the formation of our "internal working model" of self in relation to others....In other words, our internal working models of self have a significant impact on how we treat ourselves – with compassion or contempt. If our internal working models tell us that we can't rely on others to be there for us in times of need, we will not allow ourselves to depend on them.....The good news is that our internal working models are not etched in stone – they can be changed.....The power of self-kindness is not just an idea – some feel-good but insubstantial notion that doesn't really change anything. It's very real. When we soothe our own pain, we are tapping into the mammalian caregiving system. And one important way the caregiving system works is by triggering the release of oxytocin.

Self-compassion is a gift available to anyone willing to open up to themselves. When we develop the habit of self-kindness, suffering becomes an opportunity to experience love and tenderness from within. No matter how difficult things get, we can always wrap our torn and tattered selves in our own soft embrace. We can soothe and comfort our own pain, just as a child is soothed by her mother's arms. We don't have to wait until we are perfect, until life goes exactly as we want it to. We don't need others to respond with care and compassion in order to feel worthy of love. We don't need to look outside ourselves for the acceptance and security we crave. This is not to say that we don't need other people. Of course we do. But who is in the best position to know how you really feel underneath that cheerful façade? Who is most likely to know the full extent of the pain and fear you face, to know what you need most? Who is the only person in your life who is available 24/7 to provide you with care and kindness? You.

As I was reading all of this, I realized it is not about parenting perfectly or providing the perfect childhood experience for our children. Rather, it is about teaching them resilience. Suffering is a part of life. We cannot always avoid it. But, we can learn how to respond in the midst of it. We often think of resilience as some variation of being strong. It's true, but we forget about a very important component: self-compassion. Are we teaching our children self-compassion? Do we practice it on ourselves? How would our parenting be affected if we began to practice more self-compassion? I think it is safe to say that if we are not practicing it ourselves, we will not be as effective in teaching our children to practice their own self-compassion. If you would like more information about how to implement self-compassion, consider reading *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* by Kristin Neff.

Of course, you may always contact me as well: Heather L. Shy, LPC; 479-790-9571; www.wellnessandcourage.com.