

COUNSELING CORNER

Monthly school newsletter from Lutheran Counseling Services

SPECIAL EDITION: #IAmStronger

#IAmStronger

The #IAmStronger Initiative runs yearly across campuses that Lutheran Counseling Services serves in the Orlando area. This year it is held **February 4-8th**, in conjunction with **National School Counseling Week**. It is our goal, through IAmStronger, to help educate students, staff members and parents on how to be **STRONGER** in our words, hearts and minds and to stop hurtful actions.

Goal: Promote kindness and mindfulness across school campuses to decrease the impact of bullying. The 2019 focus is #WordsMatter, to share how our words can be used to light up or darken our world. Look for opportunities in this newsletter to get connected during this initiative.

Event Spotlight: Online parent webinar: 2/13 @ noon

Learn parenting tips & tricks based on Daniel Siegel's book *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*. Mark your calendar & join from a tablet, smartphone or computer: [GoToMeeting link](#)



An important element of the #IAmStronger initiative involves helping children to develop their social skills so they can use their words to light up their worlds. Let's take a look at some age appropriate social skills:

18 months to 2 years: Children are more interested in being around other children, but typically engage in parallel play next to them rather than cooperative play with them. They may have tantrums as they work toward being more independent and to develop communication skills to better express their needs.

2- 4 year olds: Begin to show a wider range of emotions, are able to play with other children and separate from parents more easily. Changes in routines or not getting their way can still lead to tantrums.

5 - 6 years olds: Include more conversation in their play and begin to understand embarrassment. They tend toward same-sex peers and enjoy "make believe" play, but do not always understand the difference between "make believe" and reality.

7 - 8 years olds: Are more aware of others' perceptions and can express feelings with words.

9-10 year olds: Children narrow their friend group and begin to develop their own identity, which can steer them away from family

11-15 year olds: Their ability to think more logically is developed, & they can become more introspective, which can lead to moodiness & wanting more privacy; Peer & friend opinions begin to matter more.

16-18 year olds: They work toward greater independence and can distance themselves from family, continuing to form their identity, understand their strengths and weaknesses & can appear self-centered.

Find ways to encourage social development in your child. Research continually shows that the social & emotional development of children, mixed with academic growth, leads to overall wellbeing. Find ways this month to focus on supporting these areas in your child.

Article information from Morin, A. (2014). Social and Emotional Skills: What to Expect at Different Ages. Retrieved from [Understood.org](#).



Car Conversations

Whether in the car, at the dinner table or store line, here are conversation ideas to build this quality in your child.

- Discuss how each family member can show kindness to each other. Consider a Random Acts of Kindness Challenge: Family members choose another family member to **secretly** show kindness to for the month. Reveal the secret at the end of the month.
- Extend the challenge outside the home: Challenge each person to show kindness in their day and talk about it as a family. Who can do the most secret random acts of kindness?
- Talk about how sometimes the most kind use of words and actions is to not express them (Ex: Rumors or disrespectful behavior like rolling your eyes). Talk about how Words Matter in your family.

COUNSELOR CONNECTION

Reach out to your school, the LCS main office at (407) 644-4692 or lcsfl.com to connect to your school's counselor for additional support and resources on this or other topics.

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(407) 644-4692 or lcsfl.com

Word of the Month: Kindness

Our #WordsMatter focus for February is Kindness, which is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. Caring means displaying kindness and concern for others. Use this month to focus on ways to care for others.

February provides a great opportunity to focus on kindness and caring as we are surrounded by Valentine's decor and themes of love.

Consider the many benefits of kindness. After a kind act, you can experience a decrease in stress, anxiety & depression. Kindness also increases serotonin, endorphins and oxytocin in the body, which boosts calm, pain relief and reduces blood pressure. As a family, watch the [Random Acts of Kindness video](#) to learn more about the science behind kindness and to get ideas to implement in your family.

Consider also Philippians 2:4 (ESV) which says "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Consider how to use this verse as a family to care for each other by learning about each other's interests. Maybe this means that a parent plays a game with a child (board game, phone game, video game, make-believe game, etc.), then the child plays a parent's favorite game. Could parents and children share about their favorite musician(s) and play a song at dinner? Could parents learn the main characters and basic plot of a child's favorite TV show/book/movie? Could a parent share about a favorite book and what he learned from it?

Look for ways to show kindness and caring this month, both in your family and outside of it. Cultivating a spirit of consideration and concern for others will bring many benefits. See how many ways you can practice kindness this month.

When Kindness is Absent: Bullying

Adapted from "What to do when Kids are Mean to Your Child" by Elin McCoy

What is bullying? Bullying is *systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students in which there is a real or perceived imbalance of power between bully and other(s)*. It can take many forms: rejecting and excluding; teasing, name-calling, and put-downs; sexual harassment (grabbing someone's butt, snapping a bra strap); humiliating and embarrassing (pinning a 'stupid' sign to someone's back, putting a bug in someone's hair); gossiping and spreading rumors; breaking basic rules of friendship (telling secrets, breaking promises); intimidating through threats or physical fighting.

Why do kids bully? There are many reasons kids may bully others. Including:

- They don't know how to solve conflicts or don't have empathy skills
- They are angry and frustrated or have emotional problems (the bully may be bullied by others, have low self-esteem, witnessing problems at home)
- There are no rules (kids need structure, boundaries, and guidance by adults to know how they are to act).
- Age and development of child (during adolescence, peer relationships and cliques are important which can lead to wanting to exclude others).
- They are defining their social group or feel peer pressure to bully
- Testing limits and figuring out what is acceptable

When teachers & parents understand the sources of bullying, preventive steps can be put in place to prevent it.

Lutheran Counseling Services is excited to announce this year's contest for our #IAmStronger Campaign!

#WordsMatter Spoken Word Video Contest

Consider how your words matter and how words are used to brighten or darken our world.

Tips for your video:

- Write out your message about how words matter (15 seconds to 2 minutes)
- Practice your message to be ready to record it
- Use a cell phones to record a video in 1 take for easy uploading
- Or use a video camera/laptop & basic video editing software to add scenes, words or other effects.
- Have parent permission to participate for all kids in the video
- Don't use logos or music that aren't yours
- Submit your video by **March 1st, 2019**
- The Top 5 videos will be posted from March 8 - 15th- get friends & family to vote by liking & sharing your video!

Prizes include Target gift cards for the top 5 winning entries!

For full rules and information about our spoken word video contest please visit LCSFL.com!

Helping your child deal with a bully

- Teach your child how to problem solve; brainstorm solutions, think through consequences for each option, make a plan and try it (Children are less likely to try an idea if the solution was given by an adult. They need to have an active role in finding a solution.)
- Encourage your child to nurture at least one close friendship.
- Encourage social activities to help in building self confidence in groups, improving social skills, and building friendships.
- Watch interactions with friends to make sure no one is being bossy or intimidating.
- Build self-confidence in your child - acknowledge areas of strength.
- Encourage your child to stay calm and to ignore a bully.
- Teach your child how to be assertive - plan what to say to a bully, role play responses, and identify good times to address the bully
- Encourage your child to stay away from the bully. Tell your child it's OK to walk away or run from a bully - It doesn't make them weak.
- Encourage your child to go to an adult for help.
- If problems continue, plan a meeting to discuss your concerns with the teacher. (Because some children do not tell others, the teacher may not know bullying is occurring.)
- Seek additional support from a school counselor if the child's emotional well-being continues to decline, a decline in school performance, or bullying continues to happen.