HEALTHY MINDS

Brandywine School District's Behavior Support Team

Let's Work Together.

WRITTEN BY LAURYN ELDER M.ED., BCBA

As many of us continue to navigate working from home and online instruction, setting up our environment for success is incredibly helpful. Before we jump into how to create a conducive learning environment, I want to note that including our students in the creation and planning is a great way to get them excited for virtual learning. Ask your kids where they would prefer to work, and provide guideline or choices s if needed. "Would you prefer to set up a work space in the living room or you bedroom?" If your student has a creative side, let them decorate that space in a way that will not distract them. Ask them if there is anything within their space that may feel distracting, and problem solve together. Talk about the importance of keeping their learning space organized. We will go deeper into this on the next page.

Creating a learning space together is a great way to excite our students during a time full of so much change. It is also an excellent opportunity to build independent organizational skills, problem solving skills and of course to spend quality time together. At the end of the newsletter I have linked a few cost effective ideas!

CREATING AN AT HOME WORK ENVIRONMENT

by Lauryn Elder M.Ed., BCBA

Children may become easily distracted when it comes to working within the home environment. It is important to be mindful of the amount of colors, directives, displays, activities, noises, smells, and or materials that are within the environment in which they are intending to work. Some simple tips can assist with creating a calm and predictable learning environment.

1.**Simplify the space.** Provide a specific table of which will be utilized as a working space. If you have a desk, that's great. If not, a table or even a specific seat and a clipboard will do. This will be known as the "working space."

2.**Designate a specific area for quiet work such as reading**. Some kids enjoy reading in an area away f rom their work space, and that is okay. Just be mindful of the stimulation within that environment as well!

3.**Try to eliminate excess materials** not needed for work from the designated area. The needed materials for assignments are typically a pencil and paper, a schedule/list, a timer, and/or technological device. Toys should not be present within the working environment.

4.**Try to eliminate excess noise.** Some kids can work with quiet music playing in the background, while some work best with complete silence. The noise in the working environment should not become a distraction.

5.**Provide a timeframe** for the amount of time work will be presented for the current work session. Some kids may benefit from a visual schedule placed within the working environment, or a "to do," check list.

6.**Build Independence.** Teach your child how to set up their own working environment! They can assist with wiping down the table, removing excess items, and dictating what items may be necessary for learning. The more involvement, the more independence!

THE PREMACK PRINCIPLE

WRITTEN BY ALEXANDRIA LARSON M.A.,BCBA & LAURYN ELDER M.ED., BCBA

IF I LEARN THE PREMACK PRINCIPLE, THEN MY KIDS SHOULD FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!

Generally speaking, the Premack Principle is as simple as the visual above! The idea behind this principle is that a behavior that is more likely to occur (something your child enjoys) will strengthen the likelihood that a less probable behavior (something your child doesn't enjoy as much) will occur. For example, let's say your child does not like to eat broccoli, but loves playing video games. Using the premack principle, you could say; "If you eat 5 pieces of broccoli, then you can play video games." The idea being that your child will be motivated by the video games and will eat their broccoli.

This strategy is incredibly helpful when hoping for a child to complete a low probability behavior. Low probability behavior in the academic environment can include complicated work or non-preferred work. We often create a contingency of "First work, then (Whatever reinforcement was chosen)" to encourage and reinforce work completion!

You can utilize a "first- then," visual for your child, or some kids work great just by simply utilizing "first... then," language. For example " First you are going to do your five math problems and then you get to watch a video." or "First you will work for 20 minutes and then you can have a 10 minute break." As you can see, you can either explain the work in terms of time, or # of problems. Some kiddos work better having an exact time frame, where as others would prefer the amount of problems. Both work similarly!
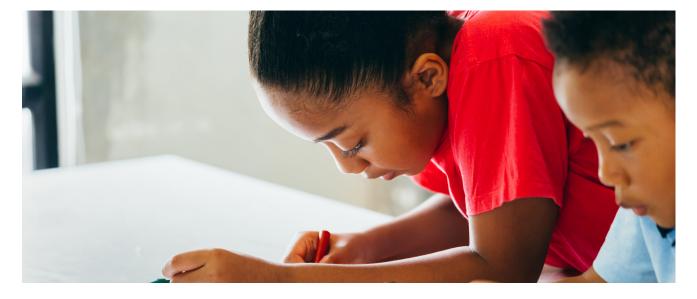
Remind your kiddo that they can do hard things when creating a contingency that may include challenging work.

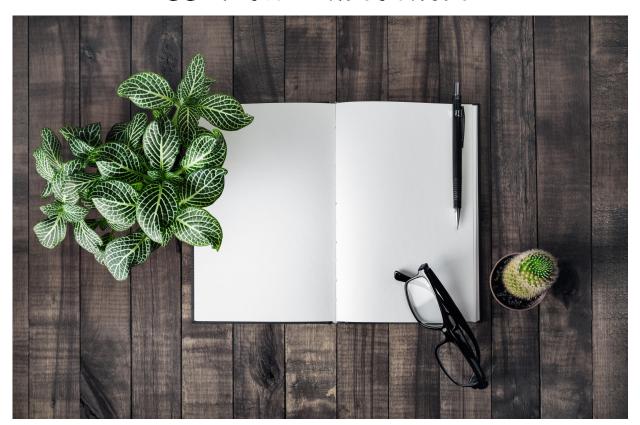# A MINDFUL MOMENT

WRITTEN BY JENNIFER STEIN., LPCMH

Mindfulness is moment by moment awareness of our feelings, thoughts, bodies and the environment that surrounds us. Research shows us a mindful practice will impact the way our brains/bodies learn to self -regulate, reduce anxiety and stress as well improve our focus/attention and ability to empathize.

Practice kind thoughts by prompting your child to think of 5 people they'd like to send kind wishes to! Sit with your child(ren) and have them share a kind wish they have for each person- have them imagine their wish floating through space to reach the person. Have the child imagine how happy and loved the person feels when he/she/they receives the wish. Wonder about how your child feels when he/she/they have given the wish. And finally, share a wish you have for your child.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Age Appropriate Chores
for Kids!

Dollar Store Work Set up Ideas!

Poster Board Work Station

Basic First- Then board

Schedule/ First - Then combo