

THE MIDDLE GROUND

The BEST STUFF is always found in the MIDDLE!

SLEEP: Quality & Quantity

The pandemic has significantly altered normal sleep patterns for children and teenagers.

If children and teenagers do not receive their recommended duration, they can be irritable and undergo behavioral changes, attention difficulties, and memory problems. These behavioral issues may impact their school performance, as well as their physical and mental health.

Based on recommendations from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, sleep duration need varies among children and adolescents, by age:

- For those aged 6 to 12 years, guidelines recommend 9 to 12 hours
- For those aged 13 to 18 years, guidelines recommend 8 to 10 hours

To assess whether sleep may be impaired, the researchers say to look for signs, such as difficulty getting up in the morning, falling asleep during the day, longer weekend sleep, yawning, or poor behavior.

If impaired, how can parents improve sleep hygiene for their children?

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EMPOWERING Students to Persevere

What does it take to persevere in the face of tough class assignments or even boredom? Is perseverance something students are born with, or is it a skill set, an attitude they can develop over time?

It all begins with the right mind-set.

Does your student believe he or she is simply "bad" at a particular subject, that no amount of effort can make up for a lack of natural talent? From this faulty fixed mind-set, perseverance or persistence is pointless. Giving up in the face of difficulty seems logical.

But for students who understand that talent and intelligence can be developed through effort and hard work, persevering just makes sense. From this growth mind-set, perseverance eventually pays off.

Fortunately, there are simple strategies you can use to both reinforce the growth mind-set and empower your students to persevere.

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January/February 2021

Cramer Junior High School
Counseling Dept. Newsletter

Happy New Year
2021

DATES TO REMEMBER...

Jan 11th E-H School Board Meeting 6:00pm

Jan 21st & 22nd students are done at 11:25

Thursday	Jan 21
1 st hour	8:15-9:15
2 nd hour	9:20-10:20
3 rd hour	10:25-11:25
Friday	Jan 22
4 th hour	8:15-9:15
5 th hour	9:20-10:20
6 th hour	10:25-11:25

Jan 25th Semester 2/Mk Prd 3

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READY SET GOALS

The middle of the school year is a great time for families to check in with students on goals. Setting academic and personal goals helps motivate, energize, and focus students, and it is a valuable skill that will benefit them throughout their lives. Parents can help students set and achieve these goals. Start by encouraging your student to record in a journal their goals in these eight areas:

1. Academics
2. Social life
3. Sports and exercise
4. Healthy eating
5. Family and community
6. Hobbies and interests
7. Screen time
8. Long-term plans



For example, your goals could range from “eating better food at lunch” to “being a great guitar player”. Be clear about the goals. In the first case, “to be a healthy person” and set realistic short-term goals (a plan of action) on the way to the long-term goal. Goals give you focus and guide you through the rough moments, the setbacks, and hardships. If 2020 taught us anything it is that we never know what to expect and things can change in an instant.

All eight areas of life above matter, and academic success is related to all of them. Having a way to separate them, document progress, and create priorities is important. A sure way to not succeed is trying to make progress in too many areas at once, so find one, two, or three areas to prioritize for a marking period. Revisit these priorities and see if follow-up goals need to be set in these areas or if new areas should be prioritized. Keeping to no more than three at a time is vital, because even if we might need to change in eight areas, we can't track that many. Slow and steady wins the race. Improvement and Progress, NOT perfection. New Year, New Goals, New Plan, New Chapter.

PERSEVERE *continued from page 1*

Encourage positive self-talk and mindfulness. “I’m just no good at this.” “This is too hard.” “I’m too far behind to catch up.” Telltale signs of a fixed mind-set, statements such as these can sap your student’s willpower and your patience. Remind your students that they would never say such negative things to a friend who was struggling with a problem. When faced with negative self-assessments, help your student reframe them into more positive ones, like:

- “I’m not good at this YET!”
- “This is hard, but if I keep trying, I will eventually get it.”
- “I’m behind now, but I can come up with a plan to catch up.”

To help students break the cycle of negative thinking, encourage them to practice mindfulness—the process of observing their thoughts and feelings without judgment. Age-appropriate mindfulness techniques can help calm self-doubts and give students a greater sense of self-control, a prerequisite for persistence.

Praise effort and process, not intelligence. We used to believe that telling kids they were smart would boost self-confidence and academic performance. But studies now show this kind of praise can discourage perseverance by suggesting that effort is less important to success than intelligence is. When praising students for completing difficult assignments, focus on how hard they tried. Be specific in complimenting the process they used to tackle their tasks, such as breaking large goals into smaller

subtasks. To reinforce the growth mind-set, point out how their abilities are growing through their own hard work.

Put failures and mistakes into a growth perspective. Some students, especially perfectionists, have an excessive fear of failure. They avoid it by giving up on subjects or activities that don’t come easily. Other students mistakenly equate a failure with a lack of intelligence or talent, taking needless hits to their self-esteem. Your own reaction to failure can make a powerful impact. When your students face setbacks, explain that failure is an expected part of the learning process that actually helps build intelligence and stamina. Taking a matter-of-fact approach, encourage your students to analyze what went wrong, seek help where needed, and try again...and again.

Give your students the chance to struggle. As a parent, you may be tempted to rush in to help when you see your student struggling with an assignment or problem. But struggle is essential to building self-confidence, independence, and perseverance. Resist the urge to intervene immediately, thereby allowing them time to figure it out on their own. (You can always intervene later if you see the struggle is becoming unproductive or too frustrating.) By trying these approaches, you can help your child grow in tenacity and focus—character traits that contribute to success in college and in career. An added bonus is that when students do succeed after struggling, the victory is all theirs. And, you can be there to enjoy each success and take pride in seeing your child develop a “can-do” spirit!

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As a first step, the researchers say to establish a daily routine for all family members, with set times for waking up, meals, school or work, recreation, and bed. School-aged children and adolescents can help create their schedules, but parents must provide healthy boundaries.

Next, a consistent evening routine characterized by a regular bedtime, avoiding caffeinated drinks and technology usage. In fact, the researchers say that electronic devices should be removed from the child's room at night because of the blue light that stimulates wakefulness.

After-bedtime snacks and drinks were also noted to stimulate wakefulness. Keep sleep spaces dark and cool, but a night-light is OK. If you need to block out excess noise, try a fan or relaxing sounds like waves rolling onto the shore.

Depending on the severity of a child's sleep hygiene, it may take a few weeks to gradually transition to earlier bed and rise times as it's easier to stay up later than to go to sleep earlier.

Set an awake-time goal, and gradually move bedtime earlier by 10 minutes every couple of days. Once a child can fall asleep within 30 minutes of going to bed, move bedtime 10 minutes earlier the next night.

As a child continues to adhere to new bedtime routines, the researchers say to move up wake time and to avoid napping, with a nap limit of 20 minutes ONLY if needed.

If these recommendations do not help to improve a child's sleep-wake schedule or if behaviors such as snoring, gasping, kicking, or sleeping too much are observed, the researchers say that these could be signs of a different health issue.

Adjusting sleep schedules can be challenging at first and will take time to implement. Sleep is a critical part of health for children and adolescents, so make sleep a consistent priority and your child will benefit from this for years to come.

Sleep Tips for Adolescents

The following recommendations will help you get the best sleep possible and make it easier for you to fall asleep and stay asleep:

- **Sleep schedule.** Wake up and go to bed at about the same time on school nights *and non-school nights*. Bedtime and wake time should not differ more than an hour or so from one day to the next.
- **Weekends.** Don't sleep in on weekends to "catch up" on sleep. Be sure to wake no more than one hour later than your weekday time on the weekends. This makes it more likely that you will have problems falling asleep at bedtime. If you wake at 7:00 am during the week, don't sleep past 8:00 am on the weekends.
- **Naps.** If you are very sleepy during the day, nap for ONLY 15 to 20 minutes in the early afternoon. Don't nap too long or too late in the afternoon or you will have difficulty falling asleep at bedtime.
- **Sunlight.** Spend time outside every day, especially in the morning, as exposure to sunlight, or bright light, helps to keep your body's internal clock on track.
- **Exercise.** Exercise regularly. Exercising may help you fall asleep and sleep more deeply. If possible, avoid exercise within 4 hours before bedtime.
- **Bedroom.** Make sure your bedroom is comfortable, quiet, and dark. Make sure also that it is not too warm at night, as sleeping in a room warmer than 75° F will make it hard to sleep. A cooler room makes for better sleep.
- **Bed.** Use your bed ONLY for sleeping. Don't study, read, watch TV, eat or listen to music in your bed.
- **Bedtime.** Make the 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime a quiet or wind-down time. Relaxing, calm, enjoyable activities such as reading a book or listening to soothing music help your body and mind slow down enough to let you sleep. Do not watch TV, scroll through your phone, study, exercise, or get involved in "energizing" activities in the 30 minutes before bedtime.
- **Snack.** Eat regular meals and don't go to bed hungry. A light snack before bed is a good idea; eating a full meal in the hour before bed is not.
- **Caffeine.** Avoid eating or drinking products containing caffeine in the late afternoon and evening. These include caffeinated sodas, coffee, tea, and chocolate.





10 Growth Mindset Questions

to ask your kids at the dinner table

1. What did you do today that made you think hard?
2. What challenge or problem have you worked on today?
3. Can you think of something new you tried today? What was it?
4. Was there anything that made you feel stuck today?... Great! What other ways might be there to solve this?
5. What did you learn today outside of school?
6. Can you think of a mistake you made today? ... Great! How can you use this mistake to do better next time?
7. Is there anything you are struggling with? ... Excellent! What new strategies can you try next??
8. Can you think of something you could have done better today?... Great! Who can you seek feedback from to make it better?
9. What would you like to become better at?
10. Did you do anything today that was easy for you? ... How can you make this more challenging for you?

Big Life Journal
Free growth mindset printables at biglifejournal.com

30+ WAYS TO DE-STRESS IN LESS THAN 10 MINUTES

- LISTEN TO YOUR FAVORITE TUNES
- HEAD OUTSIDE
- STRETCH
- MEDITATE
- READ FOR PLEASURE
- WALK, BIKE, SKATEBOARD AROUND THE BLOCK
- COUNT TO 10
- DANCE
- JOURNAL
- WRITE DOWN 10 THINGS YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR
- DOODLE OR DRAW
- TELL SOME JOKES
- CALL A FRIEND
- CHEW A PIECE OF GUM
- FOCUS & NOTICE YOUR PRESENT SURROUNDINGS (GROUNDING)
- DISCONNECT FROM TECH
- LOOK AT A HAPPY PHOTO
- SQUEEZE A STRESS BALL
- WATCH A FUNNY YOUTUBE VIDEO
- PUNCH A PILLOW
- DEEP, SLOW BREATHING
- READ AN INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE
- SPEND TIME WITH YOUR PETS
- PRACTICE YOGA POSES
- DO 20 JUMPING JACKS
- DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEONE
- SIT IN THE SUN
- VISUALIZE A SAFE, COMFORTING PLACE
- PICK SOME FLOWERS
- GIVE YOURSELF A NECK MASSAGE
- TAKE A SHOWER
- KICK A SOCCER BALL

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Emotional Intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships.

5 Questions TO DOUBLE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- SELF AWARENESS:** What specific emotion am I feeling right now?
- EMPATHY:** What emotion is the other person feeling right now?
- SELF REGULATION:** What can I do to control my emotions and my reactions right now?
- MOTIVATION:** How am I interpreting this specific task-as easy or difficult and why?
- SOCIAL SKILLS:** How can I show genuine interest in this person right now?

ON-LINE RESOURCE

<https://cramercounselor.weebly.com/>

The Cramer School Counseling webpage is up and running! There you will find valuable resources and links covering topics like Social Emotional Development, Academics, Career and Future Planning, and Health & Safety. Each month the home page is updated with new and relevant information to keep the page fresh and informative. Check it out TODAY!



Have a Need?

The Cramer Caring Closet may be able to help. Through generous donations we have a collection of gently used and even new items in a variety of sizes. Items for boys and girls ranging from footwear and outerwear to undergarments and everyday clothing. The Caring Closet even has school supplies and personal care items.

If you could use the support of the Caring Closet, you can talk to any Cramer staff member or contact the school counseling office directly at 989-460-2334.

Our Current Needs:

- Boys gloves and hats
- Boys/Girls Y12-adult underwear & socks-NEW
- Adult Girls M-L leggings, pants, athletic pants...
- Personal Care items including sanitary products

Donations of new and clean, gently used clothing, outerwear, footwear, etc. may be brought to the Cramer JH office.