



Riverside School
Princeton, NJ

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Riverside School Counseling Newsletter

What's New?

With spring break behind us and less than a dozen weeks of school left, it's time to look ahead to the stretch run of the school year!

Standardized testing is on the horizon for grades 3-5. Our goal is not to create anxiousness surrounding testing, but we recognize that this can be a stressful time for students. Please remember that I am happy to work with your child if they are feeling stressed or overwhelmed by the New Jersey ASK test.

Every day at Riverside, we are continuing to promote the word "Upstander" as a way to encourage students to be active participants in making their school and their world a better place, rather than standing by and letting things happen. I hope you'll continue to talk with your children about the word, its meaning and how they can be "Upstanders" both in and out of school.

We recently completed Mix It Up Day, where students in fourth and fifth grade were asked to sit with kids they don't normally sit with at lunch. The children were randomly placed at tables and given discussion questions to keep the conversation flowing if things got dull. The students enjoyed the activity and we'll be repeating it each month through the end of the year. I've asked the kids for suggestions on how to improve Mix It Up Day and there's been some great feedback.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me regarding your child's social/emotion progress here at Riverside.

Sincerely,

Ben Samara
Riverside School Counselor

The Value of Face-to-Face Connections

Reprinted from Parenting.org:

In today's digital world, it's common for scenarios like this to play out: A teenage girl comes into the kitchen obviously upset. When her dad asks what's wrong, she says she is having a fight with a friend who said hurtful things to her.

Her dad can't believe the friend would say some of the things his daughter told him about. For proof, she takes out her cell phone so he can "read" the argument. The entire thing was happening via text messages, and they hadn't actually spoken about the problem face to face!

There is no skill more valuable than being able to speak with a person face to face. It enables you to make a connection that no text, tweet or Facebook update can duplicate. The fastest way to communicate isn't always the best way to communicate.

It's much easier to resolve conflicts face to face. That's why world leaders meet at summits, where they can sit down together and discuss the problem. There's no reading between the lines – it's all right in front of them and everyone is getting the same message.

That's why teaching kids social skills regarding communication is so important. For most kids, conflict is (and always will be) a part of their lives – and they need to learn how to address and deal with it effectively. They need to know how to introduce themselves, look a person in the eyes and disagree with him or her appropriately.

Spend time talking with your children to help them shape their social skills so when they have a disagreement with a friend, they know how to resolve it quickly and successfully.

Mr. Samara is on Twitter!

As part of an ongoing effort to provide parents with multiple sources of valuable information, you can now follow me on Twitter @BenSamaraRS.

From this account, I will post and retweet helpful articles and tips related to parenting and child social-emotional development.



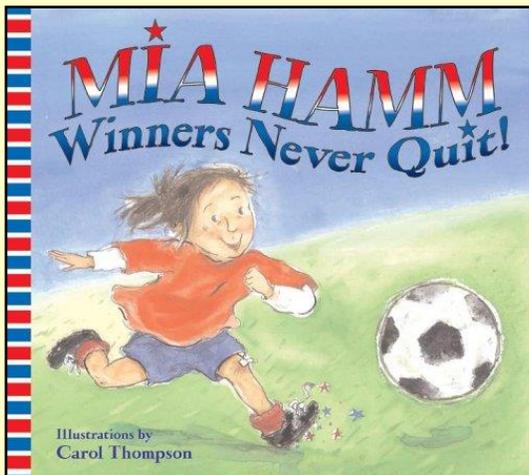
Book of the Month

Winners Never Quit!

by Mia Hamm

During the month of March, we talked a lot about winning and losing, being a good sport and being a good teammate in Kindergarten and 1st Grade. This is one of my favorite books on the topic.

Written by one of the best women's soccer players of all time, Mia Hamm, *Winners Never Quit* is a personal story about Mia as a child. Her first instinct is to quit whenever she isn't winning. But, with a little help from her brothers and sisters, she learns that the most important thing about playing games is having fun!



Helpful Websites

Wonderopolis

<http://www.wonderopolis.com>

A great website for the inquisitive child. Thousands of answers for questions like "Why does it rain?" or "Why is grass green?" Fun and educational!

Pottermore

<http://www.pottermore.com>

J.K. Rowling brings the Harry Potter books online with this great website for fans of the books. A useful tool for encouraging young readers.

Spatulatta

<http://www.spatulatta.com>

A fun website for budding cooks, Spatulatta features kid-friendly recipes and helpful videos.

Important Dates

April 21

National Kindergarten Day!

May 5-8 (Gr. 5) & May 12-16 (Gr. 3/4)

NJASK Testing

May 26

Memorial Day

June 25

Last Day of School for Students!

About Mr. Samara

Ben Samara is Riverside's School Counselor. He is available to answer any question you may have about your child's academic, emotional or social progress.

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