



Riverside School
Princeton, NJ

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Riverside School Counseling Newsletter

What's New?

Only a few weeks left in the school year, but still so much to do!

One thing coming up worth noting is my visit to each fifth grade classroom for two consecutive lessons on internet and cyber safety. As we continue to ready our graduating fifth graders for their important transition to middle school, there will be a specific focus on the ever-growing concern that is social media. It seems that every year I need to update my lesson plan to reflect the changing landscape of social media. Facebook is out, Snapchat is in. Twitter is "so last year..." but Tumblr is cool now. For parents, it seems that as soon as we get a grip on a certain app or platform, the game changes on us. This makes it more difficult to keep our children safe. This is why I visit the fifth grade classes to discuss this important topic.

As our fifth graders enter middle school, they will be faced with many new and difficult decisions, many related to the ways they use social media. My lessons this month will have a parent component to them that I hope you will find valuable. I strongly encourage fifth grade parents to talk with their children further about social media as sixth grade approaches.

As the year winds down, I am still here to answer any questions you may have about your child's social, emotional or academic progress here at Riverside. Please don't hesitate to call, e-mail or stop by!

Sincerely,
Ben Samara
Riverside School Counselor

ACTIVE LISTENING

Throughout the year, many of my groups and classroom lessons focus on active listening. This is also a very important skill for children to practice outside of school.

Active Listening is something you do when you want to let someone know you are really paying attention to what they are saying. It makes the person speaking to you feel important, respected, and cared for. Use active listening with your children as often as you can. It is especially helpful when they are upset and need your attention and understanding. Be mindfully present when they are speaking, not thinking of anything but what they are saying. When we are mindfully present, we show interest, curiosity, receptiveness, non-judgment, acceptance, and compassion. Our children will be more likely to talk to us in the future if we use active listening often.

ADVANTAGES

- Lets the other person know you are listening carefully
- Increases other's respect for you
- Decreases your misunderstanding of what was said
- Increases the support you give your children
- Helps everyone think things through better

HOW TO USE

- 1 - Listen carefully to what the other person is saying while you look them in the eye:
 - a) Repeat in your own words what they said **or**
 - b) Guess at the meaning of what they said **or**
 - c) Say what you think they are feeling

- 2 - Keep a nonjudgmental attitude
- 3 - Continue steps 1 and 2 after they say something else.

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.

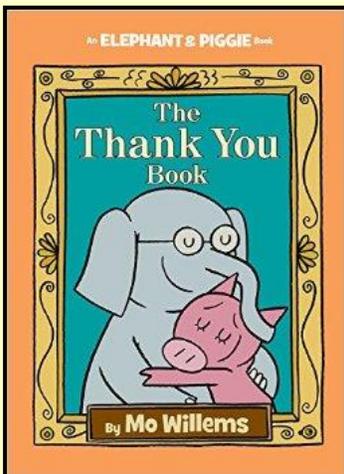


Book of the Month

***The Thank You Book* by Mo Willems**

This year at Riverside, we've spent many hours talking about gratitude and showing thanks to those who make our lives better. So, naturally, when Mrs. Lien, our school librarian, and I learned about this new book from acclaimed author Mo Willems, we were thrilled.

This book, the final chapter in Willems' "Elephant and Piggie" series, was released just this month!



Helpful & Fun Websites

Stop Cyber-Bullying

<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>
Flashy website featuring great articles and tips for parents, students, and educators looking to put a stop to this problem. The website includes numerous ideas for prevention and ways to take action.

Time For Kids

<http://www.timeforkids.com>
An extension of the popular Time for Kids magazine used frequently in our classrooms here at Riverside, this site is a great source for kids looking for an accessible way to stay connected to current events and interesting stories.

Important Dates

May 13

National Apple Pie Day!

May 25

NJ ASK Science Test (4th Grade)

May 30

Memorial Day

June 20

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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