



Riverside School  
Princeton, NJ

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# Riverside School Counseling Newsletter

## What's New?

Welcome back to Riverside! I'm so excited for the things we have planned for the month ahead.

"Lunch Bunch" has already begun. Students in grades 1-5 signed up for during the second week of school, and many of them have already been to "lunch bunch."

During these informal lunch groups, students are interacting with new and different peers while working indirectly on key social skills. It's a fun way to take a break from the normal routine and hang out with some new friends. Ask your child if they've signed up!

In addition to "lunch bunch" and other, more formal, groups, I will be doing a ton of character education-based classroom lessons as well.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your child's academic, social or emotional progress at Riverside, please don't hesitate to reach out. Additionally, if you feel your child would benefit from one-on-one support or small group work on social skills, attention, listening skills, organization, stress, or any other topic, please contact me.

Sincerely,  
Ben Samara  
Riverside School Counselor



## Anxious Children

From *Helping Your Anxious Child: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, by Ronald Rapee et al. (2008)

- Genuinely accept your child's concerns.
- Listen to your child's perceptions and gently correct misinformation.
- Patiently encourage your child to approach a feared situation one step at a time until it becomes familiar and manageable.
- Always try to get your child to events on time, or early. Being late can elevate levels of anxiety.
- Continually set equal expectations for all kids, anxious or not. Expecting a child to be anxious only encourages anxiety.
- Role-play strategies on how to react in certain situations. Support best and worst case scenarios with realistic evidence.
- Build upon your child's personal strengths.
- Help your child organize their school materials for the next day the night before.
- Allow and encourage your child to do things on his own. Try not to pass your own fears onto your child.
- Designate a "safe" person at school that understands your child's worries and concerns.
- Try not to pass your own fears onto your child.
- Set consequences – Don't confuse anxiety with other types of inappropriate behavior. Set limits and consequences so you don't allow anxiety to enable your child.
- Have reasonable expectations.

## Mix It Up Day

From the Teaching Tolerance website:

"A national campaign launched by Teaching Tolerance a decade ago, Mix It Up at Lunch Day encourages students to identify, question and cross social boundaries."

"We ask students to move out of their comfort zones and connect with someone new over lunch. It's a simple act with profound implications. Studies have shown that interactions across group lines can help reduce prejudice. When students interact with those who are different from them, biases and misperceptions can fall away."

Riverside has participated in Mix It Up Day for the past two years with grades four and five. We plan to do so again this year!

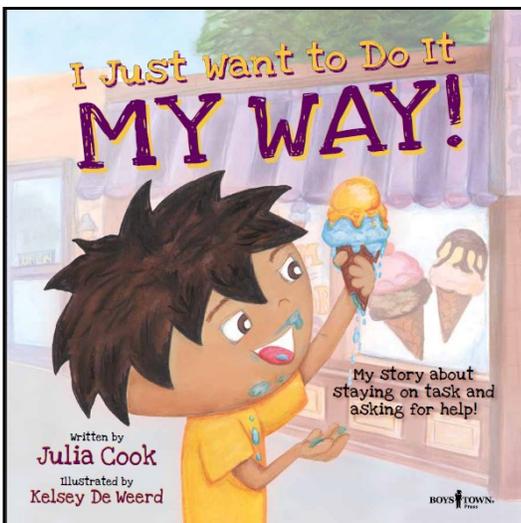
## Book of the Month

I Just Want To Do It My Way!

by Julia Cook

This is a fun book about a little boy who always has to have things his way. He learns the hard way that being stubborn has big consequences.

This is a great book for children in the younger grades. It keeps them entertained while focusing on an important subject: asking for help and learning how to do things the right way the first time.



## Helpful Websites

### The National Parenting Center

<http://www.tnpc.com>

This is a support site for parents, dedicated to providing them with responsible guidance from the world's most renowned child-rearing authorities.

### Parent Previews

<http://www.parentpreviews.com>

One of many movie review sites geared towards parents. For every movie, this site gives letter grades and descriptions for a variety of categories like language, adult content, drug/alcohol use, and violence along with detailed reviews.

Found a great website you'd like Mr. Samara to know about? Please e-mail me at: [ben\\_samara@princetonk12.org](mailto:ben_samara@princetonk12.org)

## Important Dates

September 19

Back to School Night

October 21-25

School Violence Awareness Week

November 7-8

NJEA Convention Break

November 12-13 & 19-20

Riverside Parent Conferences

## 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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