



Medication

You may be hearing from your kids that Ms. Okeson gave me a homework assignment of finding out what medication(s), if any, I am taking. Knowing the names of any medication(s) that a student is routinely taking is a very important life skill. I explained it to the students that if they are ever in need of medical attention, one of the first questions that will be asked of them is what medications they are taking? The child should be able to answer this question as it is extremely helpful to the medical provider. Your child should also be able to answer what, if any, allergies they have to medication. I would also encourage you to educate your child what each medication is for. Information and knowledge provide a sense of control for people. If you were taking a medication, you would want to know the name and reason for this medication. If someone just told you to take a medication because they said so or because the doctor prescribed it, I would imagine that your red flags would immediately go up. Teach your children to ask questions and to understand their healthcare routines. This is as important of a life skill as knowing your phone number or address...which for some of our secondary students, they also need to learn! 😊

First Newsletter!

We are coming up on being back to school for a month and I am finally getting around to putting together this newsletter. If you are new to the Day School, we offer you a hearty welcome. My name is Cathy Okeson and I provide counseling services to the secondary students, but also work with the elementary students when needed. I started this newsletter last Spring as a way to provide information to parents about topics that may be of interest to you. If you have any topics you would like me to cover specifically, please don't hesitate to contact me. These newsletters are sent out weekly (at least that is my goal) and they are also available on the Day School website (<https://www.matsuk12.us/mds>). You can reach me via email at: catherine.okeson@matsuk12.us





The School-Home Connection

For a time, I was a single parent. Many of you know the challenges of single parenting. One of the biggest challenges was working as a team with my ex-partner to establish consistent rules and consequences in both of our houses. A huge frustration for me was when our son would behave in a way that was not consistent with my house rules/expectations and I would provide a consequence – such as no video games for two days – and then he would go with his dad, and that consequence was not supported and he was allowed to play as many video games as he wanted. I felt that there was a mixed message and our son was definitely learning he could “play the system” and saw that there was a lack of unity. We hope to avoid such a scenario between our school and home by working together to support each other and not be at odds - or another source of inconsistency for our students. The Day School is founded on the concept of increasing positive social behaviors to assist our students with managing feelings and situations in a pro-social manner. Students are rated daily

on their actions and work their way through the program based on their behaviors. On the days that your student has a banner day in which they made their goal it definitely should be celebrated and acknowledged at home. If your student didn't quite make their goal, you could provide some encouragement for the next day and then move on to your nightly routine. But what are you to do if your child had a sort of rotten day at school? Perhaps they really struggled with their behaviors and needed to go to either Think Space, or some other type of intervention was employed due to a safety violation. For such behavior(s) there needs to be a balance of love with consequences. This means that while you should not berate or yell at your child for their actions, you should also not provide what could be seen as a reward. For example, these are not the days to be going to McDonald's or Taco Bell. Perhaps your child will lose access to a desired video game or non-educational entertainment, or they are restricted from meeting up with friends. I discourage you from taking away activities which reinforce pro-social behaviors or skills. I don't typically recommend taking away activities like sports (which encourage teamwork and physical fitness) or youth groups like boy/girl scouts (which teach life skills and friendship building). However, I know with my own children, if the behavior

continues even after I have provided several lower-level consequences, I may restrict access to (for example) sports as I know this is a HUGE part of my child's life. Truly, though, you must reserve such restrictions for only the most egregious/serious of behaviors. Use this too often and it loses its effectiveness. If you are struggling to come up with appropriate rewards and punishments for school behavior, please connect with myself, the school psychologist (Micah Hoffman) or your child's teacher/casemanager and we can help you come up with a workable plan.

A Question to Ponder....

This is a great question to continually ask yourself to grow a strong, positive relationship with your children:

How do my children feel about themselves as a result of spending time with me?

Andrea Nair, M.A., CCC
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This question sort of hit me in the gut. It's so simple it's profound. Does your child feel safe, loved, understood, valued? Keep asking yourself this and if you don't like the answers you are coming back with, strive to improve.

