

# Washington School Counseling Newsletter



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## Counseling Corner



### What's Happening Around Our School

In the months of November and December, schedules were filled with various activities to keep students motivated to spread holiday cheer during the holiday season. In November, students helped collect and donate over 600 pounds of food to the Hillside Food

Bank. Students also collected items for Holiday Express, an organization that sends music, food, gifts, and friendship to those in need. In December, students and staff donated new toys to the *Santa in Blue* toy drive. We also had a successful Blood Drive on November 29th.

Thank you for taking part in helping to save lives! Our December Random Acts of Kindness Calendar activity was distributed to students, and the *Garden of Kindness* activity was displayed on the first floor bulletin board. We are committed to promoting kindness here every day!

#### January/February Important Dates:

- January 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 16-19: No Name Calling Week
- January 26: "3Screens Anti-Bullying Assembly"
- February 1: End of 2nd Marking Period
- February 12-16: Random Acts of Kindness Week
- February 16: 1/2 day Professional Development
- February 19: President's Day (No School)
- February 27: Blood Drive



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## Media and Your Child

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Our children's connection to media is everywhere: TV, movies, video games, handheld games, computers, cell phones, I-pods, I-pads, smart watches, etc. There is a growing concern with our kids and media.

There are many uses for these media sources including conveniences, entertainment, and education. However, media can also damage children. Research shows that media influences the psychosocial development of children profoundly. It is

important to limit your child's exposure to media and to provide guidance on age-appropriate use of all media. The part of the brain responsible for critical thinking, problem solving, judgment, and impulse control is not fully developed until the age of 25! So when a child views media showing violence, sexual content, or harmful stereotypes, their own ideas, feelings, and behaviors are impacted. Repeated exposure to this kind of media may lead to a decrease in empathy and

increased aggression.

Here are some tips for setting media guidelines:

1. Set limits (1-2 hours a day) and encourage playtime.
2. Be a good role model: limit your own social media use.
3. Don't use technology as an emotional pacifier.
4. Keep children's rooms free of screen media.
5. Participate in media activities: it encourages social interactions, bonding, and learning.

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## How to Help Your Child Be S.M.A.R.T. about Goal Setting

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Goals are a part of every aspect of life. Without setting goals, life becomes a series of chaotic happenings you can't control. So, it's a great idea to have your child set positive SMART goals to gradually build their capacity to tackle the increasing challenges they face today.

SMART goals are: S=specific; M=measurable; A=attainable; R=realistic; T=timely. It's not only important to encourage your child to identify a goal, but it's equally important for them to be able to know when they have reached

their goal. A goal like "I will do better on my report card next marking period" is not a SMART goal. A SMART goal would be, "next marking period I will do better on my math tests, and get at least a B on most of my quizzes and homework assignments."

You can help your child turn any goal into a SMART goal, but they need help and support from adults to reach their goals. Here are some tips:

1. Have your child write down their goal and place it somewhere he/she will see it daily.

2. Develop a plan with your child about how he/she is going to reach their goal.
3. Reward (tangible or intangible) your child for steps in the right direction for accomplishing their goal.
4. Be patient with your child if he/she does not reach their goal. Encourage them to try again and help adjust the goal if it's too easy or hard.
5. Set good examples and write down a SMART goal for yourself. This may boost their self-esteem while helping you reach your goal too!