

5/17 Parent OT letter

We are closer to the Summer and I hope that you have been able to get outside on warmer days. I noticed the increased pylons in the beach parking lots and was thinking weaving a bike, skateboard, or scooter would be a great activity to boost brain power and sensory motor development.

All you parents who have braved this new world of home schooling and remote learning, please know that you are heroes in your child's lives. Children with special needs tend to test their parents when their parents shift from parent into teacher mode. Frustration is common and can be very difficult to deal with, but know that it is okay for your kids to feel frustration. Learning to cope with frustration is a skill in itself and by not letting kids work through it, we are robbing them of the opportunity to manage it going forward. We, as adults, can help our kids by guiding them to healthy coping strategies. Here are some ways to help them:

- Remind them to stop and use their breathing tool. Take a deep breath in and blow slowly out. When we are stressed, we tend to hold our breaths and tighten up. Deep breathing helps get oxygen back into our brains and opens up the mind.
- Remind your child of other times they were having difficulty learning and how they were able to conquer that frustration and gain that skill. Maybe, adding single digits was hard, but now they can do it easily. When kids say "I can't", do something, tell them to say instead, "I can't yet." That addition of "yet" empowers them to know, eventually they will learn that skill.
- Take a break! Get out of the house and drive. Go for a walk on the beach. If you can't leave the house, take a coloring, drawing, or dance break. Watch some funny cat or dog videos. Laughter really is the best medicine. Make sure your child knows you will get back to working on what is frustrating them after their break so they are not using breaks as an escape. Set a time to eventually get back to work.

- Step back and take time for yourself. If possible give yourself some time to chat with a friend, go get a coffee, or go for a walk. Stress is contagious and by taking care of yourself, you will be better able to continue the dual job of parent/teacher. You are also modeling healthy ways to decrease stress.

This week in writing, all students are going to trace the alphabet from the dots on the scanned alphabet sheet. Tracing allows for muscle memory. If you have blue, red, and green markers, pencils, or crayons, have your child first trace all tall letters in blue. All their upper case letters will be blue and several lower case letters like h, b, d. With the green marker, have them trace their small letters like a, c, e. With the red marker, have them trace the letter that falls under the line like g, y, j. Make sure that your child does not trace bottom up. It is a bad habit and leads to all kinds of problems later. The colors will increase their attention to size and line placement.

Students who are going into grades four and five, keep working on typing. The faster they get, the less burdensome lengthy, writing pieces will be for them. They will also be better prepared for middle school.

I am hoping all students grades 1-3 have received their HWT book. It is a great resource to work on handwriting over the next few months and kids usually don't mind working in it. I hope that everyone continues to stay healthy.

Ms. Faherty OT