

# Caregiver's Corner

## NEWSLETTER



### Buzz Word: Control

There are many aspects of your children's lives that they cannot control. Especially during the holidays, a lack of normal routines can create an increased sense of being out of control. It is important to help children focus on what is within their control. Giving choices whenever possible allows them to feel safe, grounded and understood. Some choices can be open ended ("What do you want to wear on New Years Eve?") and some might need to be more restrictive by offering two specific choices ("Do you want to wear your black sweater or your white buttoned shirt?").

**Circle of Control:** It can be so hard to remember to let go of the things we cannot control. This can be even more difficult during the holiday season when we are often affected by the choices, actions or feelings of those around us. This is just as true for our children too! Check out the graphic above and take time to talk to your children about focusing on what we can control versus that which we can't. Remember, we can control taking a moment for ourselves, taking a deep breath, or choosing to do something that makes us feel good!

## ★ Change and Transitions

- There are many types of transitions that our children tackle every day - from being home to sitting at school, from learning math to playing at recess, from the expected day to the unexpected events that arise, etc. During the holidays and other times of school vacation, change and transitions are at an all time high. Also, this year may present times where some children will have to transition from in-person learning to our Remote Learning Classroom. If this were to happen, it is perfectly normal and appropriate if the news of this change is shocking and/or upsetting to your child. Validating their feelings may help you both during times of transition (and other times of strong emotions):
  - **Step 1:** Stop what you are doing and think about the situation • Take a moment before responding. • Calm yourself down before acting. • Try not to react with strong emotions.
  - **Step 2:** Look at your child with new eyes • Remember your child is doing the best they can in the moment. • Try to find out what emotion your child is feeling. If you don't know, can you ask! • Think about what your child is going through. Is this situation bringing up difficult memories for your child?
  - **Step 3:** Think about past or current concerns you bring to the situation. Has this event triggered old memories or feelings in you? • Be aware of your thoughts and feelings about the situation. • Decide if you are judging your child or yourself at this moment.
  - **Step 4:** Try a validating statement • Practice making statements that calm you and your child. • For example, "It makes sense that you're frustrated. This is a tough situation." • Show your understanding and acceptance of your child. • For example, "I'm okay with you being frustrated right now." Allow them the space to let their feelings out in an appropriate way.

## How to Be a Parent Your Child Wants to Talk To

### Instead of this:

- ✗ Don't worry.
- ✗ Don't feel that way.
- ✗ Don't be disappointed.
- ✗ Don't be like that.
- ✗ Don't be mad.
- ✗ You are too sensitive.

### Try This:

- That's a big worry. I get it.
- You are upset. I would be too.
- You have every right to feel disappointed. I felt like that when I was your age.
- You are mad. I understand. You have every right.
- It hurts to see someone do something you want to be able to do, but can't yet.
- You are mad. I'm sure you have a good reason. I want to hear about it.

### Gatherings

- ☐ Greeting/hugging relatives and friends
- ☐ Hanging out with the other kids
- ☐ Wearing dressy clothes
- ☐ Having nothing to do and feeling antsy
- ☐ Answering adults' questions
- ☐ Dealing with noise and crowds
- ☐ Meeting new people and making conversation with them
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### Holiday meals

- ☐ Sitting next to strangers
- ☐ Not liking the food
- ☐ Sitting at the table for a long time
- ☐ Making conversation
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### School parties and events

- ☐ Joining groups of kids hanging out
- ☐ Having to wait for snacks/getting only one of each kind
- ☐ Talking to other kids' families
- ☐ Not liking the snacks
- ☐ Dealing with all the noise and confusion
- ☐ Sitting still and being quiet during shows and assemblies
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### Exchanging gifts

- ☐ Waiting to open gifts
- ☐ Saying thank you
- ☐ Not liking what I get
- ☐ Wanting to play with other kids' gifts
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## Holiday Challenges:

Another way to give your child a sense of control (and try to head off stressful moments) is to explore the list on the left with your child before the holidays.

Then use the chart below to help them brainstorm how to navigate those challenging moments more effectively. This can be especially helpful for those who have anxiety.

My challenges	What usually happens	What I can do instead



### Book Recommendation:

*"Right Now I'm Fine"*

Click [here](#) for the read aloud on Youtube.



### Dinnertime Do Now:

Practice validating your child's feelings at a calm moment. Ask them to talk about a time they had big feelings. Practice the steps listed in "Change and Transitions" above.. It will allow you to more easily use the steps in an escalated moment. It will also allow them to feel heard and understood outside of crisis moments.

### Virtual Resource:

Coping Skills Ideas for Elementary School Children. Click on the link below for ready to use tools!

[Coping Skill Ideas for Elemen...](#)



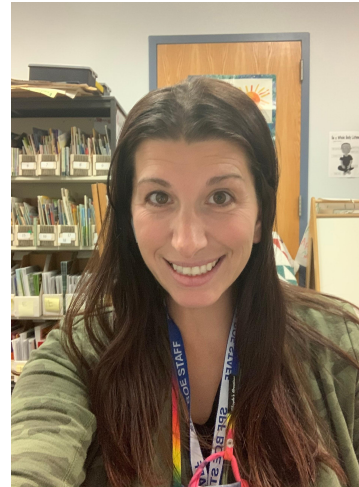
## Meet the Student Assistance Specialists



Kristine Iarussi  
[kiarussi@spfk12.org](mailto:kiarussi@spfk12.org)  
McGinn



April Chestang  
[achestang@spfk12.org](mailto:achestang@spfk12.org)  
Evergreen



Lori Lidofsky  
[LLidofsky@spfk12.org](mailto:LLidofsky@spfk12.org)  
School One



Lakendra McFadden  
[LMcFadden@spfk12.org](mailto:LMcFadden@spfk12.org)  
Brunner



Cailin Frantz  
[CFrantz@spfk12.org](mailto:CFrantz@spfk12.org)  
Coles