

# Caregiver's Corner

Tips and suggestions to support the social-emotional needs of SPF families

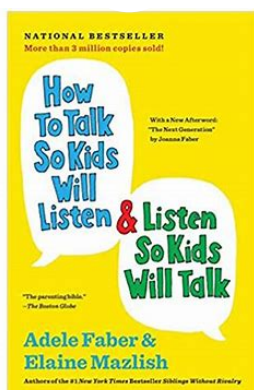


## Your Student Assistance Specialists Welcome You to the 2021-2022 School Year!

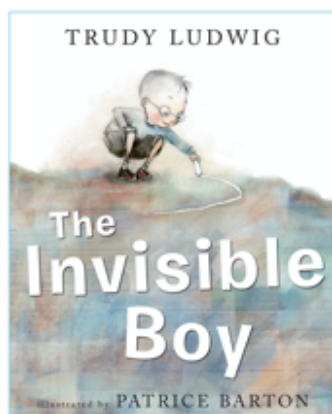
Many of us experience mixed emotions as we adjust to the demands and expectations of a new school year. Our Student Assistance Specialist Team looks forward to continuing to share relevant information pertaining to social and emotional health for you and yours.

### This Month's Book Recommendations

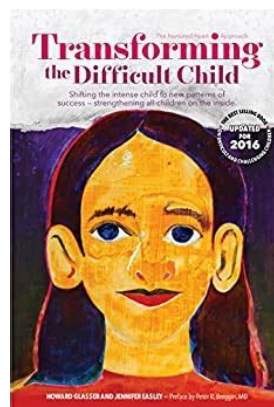
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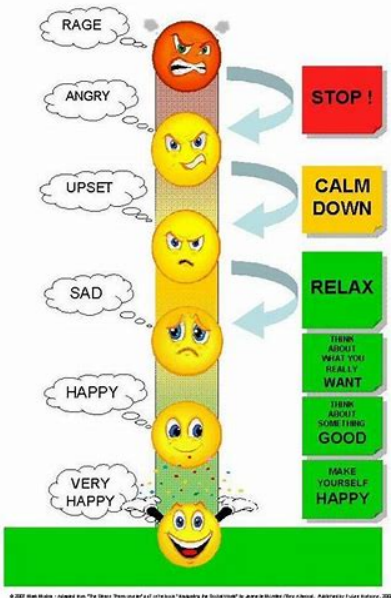
Telling our kids not to worry is often easier said than done; however targeting the causes of social wariness in childhood can lessen the chances of an anxiety disorder later in life. (NIMH, 2021)



1 in 6 U.S. children aged 2-8 years (17.4%) has a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. (CDC, 2021)



Early diagnosis and appropriate services for children and their families can make a difference in the lives of children with mental disorders. (CDC, 2021)



## Self-Regulation and School Anxiety

"Self-regulation is a skill that allows people to manage their emotions, behavior, and body movement when they're faced with a tough situation. It also allows them to do that while staying focused and paying attention". ([understood.org](http://understood.org))

The transition to a new school year can be tough for kids for whom school is a big source of anxiety, refusing to go to school is also pretty common. School refusal rates tend to be higher after vacations or sick days, because kids have a harder time coming back after a few days away. Therefore, starting a new school can increase the likelihood of anxiety. (Child Mind Institute, 2021).

"Self-regulation, on the other hand, is like a thermostat. A thermostat kicks on or off to keep a room at a certain temperature, or a "set point." It tracks temperature changes, compares them to the set point, and "knows" whether to heat or cool the room". ([understood.org](http://understood.org))

What can we do as caregivers to help??  
Here are four easy tips.

- ☒ Coach kids through situations that are difficult for them and provide a supportive framework to encourage the desired behavior until they can handle these challenges on their own.
- ☒ Anticipatory anxiety is often 6x greater than the actual event. Practice runs can help reduce anxiety. Some ideas include practicing new meal schedules, planning morning routines, getting school supplies ready, or taking a practice run (walk or car ride) to your child's school or bus stop. Actions like these provide our kids with a sense of control and ownership over this next transition.
- ☒ Protect your children from your own anxiety. There is a contagion effect when it comes to emotions.
- ☒ Help validate feelings through supportive dialogue.



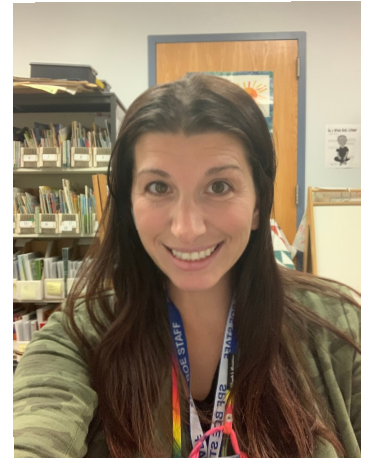
## **The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools' Student Assistance Specialist Team are Here to Help!**



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