

# COUNCIL GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2022

## CGES January 2022 Activity Calendar

1/1/2022	New Year's Day/NO School
1/3/2022	Professional Development/NO School
1/4/2022	Classes resume after break
1/10/2022	PTO/Parent Advisory Council Meeting-6:00 pm in Mrs. Bremer's room
1/10/2022	Board of Education Meeting-6:00 pm-District Office
1/17/2022	NO School/Martin Luther King Day
1/19/2022	CGES Spelling Bee – 9:15 am
1/28/2022	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Bread In A Bag
1/31/2022	NO School/Professional Development



## SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Announcements regarding school closings will be broadcast frequently on WIBW-AM 580, WIBW-TV-13, and their website [www.wibw.com](http://www.wibw.com). In addition, a power announcement phone call will be sent out if the school closing happens before school. For this reason, please contact the office if you have updated phone numbers and e-mails.

## From the desk of Mrs. Honas

Happy New Year! We are so excited to see the kids and start learning again. I wanted to share with you a celebration that our building has been having. Our intervention progress monitoring is making gains. Due to direct instruction, Science of Reading interventions, teachers/interventionists and student effort, we are seeing positive results! This is helping us close the gap from when we had to shut down school and go to remote learning. Thank you for your continued support. We all want our students to be successful academically and socially. Together, we are making gains and making a difference!

## **Why We Need Trauma-Informed Parenting More Than Ever**

By April Brown

January 12, 2021

You can identify what causes trauma in little ones — and yourself — and choose to focus on centering love, connection, healing and liberation instead.

Most can agree that 2020 was a year like no other. COVID-19 raged through communities and schools shut down. People lost jobs and loved ones. Caregivers had to navigate working remotely while keeping up with routines, virtual school and making life as normal as possible for the children in their care. Without child care, some families with two incomes made the difficult decision to survive off of one. At the same time, single-parent households

who lost work during the pandemic tried to navigate unemployment benefits and lack of support from the government. As the pandemic continues, families face [adversities related to isolation, economic hardship and unmet basic needs](#).

Overwhelming amounts of stress surrounding finances, health care and the uncertainty of the future will have long-lasting, traumatic effects on the emotional well-being of adults and children. There are many types of trauma an individual can experience. Trauma in childhood occurs when a child witnesses or experiences an event that poses a real or perceived threat to the life or well-being of the child or someone close to the child. The event overwhelms the child's ability to cope and causes feelings of fear or hopelessness.

The impact of trauma is far-reaching. Results can include (but are not limited to) the inability to find humor and joy in things that once brought us happiness, anger, trouble sleeping and restlessness, nightmares, exhaustion, fear, diminished creativity, loneliness, anxiety and increased susceptibility to illness.

As we enter 2021, we can support children by learning how to parent from a trauma-informed lens. When [we parent from a trauma-informed lens](#), we recognize the impact of trauma on children and respond to them in ways that do not perpetuate trauma. Instead, we center on love, connection, healing and liberation. Here are some ways you can bring this approach into your home:

## Create Joyful Experiences

"Study after study shows that having a good support network constitutes the single most powerful protection against becoming traumatized. Safety and terror are incompatible," says Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D., in his book "The Body Keeps Score." If we want children to feel safe, we must create loving and joyful memories together. We now know that much of the wiring of our brain circuits coincide with being in tune with those around us. Prioritizing connection with others supports trauma recovery.

- **Be present when you can.** In current times, it's important to focus on quality over quantity. Take time to play your child's favorite game. Learn their [love language](#). Eat dessert before dinner. Create a fort in the kitchen. Dance to your favorite song. Teach your child a new skill. Laugh! Snuggle. Watch their favorite movie. It's the simple things and our undivided attention that children crave.
- **Internalize the positive.** Although [our brains are like Velcro for negative experiences](#), we can take advantage of plasticity by rewiring our brains to focus on the good. At the end of every day, take a moment to discuss the positive experiences that happened with your child. Was the sun shining? Did you take a nice walk outside? Did you find joy with a pet? Encourage your child to internalize the experience by thinking about it for a few seconds. Draw attention to any changes in your body, such as warmth, feelings of care, or happiness. Repeat as often as you wish!

## Empower with Shared Decision-Making

When so much feels out of our control, it's important to provide children with opportunities to make decisions about things that matter to them. Keep it simple and actively involve children in having agency over small decisions:

- What to wear in the morning.
- Choosing a game to play together.
- Movies to watch before bed.
- Art projects.
- Choosing daily chores such as sweeping, feeding pets, cleaning tables, organizing shelves and cleaning up learning areas.
- Helping with making and cleaning up dinner.

## Co-Regulate

Being able to regulate our emotions plays a key role in emotional well-being. When we self-regulate, we manage our emotions, behavior and body movement, even during the most challenging moments. Self-regulation includes keeping track of changes in our environment, assessing how we're feeling, handling sensory information (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch) and focusing on what we're doing. But did you know that when a child continuously spends time with a caregiver who cannot regulate their emotions (dysregulated), the neurons in the child's brain mirror those of their caregiver?

According to Gerard Costa, Ph.D., the founding director of the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State University in New Jersey, "The brain is a social organ, co-constructed with others." We can support children in coping with stress in healthy ways by modeling [what it looks, sounds and feels like to be regulated](#), even during times of extreme stress and uncertainty. Here are some tips:

- **Acknowledge their fears and stay calm.** When my four-year-old daughter is upset and anxious, it's so easy for me to get wrapped up in her emotions and become dysregulated right alongside her. Instead of dismissing what's going on, acknowledge your child's fears by saying things like, "I notice you are crying. Do you want to talk about it?" or "I see you are upset because your face looks sad and you are hiding in the corner. I'm right here and I'm not leaving you. You can have space or you can come here for a hug. What does your body need?" Remember, every child is different and deals with big feelings in different ways.
- **Teach calming methods.** Deep belly breaths and [calming jars](#) are a couple of calming methods that work in our home. When we breathe deeply, we can recalibrate our autonomic nervous system and monitor our body's sensations. The breath can communicate with the brain stem and tell us that we are okay; we are safe, even when our words cannot. Establish a quiet time for five minutes every day, during which you turn off the lights and technology and lie on the ground or sit in a comfortable position. Encourage your child to focus on their breath and try to let their thoughts pass, like clouds in the sky. Discuss body sensations and emotions afterward. We can still model deep breathing, even if our children are not able to partake in it just yet, so they can

turn to it during difficult times in the future. Help your child verbalize body sensations when they feel angry, happy, sad, shy or embarrassed. Reiterate that recognizing and talking through difficult emotions is healthy and can lead to a better understanding of oneself.

## Shift from Attention-Seeking to Connection-Seeking

One of the most powerful gifts I've received as a parent is learning to shift [the harmful "attention-seeking behavior" trope](#) I learned as an undergrad in my psychology classes to focus on the importance of getting curious about our children's behaviors and reframing them as connection-seeking.

- **Reflection vs. Reaction.** When my daughter is overwhelmed, exhausted or sad, she often goes into full meltdown mode. Her small body crashes to the floor, and her legs begin to flail. "Are you mad at me?" she cries out as her body trembles. Over time, I've learned to think about what happened right before the meltdown occurred. Did she eat enough breakfast? Was she planning out a very special imaginary birthday for her favorite stuffed animal and I couldn't attend? Did she try to call her grandparents on FaceTime and no one answered? When I take a step back, breathe deeply and take a sip of water, I'm able to regulate myself enough to reflect. Wisdom always lies in reflection — never in our [lizard-brain reactions](#).
- **Move Forward Together.** After reflecting, I'm able to move forward by offering my daughter a hug, space to calm down and some help shifting her focus by asking her about a piece of artwork she's been working on. Sometimes it's as simple as just providing her with time to cry. Your child's needs will become clearer when you take a moment to pause for clarity and ask, what is their behavior telling you?

If we can take anything positive away from 2020, it's the goal of recommitting to prioritizing our children's emotional health. Trauma-informed parenting techniques can help caregivers live more balanced lives and create homes that honor each child and their voices.



### **Note from the Food Service Director**

I've been getting questions on the food service alert robocalls/emails. This is meant to be a helpful service to parents and is not meant to be just another phone call. I would like to explain for those of you who don't know or haven't been informed on the formula of these calls and how your child would be receiving them. They are scheduled for Sunday - Thursday afternoons, and can't be shut off without shutting off all other alerts.

These are helpful tips on how to get them to stop picking your child.

- Paid status, your child's account will be picked out everytime it reaches any amount below \$5.00 (Keep \$5.01 in there and you won't be bothered)
- Reduced status, your child's account will be picked out everytime it reaches any amount below \$3.00 (keep \$3.01 in there and you won't be bothered)
- Free status, your child's account will be picked out everytime it reaches any amount below \$0(anything negative you will be informed)

If you have forgotten what status you are please reach out to me and I would be happy to help you, [bshearer@cgrove417.org](mailto:bshearer@cgrove417.org)

Breakfast and Lunches are Free this year. What could they be buying?

- Forgotten Waterbottles - \$.25 (if your child gets a water bottle from the school)
- Milk not part of a school Lunch/Breakfast - \$.50 (if your child brings a sack lunch and gets a milk, you will be charged for the milk. Free milk only comes with the reimbursable meal)
- Doubles - Can range from \$1.25 - \$2.00 daily - We do not take doubles off trays( this is a hot, not pre packaged item. Please talk to your child if you don't want them to have doubles.
- Ala Carte (HS) All ala carte purchases are pre packaged and we reserve the right to say no to your child if your child doesn't have money in their account to pay for said item at time of purchase. All items meet Smart Snack Standards and you can find the list of prices on USD417.net in the menu section.

If you have any questions or concerns please let me know, [bhearer@cgrove417.org](mailto:bhearer@cgrove417.org)

Becky Shearer  
District Food Service Director