

Dear Center Elementary Families,

Our lives have changed quite a bit in a short period of time. I wanted to reach out knowing that change can raise anxiety levels in both kids and adults alike. Thankfully during times of uncertainty, there are strategies we can use and practices we can put into place to provide comfort, reduce worry, and even create learning opportunities. Below are some suggestions and resources.

Your students are accustomed to consistent, predictable schedules that guide their days at school. With an ever-changing situation, structure and routine can increase feelings of security, set clear expectations, and provide a sense of control and accomplishment. Establishing a schedule that works for your family and sticking to it whenever possible can help your student during this transition (free [Visual Schedule Printable](#)).

Stress relieving activities may look different for every family but should be a part of your daily routine. Play, exercise, time in nature, and creative projects are all healthy ways to manage anxiety. Some useful strategies for working through worries with kids (and adults!) can be found at [Helping Kids Who Are Worried](#). Another way to take your mind off of your own worries is to put your mind on ways to help others!

Additional resources:

[Go Noodle](#), [Mind Yeti](#), [Free: Online Mindfulness Class for Kids!](#), [Art Lessons with Mo Willems](#), [Screen Free Activities](#), [Antistress App](#)

Even though students are practicing social distancing it is still important to practice social skills. Luckily much of what you are already doing can be used as social emotional learning (SEL) opportunities with a little intentionality. Ordinary activities such as building with legos, playing a board game or baking cookies can also be chances to role model, discuss, and teach about compromise, managing emotions, positive self-talk, perspective-taking, problem-solving, etc. In addition, almost all children's books contain a lesson involving social skills, so read together and talk about what you read. Finally, help your student stay in touch with friends and family whether it's through cards/letters, phone, or technology.

For more specific social emotional activities check out:

[Big Life Journal](#)

[Confident Parents Confident Kids](#)

[50 Books to Teach SEL](#)

If you have questions or concerns, I can be reached via email. If you are in need of additional support, contact your pediatrician and/or mental health clinician. Many providers are available via tele-health services during this time of social distancing.

Stay healthy,

Amy Madden

School Adjustment Counselor

amadden@hanoverschools.org