



ECSELent Tips for Families: Emotional Wellness at Home

- 1. *Help your child identify how they are feeling or responding emotionally to different situations.*** Help bring attention to their body language, facial expressions and tone in a way that helps them make connections with these outcomes and the emotions they are experiencing. Naming the emotion they are feeling is an invaluable lesson!
- 2. *Reassure your child that there are solutions to all prickly feelings.*** Everybody feels difficult emotions, remind your child that there are ways to cope and move beyond these feelings. Methods to cope include engaging in deep breathing, meditation, art creation and simply talking openly about feelings with you.
- 3. *Teach your child about patience.*** If they are having difficulty waiting, try using a sand timer or a timer on your cellphone. Time is such an abstract concept and is sometimes difficult to explain to a young child, so giving them a physical time recorder can help them understand that waiting is not permanent!
- 4. *Provide positive reinforcement.*** If your child is showing great effort with patience, let them know! This positive reinforcement will encourage more and more effort from your child. Positive reinforcement, as we all know, can be much more effective than discipline. As the parent you could say "I know waiting can be hard but you're doing such a great job" or "I know waiting is hard, but I know you can do it!" These positive statements let children know that you understand what she's feeling while also letting them know that you are proud and confident that they can do it.
- 5. *Offer your child choices.*** In other words, when you have to tell your child "no," be sure to offer them something they can do instead. For example, you may say "no, we cannot go to the playground right now, but we can come up with a fun game to play at home!" Giving your child choices gives them a sense of responsibility, independence and control. Having a feeling of being in control can help children feel stabilized during uncertain times.

As we head towards the summer, it is a great time to implement these strategies as we spend more time together.

Sending you healthy wishes,
Dr. Donna Housman & The Housman Team

