

FOLLOW UP ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS GENERATED
FROM THE
THRIVE TALK Calm the Chaos! 9/24/2020

Answered by LORI J: GRADE-SCHOOL issues

- 1) I have a 1st grader. My son is struggling to stay engaged and focused in the remote environment. Help me think about how “hands on” we should be.

LORI: This is a great question and kids very at this age with how much they can do independently. By this point in the year, structures and routines are in place which makes it easier, I'd do some behind the scenes work if you haven't already which involves setting up your child's workspace, with materials organized and easy to find and labeled. A printed daily schedule with passcodes is helpful. Then you can practice with your child on the weekend the steps that he seems to be struggling with. If it is focus and attention, first graders have completed the focus and self-talk section of Second Step, reviewing those home links for those units will be helpful with him. He can practice using his self-talk statement (such as “focus” or pay attention”. The first grade unit talks about “attentascopes”. Perhaps you and he can work out a signal that will cue him and he can readjust. Aside from those supports, I would definitely loop in your child's teacher. Many teachers have their systems in place for cueing and want the kids to be as independent as possible. Teachers also may want to be the ones to manage their virtual room, as the leader- so definitely communicate what you are noticing at home and ask the teacher how much to step in is a worthy question.

- 2) We have a first grader who seems to have finally accepted to daily zoom 8am start time. We're not sure if she is she really learning anything and/or suffers from boredom from a day's worth of zoom. What is the best way to engage with her to really get a sense of whether she is actually learning? Any tips in how to engage virtually with her teacher?

LORI: The teacher is your point person here. The teachers engage in regular progress monitoring and data collection. The teacher will be able to tell you if your first grader is on target with grade level standards. At conferences you can voice your concern that your daughter does not seem as connected and perhaps brainstorm together rapport and relationship-building opportunities.

- 3) My 8year old watches youtube or play games while he is suppose to be in class or while he is suppose to be working independently in breakout room. When he is attending zoom, he looks like he is paying attention - sits up looks on the screen - but when called on for a question, he has no idea what's going on. How do I handle this?

LORI: This is tricky, but definitely happens during in person learning as well. I would set up more hurdles , and talk with your child about keeping those tabs closed so they are not as easy to jump to, as well as have frequent view of your child as much as possible without hovering,

so you can let him know the expectation. Setting up, frequent breaks with a timer for opportunities throughout the day where he has permission to engage in those preferred things like You Tube will be helpful too. You are teaching “delayed gratification” and self-management which is difficult for children but an important life skill.

Answered by Dr. BROOKE: MEDICAL issues

- 4) My 15 year old has a new girlfriend and friends he really wants to see. His friends parents let them gather indoors and I'm not comfortable with that. I keep trying to figure out what he'll resent me for more when he's 35--keeping him from gathering with friends when he was a teenager, or not protecting him from Covid and potentially permanent heart or kidney problems (i.e. "I was a teenager, of course I wanted to go to my friends' house! you were supposed to protect me!"). What kind of rules and language can I use to help?

BROOKE: Thanks for the question! Teenagers are so hard because their whole world at this age is their friends. I think I would explore various options--how does the other family behave? Would they be willing to have a small pod/group of teens that your son joins inside but is a limited group (e.g. they don't unmask around anyone else or interact outside of of the group socially). Or, could the girlfriend hang out at your house outside, or inside with mask on? Mask wearing by both parties (your 15yr old and the girlfriend) greatly reduces the risk of transmission.

I'm assuming your 15yr old is not otherwise high risk--no medical conditions as of now and no one else in your family is high risk? I think I would have a pros/cons discussion and get your teen's input as well. What is most important to them? Can they see/understand your perspective and challenge as a parent? Maybe they have an alternative idea of how to make it work? I would try to involve your teen as much as possible (within reason:) in the decision making process knowing you ultimately have the final say in the decision.

Answered by STEVE: PARENTING/FAMILY issues

- 5) I am a stay-at-home/“first grade assistant”/preschooler wrangler parent and I am struggling to find joy in my day-to-day parenting during a pandemic. Any tips on being resilient, rising above, finding joy and thriving (not just surviving)?

STEVE: The only thing you have any control of is inside you. If you are waiting for the pandemic to disappear or some other external change to happen so you can be happy, you deprive yourself of finding peace and calm now. (See my Thrive talk: [Becoming An Even Better Parent on Thrive's website www.thrivecc.org](https://www.thrivecc.org))

Most importantly is to live with the awareness that the emotional well-being of yourself, your partner, your family is far more important than the particular classroom lesson. Too often the goal to get your kids to do something you want results in struggle and unhappiness. It becomes a habitual pattern repeating itself over and over again. It will continue this way and become

more and more unpleasant unless you awaken to creating a new pattern. From your excellent question I know you want to change. That's the first step. Wanting to be different. See your child's behavior as a revealing of a life lesson they need to learn. Be aware of the life lessons you are wanting to teach your kids. The life lessons parents want for their kids to learn are important and reasonable. The problem isn't the lesson it's the lesson plan. How you teach the lesson determines if they receive your knowledge or just your temperament. What do you teach them about anger when one doesn't get their way? What do they learn from you about frustration? Being disappointed? How do you teach Negotiation and compromise? Do you teach them that they are responsible for how you feel, think and behave? The first thing to do is just stop. Stop reacting in the same ways. Once you teach yourself to stop you will have space to create a vision of what you want to be doing instead. This will enable you to develop an action plan to create the life you say you want. It's living with a conscious intention to be kind and respectful in all your interactions with anyone in your life. Especially your children because you'll be passing it on. Pass it on as a consciously and deliberately created life instead of an unconscious and reactive one. Don't make it more complicated than this. Decide you will practice being kinder and more respectful. The place to start is with yourself. You want to develop a kinder and more loving inner voice that encourages you on the journey so that you are able to practice and accept that you won't be good at it in the beginning. The inner ally encourages you to stay the course so you won't abandon the good intention before the benefits are revealed. Self-compassion is the practice. A lifelong practice so you might as well begin now! You will never hate yourself enough to love and accept yourself more. Thanks for attending the panel discussion. I am giving a timely talk for Thrive on October 29th from 7-8pm. If you want to get the zoom link just contact thrive. Best to you!