

A photograph of several people holding hands in a circle, symbolizing connection and support. The image is partially obscured by a blue text box and an orange circle. The background shows a person in a grey sweater and another in a light blue shirt.

Making Connections In Our New Reality

**Greene County Public Schools SEAC
February 9, 2021
7pm**



Meet our School Psychology Team:



Nikki Bowles,
LCSW
PREP Clinician
providing
individual and
group therapy
at WMHS



Jessica Williams-Chase,
Ed.S., NCSP @ RES
Conducts
psycho-educational
evaluations, and
provides individual and
group counseling



Jeremiah Jordan, Ed.S.,
@ Nathanael Greene
Primary & Elementary
Conducts
psycho-educational
evaluations, and
provides individual and
group counseling



Anna Weaver, M.A.
Intern @ WMMS
Conducts
psycho-educational
evaluations, and
provides individual and
group counseling



Meet our School Counseling Team



Taylor Snowden, M.
Ed @ Nathanael
Greene Primary and
Elementary
Providing social
emotional classroom
lessons, individual &
group counseling

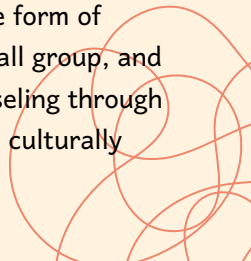


Anne Clarry, M.Ed @ WMMS, last names A-L.
Jordan Wilson, M.Ed @ WMMS, last names M-Z.
Providing a comprehensive school counseling program
including classroom, small group, and individual
counseling; while partnering with parents and
educators to facilitate the optimum development of
middle school students.



Abbey Lawhorne, M.Ed @ RES

Facilitating a comprehensive school
counseling program via tiered
student services in the form of
classroom lessons, small group, and
individual based counseling through
a strengths-based and culturally
responsive approach.



Our Agenda

1

What is developmentally appropriate?

4

What can I do?

2

How can social development be impacted by disability?

5

What has helped you?

3

What about the impacts of COVID-19 precautions?

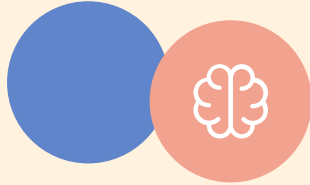
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Wrap up and questions



**What is
Developmentally
appropriate?**

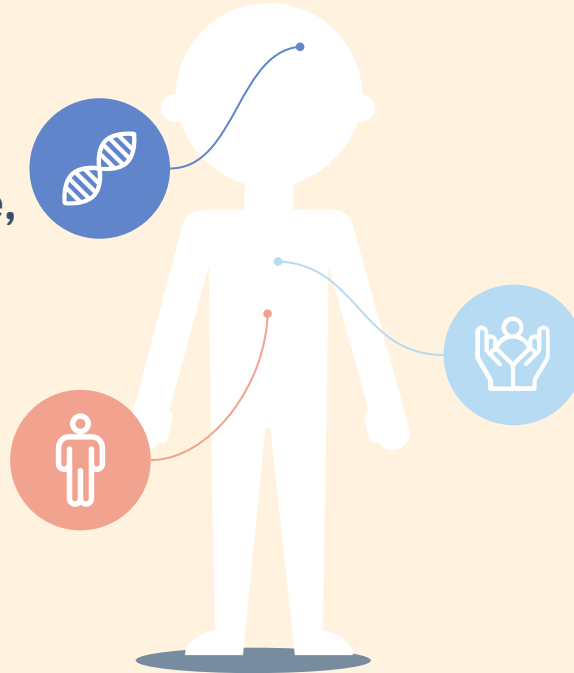
Developing Social Skills in Elementary School



- Turn-taking
- Stop, Think, Act
- Doesn't overreact to losing a game.
- Beginning development of perspective taking.
- Handles conflict with peer without aggression.
- Can re-regulate with minimal adult support.
- Build peer relationships and understanding positive friendship qualities.

Developing Social Skills In Middle School

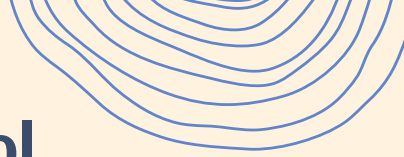
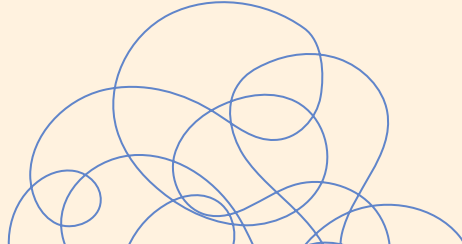
- Peers become a bigger influence on socialization.
- Start communicating more with their posture, tone of voice, and body language.
- Are introspective and moody, and need more privacy



- Resists saying hurtful things to friends.
- Is able to ‘read’ reactions from friends and adjust behavior accordingly.
- May think the whole world is watching them.
- May test out new clothing styles and try on “personalities” while figuring out where/how to fit in

Developing Social Skills in High School

- **Communicate thoughts and feelings effectively.**
- **Collaborate with others.**
- **Respect peers' space and opinions.**
- **Stand up themselves appropriately.**



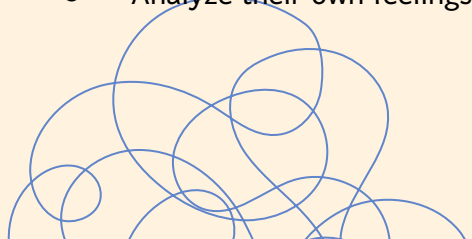
Breaking It Down...



14-Year-Olds

- Can recognize personal strengths and challenges
- Are embarrassed by family and parents
- Strive to be independent
- Are eager to be accepted by peers and to have friends
- May seem self-centered, impulsive, or moody

15-Year-Olds

- Don't want to talk as much; are argumentative
 - May appreciate siblings more than parents
 - Narrow down to a few close friends and may start dating
 - Analyze their own feelings and try to find the cause of them
- 

16- to 18-Year-Olds

- Start relating to family better; begin to see parents as real people
- Develop a better sense of who they are and what positive things they can contribute to friendships and other relationships
- Spend a lot of time with friends
- Are able to voice emotions (both negative and positive) and try to find solutions to conflicts

How common disabilities impact social development

- Children with developmental disorders, like ADHD or ASD, often have lagging skills in areas that impact socialization.
- They may have difficulty inhibiting their responses, regulating their behaviors and emotions, and organizing their thoughts.



- Students may also struggle with perspective-taking. This makes getting along with peers difficult.


Social Intake – noticing and understanding other people’s speech, vocal inflection, body language, eye contact, and even cultural behaviors.

Internal Process – interpreting what others communicate to you as well as recognizing and managing your own emotions and reactions.

Social Output – how a person communicates with and reacts to others, through speech, gestures, and body language.




Students with disabilities may have...

- Inability to understand jokes
 - Difficulty finding suitable words
 - Missed social cues
 - Difficulty communicating digitally
 - Remembering things incorrectly
 - A greater need for immediate gratification
 - A lower frustration tolerance than their peers
- 



How does isolation impact development?

- Lack of practice
 - Rusty skills
 - Lack of feedback from peers and adults
 - Anxiety or “overthinking” possible upcoming interactions
- 

So what can I do?

Provide Concrete Examples

Tell kids exactly what is expected in a given situation

Offer specific praise

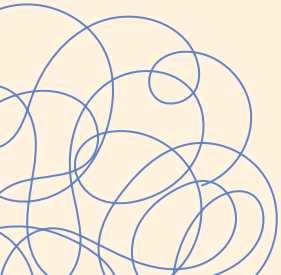
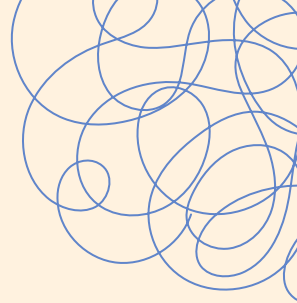
Point out exactly what your student did right

Practice Skills At Home

Modeling appropriate communication is helpful for kids. Consider role-playing and practicing scenarios before asking them to demonstrate these skills in the “real world”

Use Prosocial Modelling

When you see a skill demonstrated on TV, point it out



So what can I do?



Tip

Challenge your child to talk to a store employee; say hello, or order their own meal, etc. And you can role play at home.



Tip

Expect extra manners at home right now as practice: say good morning, state what they need rather than e.g. “I’m thirsty” etc



Tip

Have a rule-free and ‘ask’ free weekly breakfast together to stay connected and to practice social skills.



3:1 ratio

For every 1 comment regarding “shoulds” or expectations, there could be three topics regarding interests, hobbies, etc.

So what can I do?



Zones

Utilize the Zones of Regulation to emphasize feeling identification and reregulation strategies.



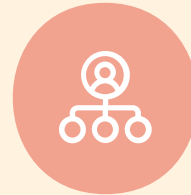
Size of the Problem

Discuss “size” of the problem and reaction and provide a conflict resolution wheel or chart for practice.



Games

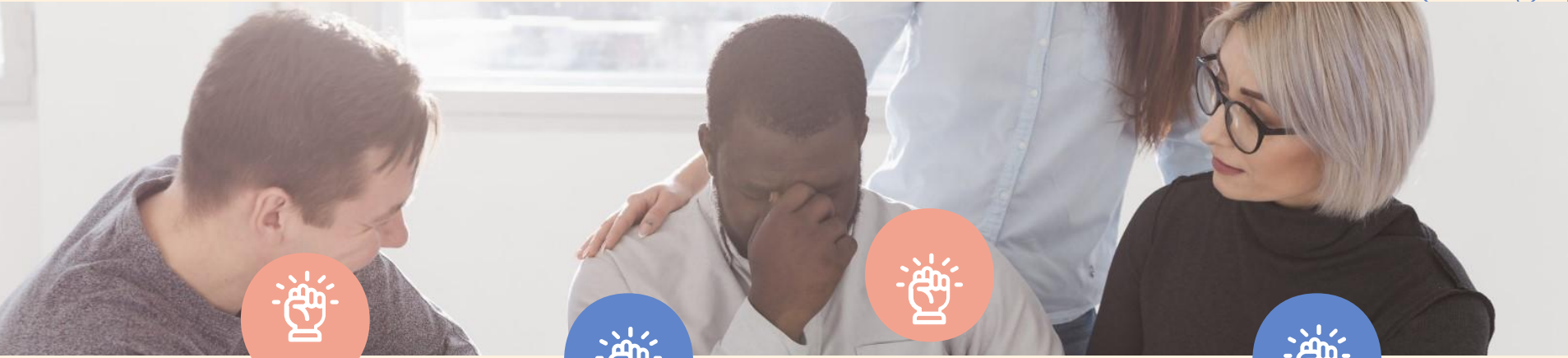
Play “social charades” to identify what social cues align with different actions.



Restorative Practices

Walk your child through restoring a relationship after a problem. Emphasize empathy and ask them how they feel the problem should be solved.

More tips:



Family Game Night!

Shooting paper balls into the trash can, board games, card games, electronic trivia/party games (Quiz Time, Mario Kart, HeadsUp, Jackbox (Teen+))

Build a Tower

If your child has difficulty with conversation turn-taking, practice having a back and forth conversation. Stack a block each a person makes a statement that is on topic.

Encourage Gratitude

Create a family gratitude jar. Each person submits one one thing they are thankful for and make it a routine.

SPAR

Put together a list of random, silly debatable topics (*a hotdog is a sandwich; pancakes are superior to waffles*). Two “debaters” are randomly assigned a position, regardless if they actually agree. Each side has 1 minute.



Choice Board for Families

Scavenger Hunt

Arrange a social distant neighborhood scavenger

hunt

Tip

More Tips

Write a Letter

Go old school. Write to Grandma or a friend.

Tip

Arrange a Virtual Playdate

Use Facetime, Google Meet or Zoom to allow kids to interact with each other

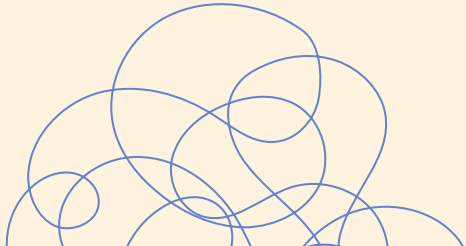
Tip

Video Games? (Yes, we said it)

Some kids are connecting through video games. With boundaries, this could be a way for kids to connect.

Encourage Creativity

Now is a great time to start a hobby - and why not build a business along with it?





What has worked for your family?



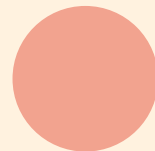
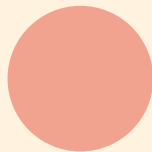
Idea:

Socially distant bike rides
Google form- with grade level, interests
(PTA?)



Idea:

Zoom bake-off - Bake
something and show it off
on a Zoom call.



Idea:

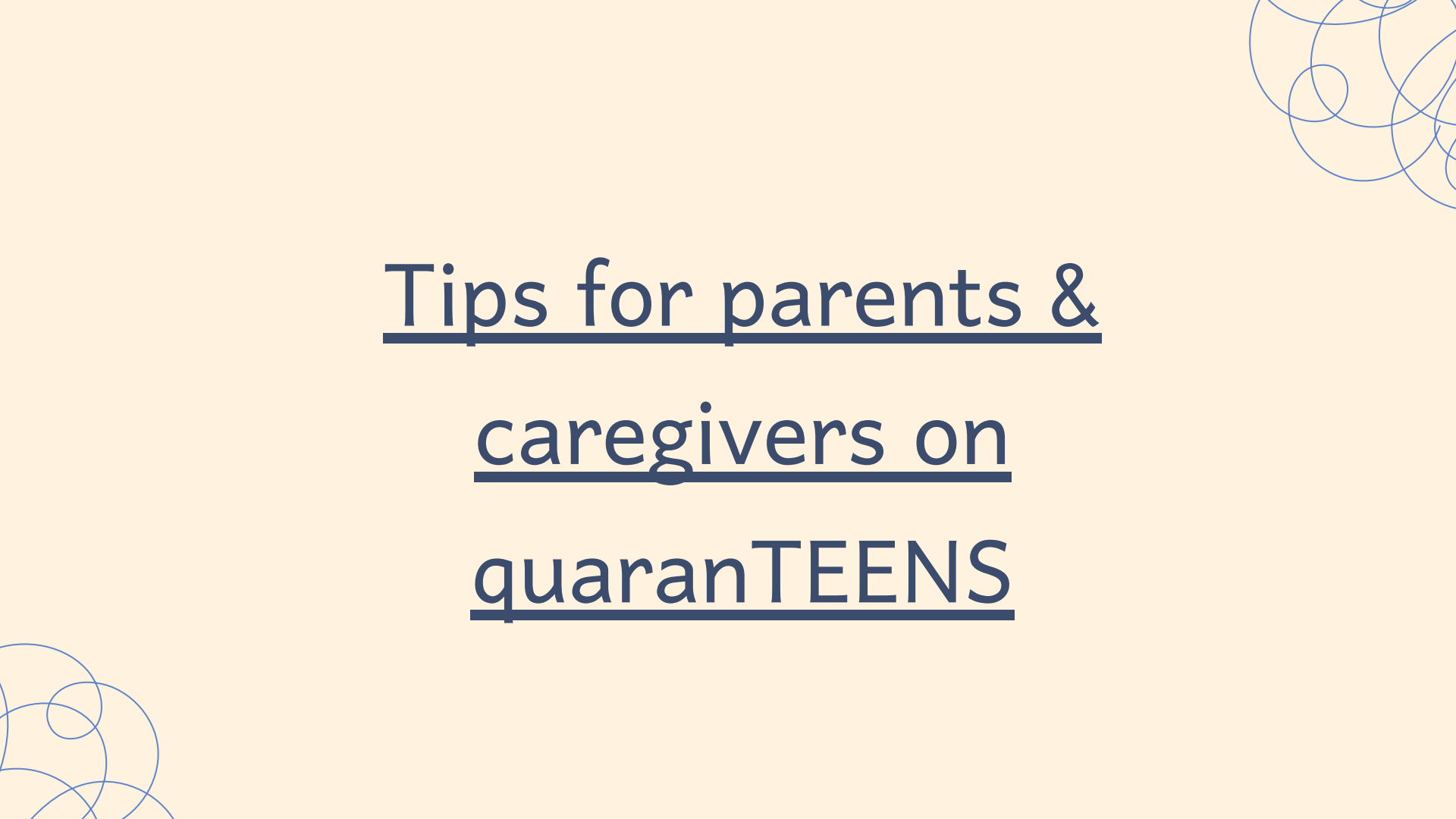
Pen pals- Connecting
students (possibly based
on interest?)



Resources



- [Helping Kids Cope With Loneliness During COVID-19](#)
- [Is Your Child Missing Friends Due to COVID-19?](#)
- [Understood.org](#)
- [Learning Difficulties and Social Skills: what's the connection?](#)
- [The Impact of Learning Disabilities on Social Skills](#)
- [Social Skills and Learning Disabilities](#)



Tips for parents &
caregivers on
quaranTEENS



Thank you!

Please reach out to any team member if you want to discuss specific needs.