

IN THE LOOP

with LINK

Updates, Observations & Anecdotes for Parents
from Julianne Allen,
Family Engagement & Communication Specialist



PARENT/FAMILY/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES & IMPORTANT DATES*

- 2/1 ECC- Kindergarten Registration Online (ongoing)
- 2/7 Parent Program PK-3: Challenges with Anxiety & Mood- 6:00 PM @OFIS**
- 2/10 OECPTA Meeting- 7:00 PM @ECC
- 2/10 Freshman Orientation for current 8th grade students & parents- 6:00 PM @OFHS
- 2/11 Falls-Lenox Valentine's Celebration
- 2/11 OFIS Valentine's Celebration
- 2/11 OFMS PTA Dodgeball Tournament- 6:30 PM @OFMS
- 2/12 Cabaret Night- 7:00 PM @OFHS Auditorium
- 2/14 ECC Valentine's Celebration
- 2/15 OFIS PTA Meeting- 7:00 PM @OFIS
- 2/17 ECC Family Math Night- 6:30 PM @ECC
- 2/21 President's Day- NO SCHOOL
- 2/22 Falls-Lenox/ECC PTA Meeting- 7:00 PM @FL
- 2/24 OFHS PTA Battle of the Schools Dodgeball- 7:00 PM @OFHS
- 2/28 OFMS PTA & OFHS PTA Combined Meeting- 7:00 PM @OFHS



*Contact your building or visit www.ofcs.net for details.
**See page 3 for more information

NUMBERS THAT COUNT

1 in **7**

Globally, it is estimated that 1 in 7 (14%) 10-19 year-olds experience mental health conditions, yet these remain largely unrecognized and untreated.*

If you are concerned for your child, reach out to your school counselor to be connected with resources and support. For parents of PreK-Grade 5 students, attend the parent program with Dr. Barlow on February 7th "Challenges with Anxiety & Mood". See page 3 for details. For 6-12th grade parents, watch the recording from the recent parent program "Stress, Anxiety, & Depression- Oh, My!" featuring presenters from OhioGuidestone. Click [HERE](#) for the video and access the slide presentation [HERE](#)

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

*Source: World Health Organization



Sensical

I'm a big fan of commonsensedia.org, because I like to know what I am getting myself into before I watch certain shows and movies with my family. No matter how old my kids get, I will never be the "cool" parent that can calmly watch shows with language or situations that are totally cringe-worthy (for me.)

So I really think that the new, FREE streaming service from The Common Sense Network, an affiliate of Common Sense Media, sounds great for parents of younger kids. Sensical offers THOUSANDS of age-appropriate, entertaining and educational videos and podcasts for kids 2-10. Parents can review and manage what and how long their kids watch. The content is divided into age-specific viewing environments for Preschool (2-4), Little Kids (5-7), and Big Kids (8-10) so your kids will only see age-appropriate stuff! No cringing!

Visit www.sensical.tv to check it out!



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY is

FEBRUARY 17th

Bulldog students are taught to BE KIND every day! What random act of kindness will YOU do on February 17th?

Learning to Love Your Groundhog Days

by Julianne Allen, OFCS Family Engagement & Communication Specialist



As I write this it is 2-2-22, which, coincidentally, is not only a repetitive date but also happens to be Groundhog Day. Groundhog Day is a strange holiday that includes a weather-predicting woodchuck and a big celebration occurring annually on 2/2 in Punxsutawney, PA. However, for anyone who is a fan of the 1993 Bill Murray movie of the same name, *Groundhog Day** means something else. Murray's character, "Phil", finds himself trapped in a weird time loop, replaying the same day (Groundhog Day!) over and over again. Per a 2012 article in *Slate* magazine, "For an event to truly resemble Groundhog Day, then, it should happen again and again, in more or less identical fashion, and ideally on consecutive days."

I don't think it is too far of a reach to say that every parent out there is living their own personal Groundhog Day and that we have been since at least early 2020 with the start of the "p" word. I refuse to mention the "p" word (not "Phil" but the other "p" word starting with "pan-" and ending with "-demic".) Nearly every single day for the past 2+ years has felt much like the day before, with no apparent end in sight. It's getting better now, but for a while there, it really was like waking up in a somewhat more disastrous 90's movie every day. Picture *Titanic* but on repeat.

Repetition and routines aren't all bad. For babies and toddlers, routines are important. Per zerotothree.org, "Consistent routines, activities that happen at about the same time and in about the same way each day, provide comfort and a sense of safety to young children...it helps them learn to trust that caring adults will provide what they need." So, setting a regular schedule is great for kids. Most kids. Some kids (and we all either know one or have one) think your schedule is only a "suggestion". But knowing you can count on a naptime every day (for yourself?) isn't a bad thing.

Even older kids benefit from the "sameness" of each day. From raisingchildren.net, "Routines can be part of an organized and predictable home environment, which helps children and teenagers feel safe, secure and looked after. And a predictable family life can also help children cope during developmental changes like puberty, or life events like the birth of a new child, divorce, illness or a move."

As busy parents with busy children, the days start to run together. You might feel like you, similarly to Phil, are in a weird time loop where you find yourself having the same arguments, picking up the same toys, and tripping over the same shoes. You take the same route to work, do the same job, drive the same route back home where you trip over the same shoes, and then make the same dinner that the same people will either love or hate. Then you take the same dog outside that those same children vowed to take care of.

But mixed in with these "Groundhog" Days, there are moments of surprise. There is laughter and silliness. There is an unexpected "snow day", or a family game night that even the teenagers participate in. There may be some days that are sadder than others, with the loss of a loved one or a disappointment at school. Maybe there's a day when your teenager gets up early and cleans their room and your younger child sleeps in late so you do too. Maybe your spouse takes the dog out or the kids *DO AN ACTUAL CHORE*. It could happen!

These small, subtle differences in our day-to-day, although they may not be particularly earth-shattering, are what make our lives-even our pandemic lives- (oops- I said it!) special. They bring us closer to one another. Those moments of laughter, surprise, tears, and togetherness that exist outside of the daily routines make us a family. They help us to **grow**.

And what about Phil in Punxsutawney? **(SPOILER ALERT!)** Eventually, Phil makes it out of the Groundhog Day loop. He changes from a nasty, self-centered jerk into a kinder, more sincere, and helpful person. He *grows*- and that is what allows him to move forward with his life.

So if you're feeling stuck, run-down, or trapped in the sameness, look for those little moments throughout the days (and nights) that make life special. Create some if you have to. Might I suggest a family movie night? Just don't start with *Titanic* if you're looking for a laugh because- *ANOTHER SPOILER ALERT*-the boat sinks.



Julianne

*Groundhog Day is rated PG and may not be suitable for younger kids. Check out a review [HERE](#).

Supporting Student Wellness & Behavior at Home

with Meghan Barlow, Ph.D.

FREE
for
Olmsted
Falls Schools
Parents/
Caregivers
(Preschool-
Grade 5)

3-Part Series

Session 2: Monday, February 7

Challenges with Anxiety & Mood

6-7:15 PM

Olmsted Falls
Intermediate School

**REGISTER
TODAY!
HERE** ↓



SnackScience!

When you need an excuse to snack, turn it into a learning opportunity and congratulate yourself for being so smart!

VALENTINES SKITTLES EXPERIMENT

SUPPLIES

- Purple, Pink, and Red Skittles Candy
- Water
- White Plate/Baking Dishes (flat bottom)
- Heart Theme Cookie Cutters

DIRECTIONS

Set out a bowl of skittles and let the kids sort them (and, ok...eat them!)

Let your child have fun arranging them around the plate alternating colors in any pattern they like

Place a heart-shaped cookie cutter in the center of the plate to add a little more of the theme and some additional color.

Before pouring in the water ask your child to form a hypothesis- What will happen to the candy when it is wet?

Carefully pour water into the center of cookie cutter until it just covers the candy. Be careful not to shake or move the plate once you add the water or it will mess up the effect.

Watch as the colors stretch and bleed out away from the Skittles, coloring the water. What happened? Did they mix? What if you used clear soda instead would that change the outcome?

SKITTLES + WATER = STRATIFICATION!

Skittles Science demonstrates a process called stratification. The simple definition is that stratification is the arrangement of something into groups. Specifically, this is water stratification, and water has different masses with different properties that create the barriers you see within the different colors of candies.

Go to www.littlebinsforlittlehands.com for more Valentines Science fun!

LINK NOTES!



ICYMI IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The January 10th program "Structure, Routines, & Habits" for Preschool-Grade 5 parents had some great info about getting your family back on track! Missed it? Check out the recording [HERE](#) and access the slide presentation [HERE](#). And don't forget to attend Session 2 of this series, "Challenges with Anxiety & Mood"! See page 3 for details.



"In The LOOP with LINK" is published periodically throughout the year for parents

and caregivers in the Olmsted Falls School District. Have an idea for something you'd like to read about in future issues? Email your questions, comments, and suggestions to OFCSLINK@ofcs.net. Thanks for reading!
-Julianne Allen,
OFCS Family Engagement & Communication Specialist

"TOTALLY QUOTABLE"

"UNEXPECTED KINDNESS IS THE MOST POWERFUL, LEAST COSTLY, AND MOST UNDERRATED AGENT OF HUMAN CHANGE."

- BOB KERREY

IF MOMS MADE CANDY HEARTS...



WHAT IS LINK?

LINK is an acronym for Learn, Inspire, Nurture, Know. The LINK Program is a district-wide family-community engagement resource. The goal of the program is to connect the Olmsted Falls School District with parents and families, to encourage two-way communication, and to help parents support their children's learning at home.