

**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

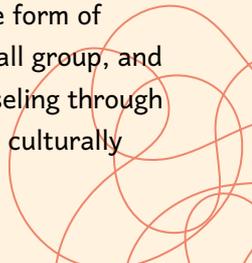


Anne Clarry, M.Ed @ WMMS, last names A-L.  
Jordan Wilson, M.Ed @ WMMS, last names M-Z.  
Providing a comprehensive school counseling program  
including classroom, small group, and individual  
counseling; while partnering with parents and  
educators to facilitate the optimum development of  
middle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

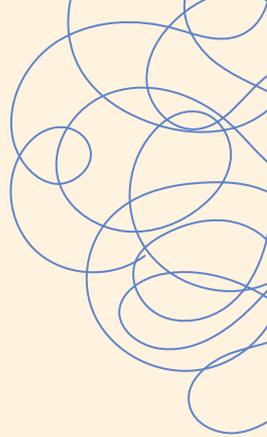
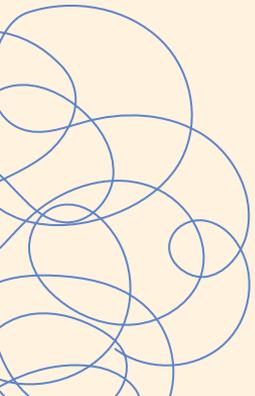
What has helped you?

3

What about the impacts of COVID-19 precautions?

6

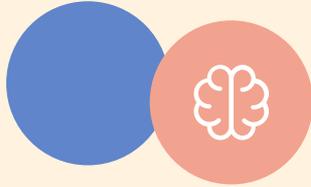
Wrap up and questions





**What is  
Developmentally  
appropriate?**

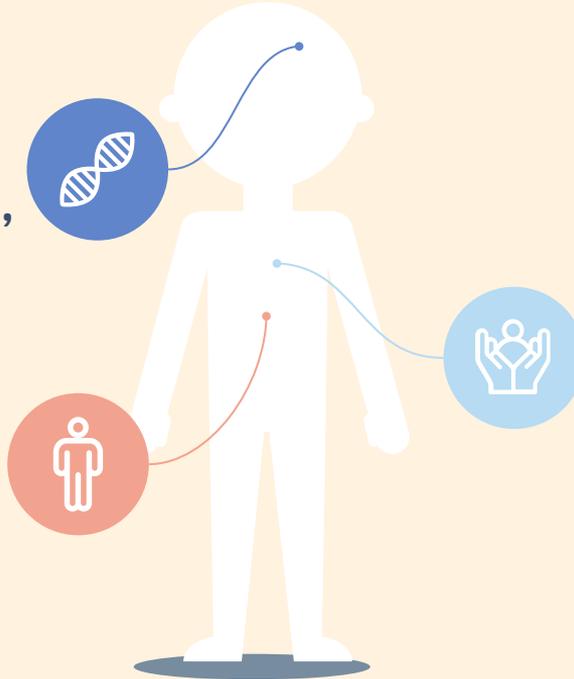
# Developing Social Skills in Elementary School



- 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.



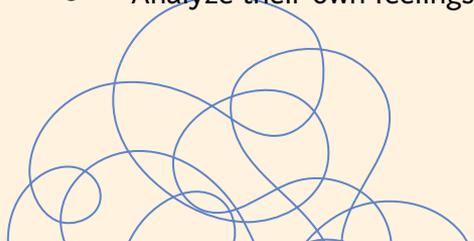
# Breaking It Down...



## 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

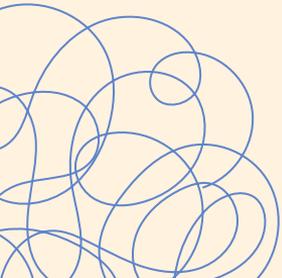
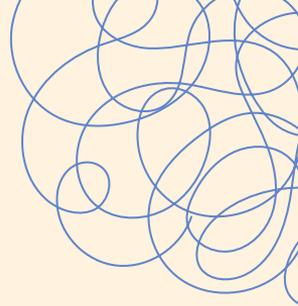
Point out exactly what your student did right

## 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

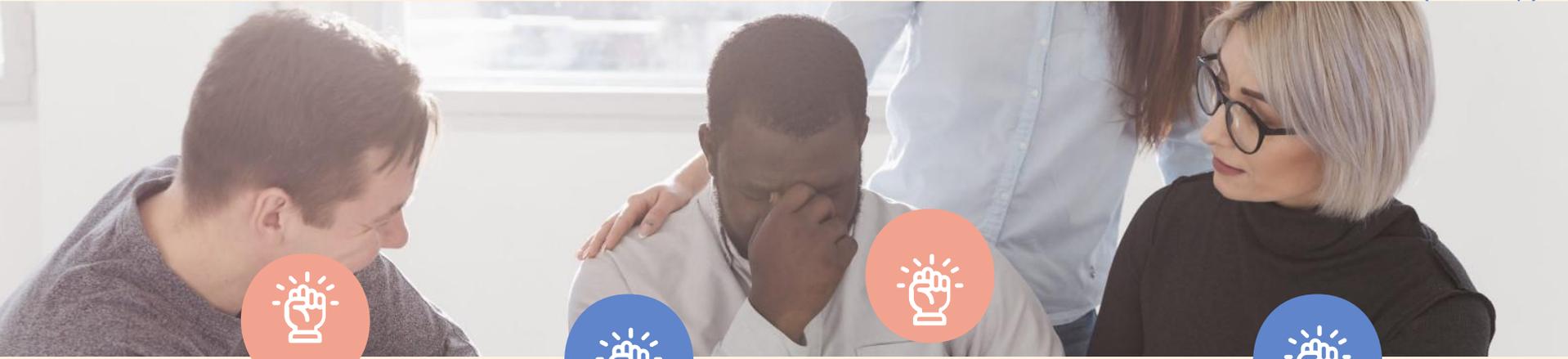
Play “social charades” to identify what social cues align with different actions.



## 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

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

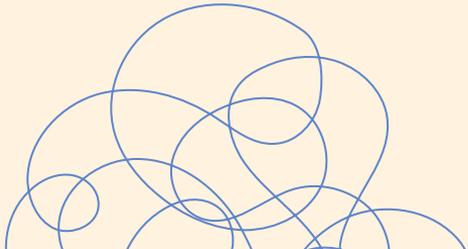
Tip

### 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?)



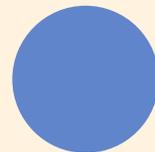
## Idea:

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



## Idea:

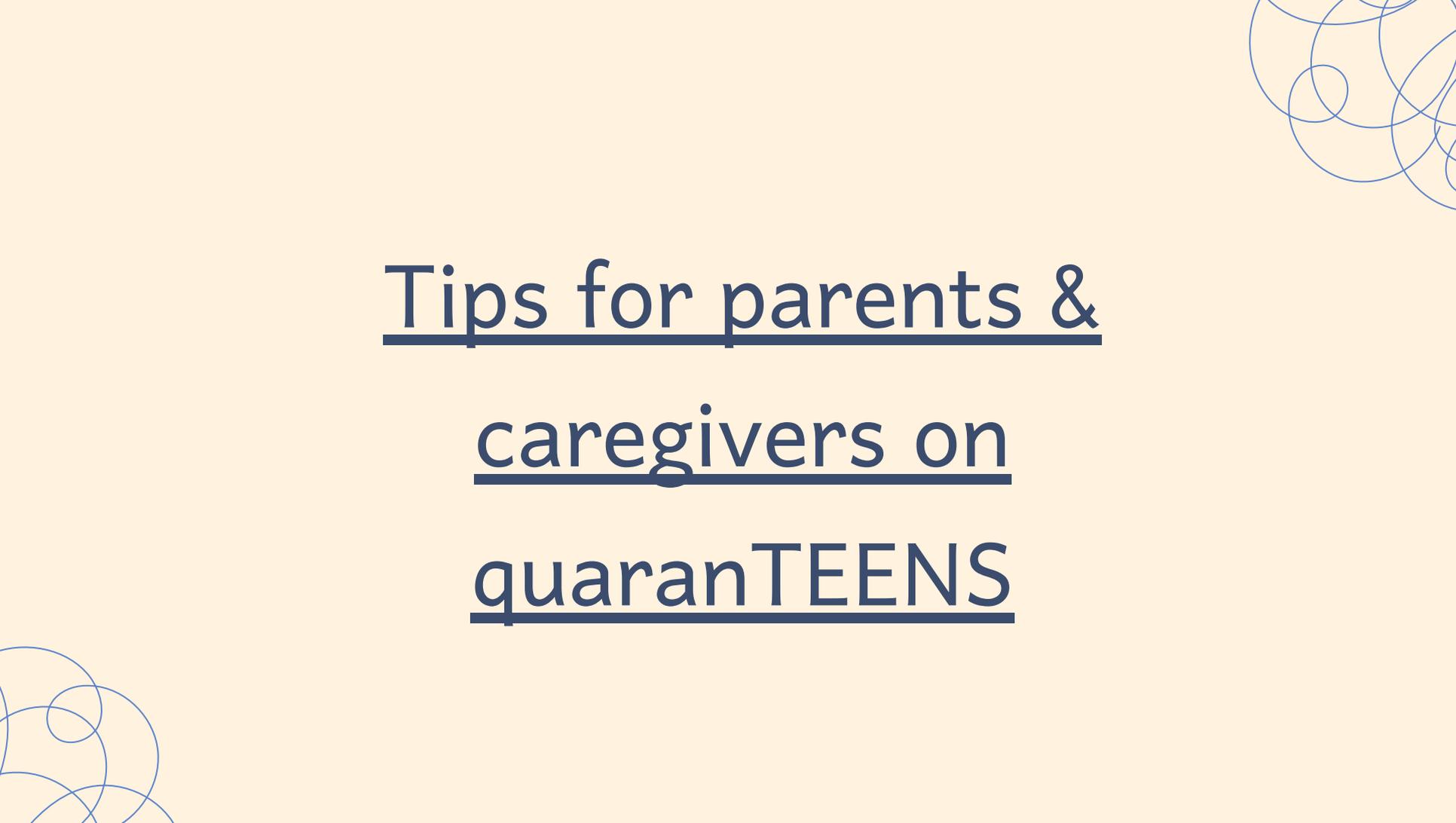
Pen pals- Connecting  
students (possibly based  
on interest?)



# 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.