

# CRESSKILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Wellness Week is approaching May 14th-18th. This year we are trying to be proactive in educating the community about wellness and mental health. To that end, we are hoping you can use the following tips for discussion at home with your family. Each day we encourage you to use the “ASK YOUR CHILD” questions below to initiate dialogue about these important issues.

These discussions should take place frequently throughout your child’s development whether it is in the car, before bedtime, or at the pool. The most important part about discussing this topic with your child[ren] is to LISTEN! Hear what they have to say, and keep an open mind. Even young kids have thoughts about wellness and what it means to them.

What is mental health? A person’s state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. For our elementary school population, this affects how we think, feel, and behave. We may all deal with problems of mental health over our lifetime, but many times we don’t talk about it due to the stigma attached to mental illness. A great resource to further the conversation on mental health is located online at [mentalhealth.gov](http://mentalhealth.gov). Lastly, if you would like to get involved in our districtwide Cresskill Wellness Committee next year, please reach out to Danielle Reiffe, MSW, LCSW at [dreiffe@cboek12.org](mailto:dreiffe@cboek12.org).

## **PARENT GUIDE**

**MONDAY, May 14th** Inside Out Day: Wear your clothes inside out to school.

It’s a good idea to stop from time to time to think about how we can help prevent violence by dealing with anger, and work to solve our disagreements. Often we feel angry when, underlying, we are frustrated, sad, overwhelmed, or scared.

**ASK YOUR CHILD:** How do you cope with anger? What do you notice about others when they get angry?

**BE SURE TO:** Validate your child’s feelings. Anger is a natural part of life. Everybody feels angry at times. In fact, sometimes feeling angry is okay, like when we feel angry about things that are wrong. But what’s very important to learn is to be respectful, patient, and self-controlled even when we are angry. Gandhi once said, “Nonviolence is a matter of the heart.” Today, let’s

think about healthy ways to handle our anger and then use our hearts to help prevent bullying and fighting in our school and in our world.

CHECK OUT: [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) “Everybody Gets Mad: Helping Your Child Cope with Conflict”

Go to the MMS "Paws for Books" Book Fair Family Event 6-8pm in the MMS Gym; There will be a few therapy dogs you can pet, with their trainers on hand to answer any questions!

**TUESDAY May 15th:** We will show a documentary about anxiety, called "Angst." Go to our home page to view details and order tickets (\$5 Per person or \$10 per family):  
<https://www.showclix.com/event/angst-cresskill>

“Screen time” is the time you spend each day on a TV, computer, laptop, iPad, cell phone, iPod, or anything electronic that has a screen you look at. Experts recommend a **MAXIMUM** of two hours a day in order for your brain to function at its best. Too much screen time decreases focus and attention. It can also disrupt your sleep, can affect your mood in a negative way, and decreases the time you might spend in healthy activities or exercising. Instead of spending “screen time,” go outside and explore, take a walk or ride a bike, read, or play a game with family or friends! Let’s have a **Balanced TECH TUESDAY** and pledge to decrease screen time **TODAY!**

**ASK YOUR CHILD:** How do you feel after you have been on tv/computer/phone/ipad for a long time? What could you be missing when you spend time on electronics? Do electronics ever take away from family time?

**BE SURE TO:** Model a balance between appropriate time on electronics and face-to-face time with your children. Try playing board games, or card games; or go outside and watch the sunset or take a walk together.

CHECK OUT: The Tech Talk Tuesday page at [Screenagersmovie.com](http://Screenagersmovie.com)

**WEDNESDAY, May 16th:** **WEAR GREEN** today to Celebrate Wellness Week and show your support for Mental Health Awareness!

Did you know that the Center for Disease Control recommends that adults aged 18 to 60 get at least 7 hours of sleep per night? Less than 40% of Americans actually get that much sleep on average. Elementary school children need 9-12 hours of sleep per night. Without adequate sleep, we can become irritable, moody, sleepy, less focused, and have problems with memory, in addition to bad effects on our health. Adequate sleep is vital for our functioning.

In addition to sleep, good nutrition is helpful because it fuels your brain and body for whatever you want to do! You may have noticed that when you feel hungry or haven’t eaten in a while, your body feels sluggish or slow, and you cannot focus or pay attention as well. Eating well helps your body feel well.

**ASK YOUR CHILD:** Do you notice after being up late that you're tired the next day? What do you notice about your mood when you're tired or sleepy? What about when you're hungry?

**BE SURE TO:** Support and impose bedtimes that allow your child to get enough sleep for his/her age and personal needs. Provide adequate nutrition and promote and model healthy eating habits.

**CHECK OUT:** Create your own family health center homepage at <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx>

**THURSDAY May 17th:** Healthy Bake Sale and Family Yoga at EHB 3:45-4:30pm today!

All 3rd-5th graders are invited to come with their family members to Family Yoga at Edward H. Bryan School from 3:45-4:30pm. There will be a healthy bake sale at EHB before yoga. RSVP to Mrs. Reiffe [dreiffe@cboek12.org](mailto:dreiffe@cboek12.org) by May 14<sup>th</sup>. Suggested donations of \$5 per family will be collected at the door.

How many times have you promised yourself that you would start exercising more and get really fit? We've all made and broken these kinds of promises to ourselves, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try again. One way to increase the likelihood of success is to keep your fitness goals realistic, and to involve the whole family. If you make the decision as a family to exercise more, you are much more likely to be successful because you can support and encourage one another.

There are lots of ways families can be active together. Family walks are a great option, and a healthy way to spend time with one another. It has been said that "The groundwork of all happiness is health." So if you need to be more active, encourage your family to get fit together. The healthier you are, the happier your family will be.

**ASK YOUR CHILD:** What are their favorite activities that involve moving around? What kind of activities would they like to try? Would it be fun to take a family walk into town, at the 3rd street walking path, or along the Palisades? How do they feel when they are running, jumping, riding a bike, or playing outside on the playground?

**BE SURE TO:** Encourage walking or bicycling to school whenever possible. Carve out designated time to be active together, and do something active indoors (playing Twister, dancing, indoor rock climbing, bowling, ice skating, etc.) when the weather is bad.

**CHECK OUT:** <https://healthyforgood.heart.org/move-more/articles/no-time-for-exercise-here-are-7-easy-ways-to-move-more>

**FRIDAY May 18th:** Bake Sale after school today!

Winston Churchill once said that, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Which way do you tend to be? Do you usually expect the best or the worst in life? Some research indicates that our brains may play a role in whether or not we tend to lean toward optimism or pessimism, but that doesn't mean we can't learn to be more optimistic. How do we do that? We simply pay attention to our negative thoughts and do our best to replace them with positive and

hopeful ones, which is an important skill to learn. Why? Because as Winston Churchill says, the more positive our thoughts, the more likely we are to see the opportunity in every difficulty, and that kind of optimism can help determine our level of health and happiness.

**ASK YOUR CHILD:** What makes you happy? What kinds of things have you done in the past that made you feel happy? How about things that made other people feel happy? How did you feel after doing them? Can you think about a time you were down about something; how did you turn it around?

**BE SURE TO:** Point out times that you or your child was not happy, but was able to feel better later. Also recognize and point out in happy moments that happiness is not what we have, but what is within us already.

**CHECK OUT:** <https://www.wikihow.com/Become-Positive,-Happy-and-Optimistic>

**Don't forget to go to the Wellness Committee's Bake Sale after school (MMS & CHS ONLY)!**

Regards,

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Elementary School Guidance Counselor  
Cresskill Wellness Committee Chair  
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