

Methacton School District
Elementary School Counseling Newsletter
SPECIAL EDITION

Life Is All About Change

It happens everyday. The weather changes, our mood changes, our feelings change. We change our clothes, our hairstyle, and what we eat each day. We're in a good frame of mind when we wake up in the morning and that often changes to a bad attitude when we get stuck in traffic or someone cuts us off. If you think of it, very little stays the same from one day to the next and even moment to moment.

How do we adjust? If it snows, we put on our boots. If our favorite shirt is in the wash, we put on a different shirt. If we run out of milk, we stop and buy more. All day long we are adapting to the little changes that we face. The bigger changes in our lives such as moving, divorce, death, and deployment are usually accompanied by anxiety, fear and sadness. These events often call upon us to make intense life changes and adaptations.

This newsletter will talk about the changes or transitions that fall somewhere in between the day to day changes and the changes due to major life stressors we frequently face. The focus will be on the transition of leaving something familiar and moving to something unknown.

Such will be the change for all of our fourth graders as they move to a new school, as well as for many students transitioning to a new elementary school. Kindergartners will also transition to elementary school and many students move in and out of Methacton each year.

Preparations are being made for these transitions to be smooth and seamless, although we know there may be difficult times for some of our students. This newsletter will address these changes and transitions.

Why is moving to a new school often so hard?

Fear of the unknown: Subconsciously, people are afraid of trying something they have never done before. Moving outside of one's comfort zone can lead to anxiety about a new school or situation. Many questions often arise for children as they prepare to make a change: What if I don't like the new school? What if I get lost? What if I don't know anyone in my class? Who will help me if I need help?

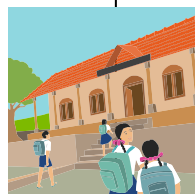


Fear of inconvenience: Children often like the status quo and don't see why they need to put effort into adapting to something new or different. They may feel that everything is fine the way it is, so why do they have to make a change?

Fear of failure: Concerns may arise that when there is a change in teachers or schools the child may not succeed. This common fear often comes as students move to a new grade or educational level. Children wonder if they will know what to do in the new school and if not, they may worry about embarrassment or humiliation.

What can a parent do to help?

As a parent, you want to keep your children feeling safe and secure. Realistically, you can't always shield your child from uncomfortable feelings and situations. It's a part of life to experience life's "ups" and "downs." Sheltering children prevents the development of skills and internal



resources to overcome changes and negative life events. Resiliency skills (the ability to “bounce back”) are beneficial to overcoming unpleasant or stressful situations. Here are some things to keep in mind as you help your children deal with the unpredictability of change as they move to a new school:

- ◆ Be positive. Communicate optimism and enthusiasm that everything will go well.
- ◆ Convey your belief that your children can handle the transition. Empower them and show that you have confidence in them.
- ◆ Talk about changes you have faced while growing up and those you are still facing today. Lead by example.
- ◆ For children who have been unhappy in any way in their present school, you can stress the importance and opportunity of “new beginnings.”
- ◆ Focus on the opportunities that lie ahead. There will be different activities to get involved in and new people to meet.
- ◆ Some fear and worry is normal with transitions. Talk to your child’s school counselor if your child is experiencing anxiety or fears that are interfering with your child’s day to day behavior or enjoyment of life.
- ◆ Reassure your child that there will be many people at the new school who will help with the transition and throughout the school year.

Share with your child some wise words from students who have recently changed schools...

Enjoy this advice from Kids!

“I started a new school last year. You have to smile!! Relax and talk to everyone. Don’t judge people. Show that you are interested in others. Listen to them, give compliments and ask them questions. That helps start conversations.”



“You may be a little shy at first, but don’t worry. That’s how everyone will feel.”

“I’d say be nice to everyone and introduce yourself to people.”

“Don’t try and make a false first impression. Be yourself and don’t try to be someone else.”

“Get involved in everything and anything you can. This is a great way to make friends and have fun!”



***During transitions,
remember the beauty of resiliency!
Children are resilient!***

The resilient child:

- *has unconditional love*
- *has an older person outside the home to talk to about problems and feelings*
- *is praised for doing things on his/her own*
- *can count on the family being there when needed*
- *knows someone he/she wants to be like*
- *believes things will turn out all right*
- *is willing to try new things*
- *likes to achieve in what he/she does*
- *feels that he/she makes a difference in how things turn out*
- *likes himself/herself*
- *has a sense of humor*
- *makes plans to do things*



**Methacton Elementary
School Counselors**

- Shannon Broadhead-Worcester x40206
- Linda Ehmer-Woodland x43213
- Jamie-Friedman-Arrowhead x44206
- Judi Schmitz-Eagleville x41207
- Lori Shaw-Audubon x42203