

SEL MONTHLY™ COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) & WELLNESS



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Students in elementary school benefit from taking breaks throughout their day by getting their bodies moving and grooving. One key element to wellness is physical activity. In fact, studies show that children need at least 60 minutes a day of moderate to intense physical activity. Allowing time for movement comes with a handful of benefits, including the development of motor skills, bone and muscle growth, and the enhancement of cognitive and social skills. [Click here](#) for a list of YouTube channels with exercise videos specifically for young children!

MIDDLE SCHOOL

As students become more independent and observant in middle school, it can be helpful to discuss different components of wellness, along with strategies that they can use at home or at school. Incorporating mindfulness, physical activity, and social interaction has been shown to increase a child's overall well-being. For an example of a mind and body activity calendar, visit SHAPE America's suggestions [here](#). This sheet can be printed and even placed on the refrigerator at home as a daily reminder to take care of ourselves first!

HIGH SCHOOL

One component of wellness that teens may want to explore is their intellectual wellness, which they can cultivate by engaging in activities that they find creative and mentally stimulating. Exploring new ideas can help students become more mindful, accepting, and balanced. Some suggestions for enhancing intellectual wellness include: picking up a new hobby, traveling and learning from other cultures, and exploring new ways to express oneself artistically, such as through music, visual art, or writing.

GOAL SETTING

*by Siomara Bridges-Mata
Community Programs Specialist*

As 2021 begins, seize the opportunity to look forward. A new year inspires us to learn from the past and set new goals to reach our fullest potential. After a challenging year, we can close the chapter of 2020 and look to the new year with fresh eyes by prioritizing our physical, mental, and emotional wellness.

Maintaining an optimal level of wellness is crucial to a high quality of life. Wellness matters because everything we do and every emotion we feel relates to our well-being, and our well-being directly affects our actions. When you focus on achieving optimal wellness, you also subdue stress, reduce the risk of illness, and increase moments of positive interaction.

This time of year, many people focus their goals on their overall wellness, making promises to themselves like eating healthier, getting more exercise or sleep, etc. Research has, however, proven that those resolutions often fall to the wayside by the time February comes around. This month's newsletter will provide strategies, research, and resources to support your wellness goals and those of your family, along with tools to make them more satisfying and sustainable.



CLEARING OUT THE CLUTTER

by Saima Qadree
Program Development Officer

Our wellness is deeply impacted by our physical environment. For many of us, a cluttered and chaotic environment can lead to a cluttered and chaotic mind. As you kick off the new year, try these simple tricks to clear the clutter and boost your overall wellness:

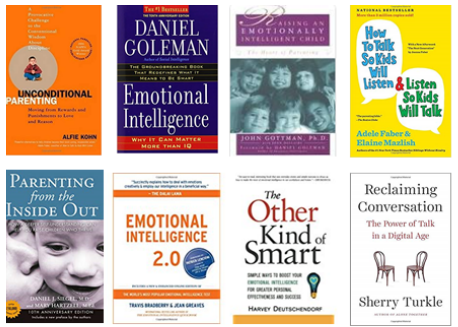
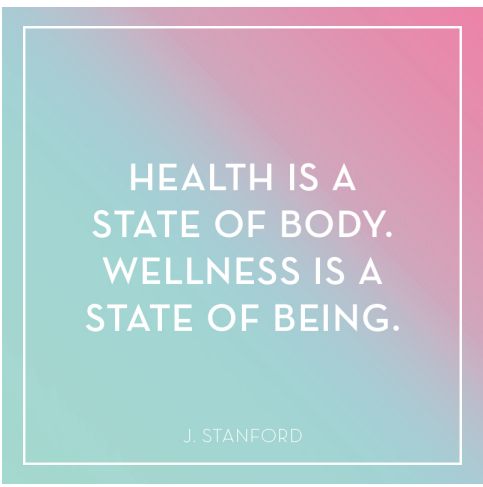
- **Do a quick cleanup:** The holiday season can be a busy time with lots of moving pieces. Take some small pockets of time during your day to reset your space and put things back where they belong.
- **Limit yourself:** Set up boundaries on how many items you can have in a particular category. For example, are you obsessed with coffee mugs? Be selective and reduce your collection down to your top five mugs and donate the rest!
- **Give yourself grace:** Decluttering and cleaning is an ongoing process, so while it is important to keep at it, it is also important to remember to give yourself grace. Not everything can happen in one day, so pick something small to tackle and go from there.
- **Reward yourself:** Of course, a clutter-free space is a great reward in itself, but for some of us, other types of rewards can be nice motivators to get things done. Once you've achieved a decluttering goal, pick a reward and treat yourself!

BALANCING WELLNESS AT HOME

by Kaitlin Kizer
Program Partnership Manager

Establishing structure and consistency can help both children and adults juggle life's many activities, leading to an overall higher level of wellness at home. One way to create this structure is to build a schedule for physical, emotional, and mental wellness. This allows children to practice responsible decision-making, which is a core competency of social and emotional learning.

To prioritize physical wellness, create a schedule to do something active, either alone or with a family member or friend, such as walking, going to a park or the beach, or even doing household chores! Mindfulness activities, journaling, and connecting with others benefits our mental and emotional wellness and can be done in as little as five minutes per day. Additionally, an important way to balance wellness while at home is to limit excessive technology use and spend some time outside. You deserve it!



RESOURCES AND READINGS

by Brian Schank
Senior SEL Program Specialist

Taking care of ourselves, or self-care, is not selfish. We all need to hear this as we look at our own wellness. There is a saying: "Teachers are like a candle, they light the world, but extinguish themselves." The same can be said of parents. In other words, taking care of yourself allows you to be there for others. We cannot support our children, students, friends, family, and colleagues without supporting ourselves first.

Where can we go to guide our journey to better self-care and physical and mental wellness? Try these recommended resources and readings!

- ["A New Way to Think About Work-Life Balance"](#) (Edutopia)
- ["Self-Care for Teachers: Wellness Practices for In and Out of the Classroom"](#) (Planbook)
- ["Self-Care for Parents"](#) (Kaiser Permanente)

For more resources, visit www.myframeworks.org



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