

National School Psychology Awareness Week: Helping Staff and Families Support Students to Thrive in School and Beyond

National School Psychology Awareness Week is the week of November, 10-4, 2014. School psychologists are members of the school team that support students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach. We apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. We provide direct support and interventions to students, such as learning assessments, academic and behavioral interventions, counseling, and social skills training. We also consult with teachers, families, and other educators to improve support strategies and school-wide practices and policies.

Helping families and schools implement activities and programs that help children develop resilience, skills, and hopefulness is one of the main goals of **School Psychology Awareness Week**. There are many ways parents can help children take on new challenges; learn new skills; and feel protected, respected, and valued. As parents, you can:

1. Encourage your child to set goals and to map out a plan for achieving.
2. Help your child internalize a sense that he can achieve by reinforcing the skills already developed and encouraging him to try new challenges.
3. Emphasize that learning and growing requires trying new things and that success comes from small steps to a long-term goal.
4. Help her work through setbacks or lack of self-confidence by helping her identify negative thoughts that may suggest concerns about her ability to be successful. As a parent, you can help her see what the small steps are and how persisting and overcoming obstacles is a part of succeeding.
5. Praise attempts as well as success and make sure that you focus on the effort put into the success.
6. Create an environment at home that allows your child to explore building (blocks, helping with projects, and more) drawing (crayons, finger paints, paper) and music (on the radio, with children's instruments, or through formal training).
7. Demonstrate through your own behaviors how to try new challenging activities in sports, the arts, or school subjects and use problem solving and decision making skills by thinking aloud.
8. Model the joy of learning by reading about a variety of topics with your children and let them know that you, too, are learning new things.
9. Model perseverance and problem solving when faced with challenges or difficulties.
10. Help your child develop positive relationships with peers and adults and model respectful, caring behaviors with others.

Please partner with Ina Nyko, the school psychologist at Enloe High School, and together we can help your child to **strive, grow, and thrive!** If you ever need to contact me about how to support your child, I can be reached at 919-856-2958 or inyko@wcpss.net.