



BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES

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Alternative Education

Building Healthy Families is pleased to announce an exciting collaboration with the Enterprise School District! On August 31st, we welcomed the Alternative Education students to their new classroom and an engaging, innovative education opportunity. Maria Weer, our Education Coordinator and certified teacher, has eagerly been designing a hands-on, project-based curriculum that meets the individual academic needs of each of her new students! She and the entire BHF Staff look forward to working with our students, their families and the Enterprise School District!

Parenting Class Schedule

Start your school year off right with one of our fall parent education opportunities!

Toddler Play Group	Fridays	Enterprise
Love and Logic	Tuesdays	Enterprise
Strengthening Families	Thursdays	Enterprise

Please contact Maria Weer for detailed information and registration materials.

Building Healthy Families Welcomes the SMART Reading Program

After several years in transition, Building Healthy Families is pleased to offer the SMART reading program a permanent home. Serving students in all three Wallowa County Elementary Schools over the past five years, this year's programming plans to reach over 70 children grades K-3 and nearly 50 adults from our community. The SMART Reading program pairs struggling early readers with adult volunteers. Reading pairs meet once or twice each week at the student's school to share stories, work on reading skills and fluency and develop a positive relationship and life-long love of learning! The SMART mission aligns with the vision and ideals of Building Healthy Families and we are anticipating a seamless transition and a successful year of SMART! If you are interested in becoming a SMART Reading volunteer, or wish to know more about this exciting program, contact Maria Weer to get in touch with your school's SMART Reading Site Coordinator.

Successful Exploration After-School Program Gears Up for Another Great Year

After a successful pilot year, the Exploration Tutoring and Mentoring Program is excited to announce its expansion to all three Wallowa County School Districts. Pairing teacher identified students with adult tutors/mentors, the program seeks to increase academic performance, engage students in education and provide a positive adult/student relationship that benefits the entire community! Hour long weekly sessions take an academic focus with homework completion, basic skill building, and goal setting curriculum. Quarterly team activities provide an opportunity to develop a non-academic relationship and new experiences for all of our pairs.

We are currently seeking adult volunteers able to dedicate one hour per week to the positive youth development of Wallowa County. If you are interested in being a part of this exciting and successful program, please contact Maria Weer at Building Healthy Families.



A new School or classroom may lead to back to school anxiety

Back-to-school for many children this year may mean starting in a new classroom or a new school. For some children, no matter what their age, this can be a scary prospect. Kids worry if they will fit in, make new friends, be comfortable in the new school or be able to participate in their favorite activity or sport. Just the prospect of having to eat alone at lunch that first few days can make some children physically ill. Parents should take these thoughts and feelings seriously so they can help their child succeed in their new school. Unsuccessful school changes can lead to poor grades, behavior problems, health problems, and possibly, with older children, dropping out of school entirely.

To help children begin the transition to a new setting, parents should first listen to their child's concerns. Whether the child is age 6 or 16 he needs parents to understand these concerns and feelings. Once parents understand what issues are making their child anxious, parents can begin to help him work on ways to transition into the new school. Visit the school together as a family. The first day is less stressful if the child has seen the school ahead of time. Seeing the classroom(s) he will be in, visiting with teachers, and finding important spots like the restrooms, lockers and the lunch area will help the child be more comfortable about the first day of school.

Most schools have a special day for parent/child orientation so plan to attend. If the family moved during the school year or missed the orientation day, call the school to set up a day to visit. School officials are always happy to try to make a child's first day a positive one.

Visit with families in the new neighborhood to learn information about the area schools. This will also be a good time for children to meet some of the neighborhood children who will be attending school with them. Seeing some familiar faces the first day of school can help to make the transition easier.

Encourage the child to begin a sport or activity where he will meet children his own age. Possibly these children will have the same class or classes when school starts. At the very least, having a few familiar faces may give the child someone to eat lunch with so he doesn't feel awkward or alienated. Read more: For younger children, talk to their prospective teacher about selecting a "buddy" for the child for the first few days of school. Tell the teacher about the child's interests and personality so she can line up a child who might be compatible. This can go a long way toward making the child feel at home in his new school.

After School has Started

Monitor how things are going for the child. Set aside time each day to talk to him about school and any issues that are important to him. Remember that these feelings are important to children so don't minimize them. Whenever possible, suggest ways to cope with certain situations or just be an ear for the child to let off steam.

Most children will acclimate to their new environment within the first two weeks. It may take a little longer for older children since the older they are, the more cliques and groups become involved. But be aware of how the child is getting along with the new school.

Signs to look for if the child is not adapting to the new school are: Consistent irritability; Lack of sleep or appetite; A complaint of illness such as headaches or stomach aches in order to stay home from school; Changes in behavior such as anger or rebellion; For younger children, excessive crying, clinginess or sudden relapse into childish behaviors such as thumb-sucking or bedwetting.

Talk to the child about these behaviors and how to work together to solve the school issues that are causing them. If that doesn't work, set up a meeting with the child's teacher or the school counselor to find ways to help the child adjust to his new environment. In extreme cases involve your physician or another professional to help the child with his anxieties.

Every child is different and adjusts to changes in his own time so be patient and understanding and soon the child will find a way to succeed in his new school.

