

Thrive update



Enhance Inspire
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www.bvsvd.org

>> Transition through life successfully

As parents, we all share in our child's roller coaster ride of transitioning up the educational ladder from preschool right up to college. How we transition from one rung to another can be the difference between success and failure. This month's newsletter focuses on transitions, with great advice inside for helping both elementary and secondary students experience success.

In addition to focusing on transitions like moving up from elementary to middle school, or middle to high school, our children, as well as ourselves, are all going through constant transition, whether we are aware of it or not. The word "transition" literally means "the process of change" and transitioning successfully is really about how we adapt to change. While it is difficult to be fully aware of it, from moment to moment, everything is in a constant state of change: our bodies, technology, our planet, everyone we know, everything that exists. Yet many people are resistant to change, typically because there is comfort in what's familiar. Moreover, when we struggle with transitioning, it is often because of negative expectations, worries, or fears, like the elementary child panicked about being able to open their locker in middle school. What makes things even more challenging is that most of us have a tendency to focus on the negative more than the positive. Thus negative expectations come naturally and positive ones take effort. The good news is that with just a little effort we can make small shifts in our expectations from negative to positive, which can cumulatively have a profound impact on our ability to successfully adapt to the ongoing transitions in our lives. Our dreaded anticipation of future challenges around the next turn can be transformed into seeing life as an adventure as we head forward into the great unknown.



Take time to point out the fun and adventure in things.

If you want your child to be confident and successful with transitions, what better way than to model it yourself? Take time to point out the fun and adventure in things. Get into the habit of talking about positive potential outcomes in response to life transitions and brainstorm, with your child, ways to help make it so. Resisting change is like resisting life itself. The more time we take to stop and smell the roses and try to reflect on the changes going on around us, while embracing future possibilities and the blessings in our lives, the better we will be able to enjoy what is, and look forward to what will be.

by Dr. Jan Hittelman, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist

>> Mindfulness helps children with focus, decision making

In 2011-12, Mindful Schools partnered with the University of California, Davis to conduct a randomized-controlled study on the impact of mindfulness practice with children. The study involved 937 children and 47 teachers in three public elementary schools in Oakland. The results: students reported the ability to focus better in class and that it helped them make decisions.

Change can be a powerful stimulus that provokes a variety of reactions, not all of them positive. Mindfulness can create space – changing impulsive reactions to thoughtful responses – between a stimulus and our response. Some of the benefits of mindfulness include better focus and concentration, increased sense of calm, decreased stress and anxiety, skilled responses to difficult emotion, and increased empathy and understanding of others. All of which can help us to manage and adapt to change.

Breathe. And have patience.

– Greg McDonald

School Counselor, Broomfield Heights Middle School

Mindfulness = intention, attention, and attitude, or how an individual consciously (intention) brings awareness (attention) to the present moment with openness and acceptance (attitude). It's not just meditation but any activity that allows us to set aside time to bring awareness to the experience.

Mindfulness can help to enhance our readiness for change and to understand that no decision is 100 percent right or wrong. Through mindfulness, we create the space to understand what we really value so we can make the best decision for ourselves at the present time.

These questions from Ronald Alexander, Ph.D, author of *Wise Mind, Open Mind: Finding Purpose and Meaning in Times of Crisis, Loss and Change*, can help us to be more mindful during times of transition:

- What do I feel right now?
- Do these feelings benefit me in any way? If I feel anxious and fearful, do these emotions lead me to insights, or are they responses that cause conflict, hold me back, and distract and disempower me?
- If what I'm experiencing is in response to another person's behavior, what's the evidence that that person's actions have little or nothing to do with me and are, instead, the result of what's going on inside his own mind?
- Is there anything I can do to help myself depersonalize the situation?
- Are there practices I can use to nourish myself at this difficult time?

Learn more about Dr. Alexander's work at www.ronaldalexander.com.

by Leisha Conners Bauer

Lisa Cech

Boulder County Healthy Youth Alliance and School Counselor, Angevine Middle School

Be open to new experiences.

There will be bumps in the road - work towards being resilient.



>> Transitioning from elementary to middle school

Focus on easing this important childhood transition

Just like when our child takes their first steps, the powerful feelings of both thrill and fear that rise up when they begin preschool, elementary or middle school are the same. We feel so proud and excited but are also forced to face that our baby is venturing out into a larger, scarier world. It is important to remember that transitions are a natural part of life. We all experience them and, as parents, we play an important role in supporting our children through them.

Open communication, being informed and coping with feelings in healthy ways are essential. Be available and open for your child to talk about any thoughts, concerns, hopes that they have. Being open to whatever they have to say, without minimizing it or over-blowing it, is key. It can simply be enough to say, "I hadn't thought of that, but let's find out." Attend open house or other transition events so that your child can get their questions answered and begin to see themselves in their new setting.

Be cautious not to put your own nervousness on your child. That may inadvertently send them the message that you don't believe they can handle it or that you don't think they will be successful. Stay positive, help them be their own problem-solver, and don't be afraid to cry as you're driving away after you've dropped them off on their first day.

by **Sennen Knauer**
School Counselor
Broomfield Heights
Middle School

This transition is almost always more challenging for parents than students because we can't even imagine that our "babies" have grown up so quickly. While students are nervous, it is important to acknowledge it and then help them know that we'll take it one day at a time and that likely the transition will be great.

– Megan McDonald
School Counselor, Eldorado K-8

Go slow to go fast.
Be sure you take the process of transitioning slow. Be thoughtful and purposeful in your actions as your child moves to the real world.

Support them in developing their own systems for organization and time management, but understand this process will take time and be patient as they figure it out.

Listen, listen, and listen some more. Then, if they ask you to help solve a problem, help them brainstorm solutions.



>> Transitioning from middle to high school

Prepare as a parent to provide support

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” – Howard Thurman

“What would you do if you weren’t afraid?” Go do that.

The junior and senior years of high school can be stressful times for both students and parents as decisions loom regarding the immediate future. Questions whirl—What do I want to do in my future? Do I want to go to college? If so, what kind, and where? What career am I interested in? Where do I find XL sheets?

In order to answer these questions (and a million others), parents must realize that the answers are interwoven with the greater question of “How can I help my student position themselves for happiness and success as they leave home?”

Assist your child in identifying, developing, and focusing on their strengths, interests, and passions. Ideally, the adults in a student’s life will help them discover their strengths, their skill set, what motivates them, and engage in conversations around finding meaning and purpose in life. Parents don’t need research to inform them that thriving adults who are the happiest in life are those who have found something they love doing, and are actually involved in doing it. Assure your student that most life paths zig and zag many times; few of us forge ahead on a clearly defined pathway, never to change our mind or find new interests. Remember that mistakes are crucial to success. Avoid becoming the dreaded ‘helicopter’ parent, never allowing your child the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Above all, relax; be gentle with yourself and with your student. The transition from child to a fledgling adult will inevitably come with some amount of stress, fear, emotions and conflict. Provide your child with a loving, supportive and predictable home environment. Seek out other parents who can offer you understanding as you both go through this experience together. Be open to a new and evolving relationship with your soon-to-be adult child! Offer your confidence to your student that you know they will succeed and thrive in the next stage of their life. Your child will enjoy their last years of high school much more if you are working hard at enjoying them too!

by **Linda Bostic**
School Counselor
Peak to Peak

My best advice to parents when discussing the transition from middle school to high school is to observe and listen to their child. We often see freshmen get overly stressed about the academic workload, which manifests in a variety of ways at home. Lack of sleep, withdrawal, irritability, or even depression / anxiety. Parents should have an open line of communication about what is on their child’s plate on a daily basis. The other thing I would advise is for parents to be cognizant of their child’s social transition. Do they seem happy before and after school? Do they have friends to spend time with on the weekends? Having regular conversations around their child’s social life is equally as important as the academic piece of school.

– **Lesley Lundeen**
School Counselor
Fairview High School



>> A parent's guide to childhood change

Growing up is tough. Actually, "tough" doesn't really capture the ridiculousness of moving from childhood to adolescence to early adulthood. For many, it's a lot of awkwardness and a series of wonderfully crazy obstacles: Not just the physical and biological maturation but the social, intellectual and emotional.

However, it's those tough times that strengthen your child. It's overcoming those obstacles that make them wonderful. Yes, you remember the clumsiness of being a 6th grader in middle school or a freshman in high school. You may even remember the discomfort of being the new kid at school. Those adolescent rites of passage can be pretty dreary.

But we are all better for having gone through them.

Still, there are plenty of ways to help your youngster battle the stresses and strains of transitions. It's pretty simple: Parents should be there to listen, provide their kids with attention and affection, and keep them informed, aware and prepared for both big and small changes. Make your home a place of positivity and support, so that when there is change, you can handle it as a family. And lastly, make sure there are routines and rituals in place to ensure some consistency—even in the most erratic times.

Tip From the Y

Research shows that kids, even as young as 2, will copy coping and stress-management styles of the adults who surround them. Yes, that means that they noticed that little freak out over you had when the water heater went out last winter. As much as possible, keep your own anxieties and worries in check. Model for your kids healthy ways of coping with stress and changes. The Y is currently registering for summer camps and youth sports. Register now at ymcabv.org.

Andra Coberly is the communications specialist for the YMCA of Boulder Valley. The Y supports the community through programs that focus on healthy living, youth development and social responsibility. Financial assistance is available for those who qualify.



>> BVSD Bike to School Day is April 22

Get you and your bike ready. Treat yourself to a bike ride on Wednesday, April 22. It's Earth Day, too!

The Joy of Cycling

Whether it's the feeling of fresh air on your face, the chance to get a little exercise, or simply take a break from the family car, there are a myriad of ways to experience the simple pleasure of riding a bicycle. BVSD Bike to School Day is one!

Bicycling is Earth Friendly

The event coincides with Earth Day as a healthy reminder for you, your family, and the planet.

You know the story: too many people in cars - the pollution - the stress on the Earth. Bicycling to school and your favorite destinations within reach (less than 15 minutes of travel time) is an opportunity to take a car off the road and cut a smidgen of nasty pollution. Imagine the effect of making it a regular occurrence!

United, We Bike!

Bicycling has a unifying influence. BVSD bicycle advocates, parents and staff alike, through events like Bike to School Day, hope to build connections among families, schools and the broader community around bicycling and health.

Registration and a Big Prize

Please make your trip count by registering online at bvsd.org/toschool. The school with the greatest participation, based on registration, will be rewarded with a fruit-smoothie party courtesy of the BVSD School Food Project. **Registration opens for students and staff on April 1 (of course, parents are invited to participate but only students and staff may register).**



>> BVSD Lifelong Learning April school-day-off camps

Horses, dancing, LEGOs® and more! That's what BVSD Lifelong Learning has in store on the April 17 and 20 no-school days. Kids in grades K-5 can choose from a variety of awesome camps. And younger kids will love the Mini Horse Play camps for ages 2-5. So if you're looking for fun and enriching activities for your kids when they're not in school, consider BVSD Lifelong Learning. For information on all Lifelong Learning classes and camps, visit www.bvsd.org/LLL or call 720-561-5968.



>> Iron Chef competition to be held at Casey on April 23

BVSD Food Services will host the 6th annual Iron Chef competition from 4-6 p.m. on Thursday, April 23 in the Casey Middle School cafeteria.

This year's category is "Vegetarian Entrees," and Food Services expects an array of delicious and creative concoctions from the middle school Iron Chefs. This is a youth-centered competition, featuring talented young culinarians from Platt Middle School, Centennial Middle School, Monarch K8, and Aspen Creek K8.

The culinary creations will be judged by an expert chef panel, and the winning recipe will be included in the 2015-2016 BVSD lunch menu to be served across the district. The celebrity chef judges are Manal Jarrar, chef/owner of Arabesque, and Bradford Heap, chef/owner of Salt Bistro and Colterra.

Whole Foods Market is one of the two main sponsors for the event and is contributing the food that will be used.

"We value our long-time partnership with Chef Ann, and particularly love this event that encourages kids in our community to get creative in the kitchen," said Monika Kunz, Marketing and Community Relations Specialist at Whole Foods - Pearl Street.

Tundra Restaurant Supply provided gift cards for the top three teams as prizes. Tundra is also supplying basic kitchen equipment for every participating student.

"Giving to this Iron Chef competition is important for us because we truly believe that the competition is more than just encouraging taste and inspiring talent, it's also about the kids giving back through their cooking," said Wayne Lajoie, President of Tundra Restaurant Supply.

This event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Stephen Menyhart, District Manager of Food Services at stephen.menyhart@bvsd.org or by phone at 720-370-0207.



The 2015 Competition T-shirt logos were designed by Platt Middle School student Emma Gentry.

>> BVSD Day at the Boulder Farmers Market - May 2

BVSD students and their families are invited to celebrate Farm to School in BVSD schools at the Boulder Farmers Market on Saturday, May 2 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

At the event you can meet BVSD farmer partners, get your farmer and harvest collector cards signed, get a collector card set, have your face painted, enjoy delicious food from the Munchie Machine (BVSD's Food Truck) and enjoy Harvest of the Month samples at the School Food Project table. Free prizes and raffle drawing.

Event schedule includes:

8 a.m.-2 p.m.: Munchie Machine (BVSD Food Truck)

Visit the Munchie Machine for Boulder's Best Breakfast including market-sourced breakfast sandwiches, green smoothies and more.

Stop by the School Food Project table for a Harvest of the Month food tasting, healthy eating activities and more.

9-11 a.m.: Meet BVSD Farmer Partners

Get your farmer and harvest cards signed by the local farmers who provided beautiful produce for BVSD school meals and salad bars this year. All students who attend this portion of the day will receive a Market Sampler bag filled with produce from BVSD Farmer Partners (while supplies last) and can enter our raffle drawing for \$100 Market Bucks.

Enjoy fun activities and live music throughout the day.

Learn more at the School Food Project Facebook and Twitter (@SchoolFoodProj) pages!



>> Calendar of classes & events

APRIL 2015

Tuesday, April 7, 7-9 p.m.

PEN Presents - Brighten the Brain Lecture

Aspen Creek K-8, 5500 Aspen Creek Drive, Broomfield

Consciously using media and technology to brighten the brain with Lori Kochevar, MS, LPC.

Suggested donation \$5 at the door. Get more information and register at

www.parentengagementnetwork.org/brightenthebrain.

Wednesday, April 8, 6-7 p.m.

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) Parent Education Meeting

BVSD Education Center, 6500 East Arapahoe Road, Boulder

SEAC is a forum that brings together parents, staff, students and the community. Free and open to all. For more information, contact SEAC Coordinator Anna Stewart at anna.stewart@bvsd.org or 720-561-5918.

Thursday, April 9

PEN Presents - Healthy Alternatives to Drugs & Alcohol

Monarch High School, 329 Campus Drive, Louisville

A panel of Natural Highs youth participants with Avani G. Dilger, LPC, CACIII, will discuss brain

chemistry basics about sobriety, drug and alcohol use and recovery, and how to support your

teen with a sober, healthy lifestyle. Free with a requested donation of \$5 per ticket. Register at

www.parentengagementnetwork.org/naturalhighsmhs.

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Look for us on the web!
www.bvsd.org

Monday, April 13, 6:30-8 p.m.

Successfully Transitioning to High School

Mamie Doud Eisenhower Library, 3 Community Park Road, Broomfield

As your child starts on the road to young adulthood, learn how to support them for a successful

high school experience. A Pathways to Success Workshop – Free and open to the public.

www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

Tuesday, April 14, 9:30 a.m.

Executive Function: Discussion for parents of elementary students and sharing of resources

INcahoots Meeting Place, 4800 Baseline, Suite A-112, (Meadows Shopping Center, southeast corner)

Facilitator: Kathy Sherman, Director, Hillside School. Sponsored by Hillside School. Free and open to all.

www.hillsidelearning.org/parent-resource-group, info@hillsidelearning.org

Wednesday, April 15, Noon-1 p.m.

Navigating the Transition to Middle School

Coinciding with adolescence, middle school can be a tough transition for all. Learn how to make it successful. A Pathways to Success FREE Webinar. Register by going to

www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com/free-webinars

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

Thursday, April 16, 12:30-1 p.m.

Helping Families Successfully Transition through Divorce

BVSD Ed Center Board Room, 6500 Arapahoe, Boulder

Discover proven parenting strategies that can make all the difference in minimizing the negative impacts of divorce. A Pathways to Parenting Success Presentation. Join live or watch on Comcast Ch22 or streamed on www.BVSD.org. www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

Friday, April 17 and Monday, April 20 – Spring Conference Exchange Days / No School

Friday April 17, 2015, 2-5:30 p.m.

Teen Poetry Café at Boulder Public Library

Boulder Public Main Library Teen Space: 1001 Arapahoe Ave, Boulder, CO 80302

All poets 6-12th Grade welcome. The schedule is as follows:

2 p.m.: Meet & Greet, Coffee & Tea, Poetry for Beginners with Ellie Haberl

3 p.m.: Chocolate Fountain, Socializing, Writing with Ellie Haberl

4 p.m.: Open Mic with Poet Tony Burfield – Bring an original work to perform (Video available)

For more information, call 303-441-4398 or <http://teens.boulderlibrary.org>.

Tuesday, April 21, 6:30-8 p.m.

Transitioning to College: Tips and Tools for a Great Experience

City of Louisville Library, 951 Spruce Street, Louisville

Did you know that 40 percent of undergraduate college students don't earn their degree?

Learn how to make sure your child isn't one of them. A Pathways to Success Workshop – Free and open to the public. www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

Wednesday, April 22

BVSD Bike to School Day

Register at bvsd.org/toschool.

Monday, April 27, 6:30-8 p.m.

Transitioning Through Adulthood: Successfully Adapting to Change

Meadows Branch Library, 4800 Baseline Road, Boulder

Learn how to successfully adapt to a variety of life changing events and circumstances.

A Pathways to Success Workshop – Free and open to the public. www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

MAY 2015

Saturday, May 2, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

BVSD Day at Boulder Farmers Market

13th St. between Arapahoe and Canyon

Visit the BVSD Food Project table for delicious food, activities and more. Look for BVSD's Food Truck "Munchie Machine" Free prizes and raffle drawing. See page 6 of this issue of Thrive for more information.

Tuesday, May 5, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

13th Annual PEN Celebration Luncheon

Guest speaker: Nancy Buck, author, Peaceful Parenting

Tickets are \$20. For more information, visit the website at www.parentengagementnetwork.org or contact Kathy Valentine at valstone2@hotmail.com or 303-810-6456.