
AMI/USA Administrators meeting

8/26/2020

To share strategies, questions, and concerns regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, school closings and reopening, and remote learning among AMI/USA Administrators.

AGENDA

1. [Alan Preece](#), AMI/USA's Interim Executive Director, introduction and additional details.
2. [Irene van der Zande](#), Executive Director and Founder of [Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower International](#), joins us to share COVID-19 resources, including free articles, videos, and other materials that schools can share with their staff and families. Kidpower provides schools with PreK-12 social-emotional safety skills curriculum and training to prevent and solve problems with a focus on preparing educators to protect and empower the young people in their care.
3. Heads of Schools participant Q & A and discussion.

MEETING NOTES

INFORMATION SHARED
Introduction by Alan Preece introducing Irene – we look forward to hearing more about the Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower International.
Irene van der Zande – sharing that she was introduced to Montessori through Maryse Lepoutre-Postlewaite and Maryse invited to share her thoughts relating Kidpower's work to Montessori. Values are similar to Montessori, authentic and respectful values. Both care so much about children, immediate connection. Kidpower exercises that were shared are valuable and can be applied with all age groups. The difference between teaching in Kidpower – the lessons are direct and clear.
Kidpower lessons are practiced – invite participants to unmute and participate in practicing the skills that are shared. Practice helps our minds learn what to do in real life. These are 'people safety skills' – skills for preventing and solving problems with people. Serious problems like abuse or bullying, but also everyday situations and how to develop safe and strong relationships with each other. Relating people safety skills to fire and water safety skills training.
These skills apply to all ages: even elders are learning more from these skills i.e: in creating and setting boundaries. Related a story about a 94-year-old learning about setting boundaries for the first time. We are all students, we are continually learning. We start where our students are. We are learning better how to teach (online) and how to support children, children are learning how to take charge of their safety and their well being.
When the pandemic started, identifying that emotional safety skills were needed due to 'adaptation fatigue' – emotional safety skills webinar offered at the beginning of the pandemic.

Everyone can practice these skills. Practice with your bodies. Now that school year is starting again, everyone is feeling a bit overwhelmed.

Safety signals – put skills into practice, for all ages: simple gestures, words and graphics for core safety concepts and skills.

1. Feeling like that kid in Home alone: hands on cheeks, big breath in exhalation. “Oh no!”
2. hands out to the sides “It’s ok!”
And then –
3. Palms together, straighten your back, say “calm down power”. Explained. Not in the heat of the moment, taught in anticipation of the need for these skills.

Relating stories about a child using this method to find success in overcoming significant anxiety. Irene will send links and training information after this session for practicing these skills, as well as training information.

Kidpower instructors are making more and more instructional videos all over the world to provide resources to practice these skills, since more and more learning is online rather than in-person. Showing a video of an adult practicing the calm down power skills, when confronted with a problem, how to use this skill for calming down and using better communication.

Emotional Safety Screen technique –

Hold three fingers up as a screen. A reminder to let in the fresh air and “let out the bugs”. Let in information is the fresh air and insulting or hurtful behavior are the bugs. Sometimes we get stuck in arguing with someone. For responding to unsafe situations, this can be used as a boundary setting bridge. In addition to the safety screen, start with a bridge, use “I” statements: an acknowledgement of the other person’s needs or feelings. Then work on the communication, providing your suggestions for resolving the conflict. Video shown to demonstrate this technique.

Sharing Kidpower’s COVID-19 website resources: kids and adult activities, videos, coloring books, boundary rules and consent posters with safety signals, conflict skills, includes webinars and materials for schools to share with teachers and parents. Point to your chest and say “We each belong to ourselves. I belong to me and you belong to you.” Some things are not a choice – relating a story about a child setting boundaries with parent regarding chores and being disrespectful.

Practicing role playing regarding setting boundaries. Using hands to discuss difficult problems. Put a finger in front of your mouth and shake your head, practice saying “problems should not be secrets”, “presents someone gives you should not be secrets”, “any kind of touch should not be secret”, “anything about people and their private areas should not be secrets”, “friendships and games should not be secret”. Put hands up like two heads talking: “tell and keep telling until you get help”, “I need help”, and “I will help you”

There are 10 core people safety skills and they are making bundles for schools for: starting strong, confident kids, and independent relationships for middle and high school students curriculums and books, with recordings for how to teach the lessons and licensing these to schools. Videos to use for teaching these skills. Coaching. Over 400 free resources on the Kidpower website. Kidpower works with schools regardless of their ability to pay. “We don’t have to be perfect to be great.”

Being persistent and getting help –

Taught as individual skills and practiced in stories or role plays that are relevant to their student’s lives. Puppet video (role playing): expressing affirmations, to practice communication skills, and

<p>how to communicate regarding a problem. How to get help from a parent. Role-playing with setting boundaries and getting help. Role playing is more effective when using hands as a kinesthetic experience, and is more important in the online setting. Safety skill: Boundary pusher – skill demonstrated using hands pushing against each other. To demonstrate boundaries and if the boundary pusher is pushing back; this is a conflict. We say that walls are not floppy, they are upright and strong; to portray a strong boundary. To help kids understand a boundary when you can't be in the room with them. To show the concept of boundaries with a physical component.</p>
<p>Hold up hands in front, this is a wall, sit tall and say “Please stop” Hold up hands and lean back, and say “Don't bother me ok”. Does this seem powerful? No. Hold up hands and lean forward, and say “Leave me alone!”. Would this start a fight? Yes. Strong walls don't topple backwards or forwards. This can be used to demonstrate, passive, aggressive and assertive behaviors.</p>
<p>When you want help, that's not a wall, that's a bridge. Use hands in front in bridge to demonstrate an assertive way to ask for help. Practice this skill being passive, aggressive, and assertive.</p>
<p>Practice with interrupting – provide the guideline: you wait when you want something, you interrupt and keep asking if you have a safety problem. Practice with asking for help and analogy to waiting in line, related to severity of request (safety). Use: “Excuse me, I have a safety problem” of “Excuse me, I need help” – as a way to interrupt, and to practice this skill.</p>
<p>Every safety skill you practice with children may be misused at some point. This is an ongoing process and needs to be repeatedly practiced. Lessons are geared toward helping teachers and parents with how to repeatedly practice these skills with children. Many schools put boundaries and consent posters up on the walls (virtual walls) to help everyone remembers the skills.</p>
<p>Kidpower works with parents to teach these lessons in a positive manner, in an emotionally safe way, for example it is not “stranger danger” instead “stranger safety”. We believe that most people are good, and that means that most strangers are good, I am a stranger to you and you are a stranger to me, and the reason it is safe to be with me is because your grown up said so. And just like with animals we don't know well, we have safety rules to follow with people.</p>
<p>Teaching about healthy boundaries, teaching all of the adults around that child so that adults can recognize and intervene to stop an unsafe situation, and so that children know how to ask for help.</p>
<p>Child Protection Advocacy Institute starting tomorrow – pay what you can. Live coaching sessions. www.Kidpower.org/institute. Gives people hands on practice, deep immersion into Kidpower program, one two-hour session each week, sessions will be recorded, international attendance.</p>
<p>Question regarding teaching Positive Discipline to parents – resulted in parents feeling incompetent about the way to implement the techniques. Kidpower's specific nomenclature, gestures, and philosophy is a total package that seems more attainable by parents and teachers. Is there a specific methodology that you have found most successful for you with making this most effective for teachers, parents and youth that you have found? Kidpower positive practice teaching method. Don't just tell about the skills, practice, rehearse, repeat. Use coaching, use signs around to remind us (just like road signs). But having rehearsed these skills makes the difference. Suggestion to look at Kidpower's teacher training, then use the videos to practice the skills. Not fear based, contribute to feelings of power, new vocabulary.</p>

<p>Take problems and turn them into positive practices. Looking at the Positive Discipline - may need to add opportunities to rehearse. Have to address the emotional triggers that get in the way. Analogy to shaking a can of soda to understand how to recognize emotional triggers. Soda bottle effect – grab a can of soda and shake it, you just keep getting more and more annoyed, then when you open the can, what happens? Fear of setting boundaries can be a road block to using these skills. Tool for managing emotional triggers for practicing these skills.</p>
<p>Bullying = unsafe or disrespectful behavior. Define the problem, then all practice together skills to address the problem. Relating a story about a child who was automatically suspended for 3 days due to an altercation. When the child returned, the teacher said “Something unsafe happened” and now we are all going to practice together the skills that will help: “stop power” “listening power”. Suppose you feel like grabbing, push your hands down using hands down power, or if you feel like kicking put your feet down on the floor. Use Walk away power (with fingers walking along your arm). If you use wheels, use your wheel power: “roll away power”. Use these visual signals to remind the person to use the skill.</p>
<p>Practice is a management tool that you can use for unsafe or disrespectful behavior. Trash can power: “Mean words that other people say or that you say to yourself can get stuck in your head and they can stay there for a really long time.” But we don’t have to let that happen. Have a symbol of the “trash can” – use your hand to catch the mean words, and throw it away in the trash can. Now put your hand on your heart and say something nice to yourself. Make sure to tell young children: “I am pretending so we can practice.” Use the “mean word grabber” to catch that word. Replace the negative words with a positive word to yourself. “I am smart.” This technique can be used to turn mean words into kind words. Children really respond to the hand symbols and like the ‘shredder’, the ‘flip top trash can’, and ‘dumpster’.</p>
<p>Ability to take in compliments is also important. Don’t throw those words away. We tend to think more about critical comments, than we do about positive comments.</p>
<p>When we make mistakes – throw those words away. Say instead: “Mistakes are part of learning.” or “I do not have to be perfect to be great.”</p>
<p>Open for questions: regarding bullying, renamed and relabeling helps. With response to a parent that is concerned that their child is being bullied, try “your child is feeling unsafe”. Someone is feeling unsafe. We can all practice together on how to interrupt unsafe or disrespectful behavior. Suppose that it is the end of the school day, day before break, outside in the parking lot there are some children having a problem and parents are around. What message do we give if we walk past this situation? The intervention does not have to take a long time, practice in advance. Say, for example: “That doesn’t look safe”. (some things are not a choice and/or against our values). Or say: “That kind of language is not ok at our school.” To respond and to address the situation.</p>
<p>Need to honor the fact that we are all overwhelmed at this time. Acknowledge that we are practicing resiliency, creativity and we are adapting to the new circumstances.</p>
<p>Question regarding someone who can’t accept compliments, but is quick to point our faults in others. Hard to see that this person is stuck in this pattern, how to address. Part of what we do is to practice, start with the bridge “you are a wonderful teacher, and we respect and value you. And, I am concerned because I see you not taking in the good things other people say, or being very critical of others. I would like to practice some skills that might help.” State the issue. Prepare for</p>

the defensive negative reaction. Refer to the Kidpower boundaries workshop webinar. How many people don't like it when people tell you that you did something they don't like. Practice persisting when confronting a negative reaction.

Extraordinary power of this presentation – the skills shared are very valuable and it makes it fun to practice. The resources are impressive. A fantastic, delightful demonstration of Kidpower.

Irene will send resources and include links for the resources to follow up and an article about online and real-world safety and strategies for addressing cyber bullying. Email Irene with any questions or clarifications needed: irene@kidpower.org

Thanks to Irene for this presentation and sharing of resources. Thank you to all who were able to attend. Please feel free to share topics, and suggestions for future meetings and requests for support.

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