

Dear Families/Caregivers,

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network defines trauma as any frightening, dangerous, or violent event that poses a threat to a one's life or body. Trauma disrupts a child's ability to learn, solve problems, and manage emotions. But research shows that the single most protective factor for children who have experienced trauma is their relationship to a caring adult.

In this lesson students learned to identify the people who love and care for them. They learned that they are part of our class and part of our school. They learned to identify their needs, who can help them meet their needs, and how to ask for what they need. Students also learned the importance of supporting others meet their needs.

Here are some suggestions to help your child understand the importance of connection and identifying the people who support them:

- Verbalize to your child that you are there to keep them safe. Following a traumatic event, children need additional reassurance that the adults in their lives are going to protect them. Remind them that they are a part of a family who loves and cares for them.
- Encourage your child to state their needs as they arise, as opposed to always meeting their needs before they ask. This helps children better understand what they need. Then ask your child to state who can help them meet that need. Sometimes the answer will be themselves. If they need help meeting a need, encourage them to ask for the help they need.
- Talk with your child about the people who help them meet their needs. These people may include family members, friends, neighbors, school personnel, and other community members such as coaches, counselors, medical professionals, and emergency workers. Consider having your child write a thank you note to someone who has helped to meet a need during this difficult time.
- If possible, volunteer with your child to help meet a need for someone else. This may be someone in your family, a friend, or others in the community. Helping others provides children with a sense of empowerment that they can make a difference.

Feeling connected is important following a traumatic event. I consider it a privilege to be part of your child's support system. Please don't hesitate to let me know if there are ways that I can better serve your child.

Sincerely,

Your Child's Teacher