



Supporting Systems

Creative Brief: My Circle of Family Support

How can I access my circle of family support to help me learn at home?

Purpose

Many homes are bustling and active places. Children and parents can feel challenged by the demands of learning. The Activity can be very insightful for parents and children; imagining and expressing their Circle of Family Support. Creating a visual anchor can be useful as a resource for learning.



Breathing/Stilling Exercise

- Children may or may not have difficulty with stilling themselves inside or out.
- Children and parents sit in a circle or facing each other on chairs or sitting on an area rug. When working with elementary school children, they respond to distinct small physical suggestions, like how to cross their legs or how to sit in their chairs with their feet on the ground and sit with their backs straight like trees.
- Parents and children should breathe in and out slowly a few times. You might begin with a visual aid such as an expandable ball or your hands to demonstrate the rhythm of the breathing, Then have students close their eyes and breath slowly three times in and out.
- The parent tells a guided story (or use mine) about remembering their quiet place, can be a place to start. You can all keep your eyes closed or look at a place on the wall or floor. The parent can remember a quiet place they use now or one from their own childhood. It is good to tell the story describing the place and the feeling.. Go slowly and remind the children to breathe in and out slowly. Parents can invite the children to imagine their own quiet place and then can add their family members that support them standing behind them in their quiet place. Have them imagine what kind of supported words their family members would say to them and what are some memories of love. Guide children back after a minute or two, depending on how still the circle is.
- Some children may need redirection during the exercise. If you know what your child might have difficulty; you can ask them to help you demonstrate to your other children. If they are young place stuffed animals on the floor next to them to represent their classmates and demonstrate for them or they can draw pictures of their classmates or have papers with their names. I call it "being my second." This establishes my place and gives them one.
- After the exercise, children can share something about who they imagined and what words they heard or what else happened in their experience..



Circle of Family Support Systemic/Art Exercise

- Invite children to hold their family support place inside of them. Using provided paper and art supplies, students can draw their family circle of support. Who is there? Where are they? They can write some supportive words or sentences. It might enhance the process to quietly reinforce that they are drawing from the inside out. You can also do this exercise.
- Afterward, you can have your child to share and hang their drawings up. Children can refer to the circles as anchors during their day. They can decide where and how to place them in the house. Experiment with different places for their circle or try different shapes. Children may also want to make a second drawing to keep in their "school " space. You can also hang yours up. It might be interesting to see if you try different ways and shapes and do this exercise to start the week or whatever space of time seems right.