

From the Desk of the Executive Head...

1-12-2021

Dear PEPPS Community

Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am
Be still and know
Be still
Be

My prayer is that we all find time just to BE this holiday period.

What follows is an article which expresses the need for us to BE PRESENT to our children.



Dr Luis Rojas Marcos, a psychiatrist, writes an article that I believe impacts us all as parents. The data is international but probably is not dissimilar to the South African experience.

*There is a silent tragedy unfolding today in our homes and concerns our most beautiful jewellery: our children. Our children are emotionally devastated! Over the past 15 years, researchers have given us more and more alarming statistics on an acute and constant **increase in childhood mental illness** that is now reaching epidemic proportions.*

Stats don't lie:

- 1 in 5 children have mental health issues*
- A 43% increase was observed in ADHD*
- An increase of 37% in teenage depression has been observed*
- A 200% increase in the suicide rate among children aged 10 to 14 has been observed.*

What's going on and what's wrong with us?

*Kids these days are **over-stimulated and over-given material objects**, but they are **deprived of the foundations of a healthy childhood**, such as:*

- Emotionally available parents*
- Clearly defined boundaries*
- Responsibilities*
- Balanced nutrition and adequate sleep*
- Movement in general but especially outdoors*
- Creative and informal game playing opportunities with social interaction and spaces for boredom*

Instead, the last few years have been filled with the children of:

- Digitally distracted parents*
- Pampering and permissive parents who let children "rule the world" and be the ones who make the rules*
- A sense of entitlement, to earn everything without earning it or being responsible for getting it*

- Inappropriate sleep and unbalanced nutrition
- A sedentary lifestyle
- Endless stimulation, technological teddy bears, instant gratification and absence of boring moments

What to do?

If we want our children to be happy and healthy individuals, we need to wake up and get back to the basics. It is still possible! Many families are seeing immediate improvements after weeks of implementing the following recommendations:

- **Set boundaries** and remember that you are the captain of the ship. Your children will feel safer knowing you have the management of your home in control.

- **Offer children a balanced lifestyle** filled with what children need, not just what they want. Don't be afraid to say "no" to your children if what they want isn't what they need.

- Provide **nutritious food** and limit junk food.



- Spend at least one hour a day outdoors doing activities such as cycling, hiking, fishing, bird/insect watching

- Enjoy a daily family dinner without smartphones or technology distracting anyone at the table.



<https://kidadl.com/articles/no-prep-outdoor-activities-five-ten-year-olds>

- Play table games with the family or if the kids are too small for board games, let them decide on the play they want.

- Involve your children in a task or housework according to their age. For example folding clothes, ordering toys, hanging clothes, unwrapping food, setting the table, feeding the dog etc.

age appropriate CHORES

2-3 YEARS	4-5 YEARS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *make bed *pick up toys and books *put laundry in hamper *help feed pets *help wipe up messes *dust (put socks on hands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *clear/set table *load dishwasher *empty silverware from dishwasher *take laundry to laundry room *match socks & fold *put away laundry *straighten room *get the newspaper/mail
6-8 YEARS	9-11 YEARS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *empty dishwasher *clean bathroom sinks & counters *sort laundry by colors *help pack school lunches *pull weeds & rake leaves *water plants/flowers *collect trash from wastebaskets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *clean toilets *take trash to curb *vacuum *mop floors *mow grass *food preparation (wash, cut, dice, measure) *walk pet
12+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *baby-sit siblings *wash windows *iron *clean interior/exterior of car *cook simple meals *laundry *clean refrigerator *make grocery list



- Implement a **consistent sleep routine to ensure your child sleeps long enough**. Times will be even more important for school-age children.

- **Teach responsibility and independence**. Don't overprotect them from frustration or error. Being wrong will help them develop resilience and learn to overcome life's challenges.

- Don't load your children's backpack, don't carry their backpacks, don't take them the task they forgot, don't peel their bananas or peel their oranges if they can do it themselves (4-5 years old). Instead of giving them the fish, show them how to fish.

- **Teach them to wait and delay gratification**.

- Provide opportunities for "boredom" because **boredom is the moment when creativity awakens**. Don't feel responsible for always keeping kids entertained.

- Do not use technology as a cure for boredom, nor offer it at the first second of inactivity.

- Avoid using technology during meals, in cars, restaurants, shopping malls. Use these moments as opportunities to socialize by training the brains to know how to function when they are in "bored" mode.

- Help them create a "Boredom Bottle" with activity ideas for when they're bored.



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Things to Do When Your Kids Are Bored

Free Printable
I'm Bored Jar

www.happymomhacks.com



<https://happymomhacks.com/things-to-do-when-your-kids-are-bored/>



- **Be emotionally available** to connect with children and teach them self-regulation and social skills.
- **Turn off the phones at night** when kids have to go to bed to avoid digital distraction.
- **Become an emotional regulator** or coach of your children. Teach them to recognize and handle their own frustrations and anger.
- Show them to greet, to take turns, to share without being left without anything, to **say please and thank you**, to recognize the mistake and apologize (don't force them), be a model for all these values.
- **Connect emotionally** - smile, kiss, tickle, read, dance, jump, play or spoil with them.

As the year concludes, we acknowledge that **every pupil has grown and learnt**. This poem reminds us that children do not have to be an official prize winner to be recognised as having achieved something worthwhile this year. **I am so proud of what each PEPPS pupil has accomplished this year.**

I SEE YOU

To the child who conquered their fear of heights, or sleeping in the dark, or riding without training wheels, or sleeping out for the first time this year, I SEE YOU.

To the child who managed to resolve more conflict than they started this year, to the child who learnt to say the impossible 'I'm sorry' and to the child that walked away from fighting instead of getting involved, I SEE YOU.

To the child for whom school is a huge struggle, yet you get up every day and you go, I SEE YOU.

To the child who battled all year with the maths, or reading, or concentration, or speaking out in class, or learning their words, but persevered anyway, I SEE YOU.

To the child who found the kindness in their heart to reach out in any way to another person or an animal in need or in pain, I SEE YOU.

To the child who learnt to give and to share for the first time this year, and even found joy in these, I SEE YOU.

To the child who battles to make friends and to be social, you made a few friends and for that, I SEE YOU.

To the child who wanted so much to please, but was just out of sight of an adult who perhaps was too busy or too distracted, I SEE YOU.

To the child who lost a friend or a loved one this year, but carried on every day bravely even though their heart ached, I SEE YOU.

To the brave parents who try every day to do the best for their kids, I SEE YOU.

Author unknown

We are incredibly excited that PEPPS will be opening a **College (Grade 8) in Mokopane** at the beginning of next year. We already have over 40 applications and there are still limited spaces available.

Our other schools are all nearly full with many grades full to capacity and one or two places available in a few grades. Our ECD Schools (pre-primary) do still have some spaces for the 4 to 5-year-olds.

Thank you for supporting PEPPS and entrusting your children to us this year. We are honoured and appreciative that you chose us. We are able to provide excellent education because we are reliably financially supported by our families. Thank you so much for honouring your obligation to pay for your child's education timeously.



I remind you that **2022's first payment is due on 1 January 2022** and payments are made on the first of each month for 11 months. I trust that our parents appreciate that we have managed to minimise any add-on amounts on the fee accounts and we intend to continue with that pattern into 2022.

Vaccines decrease Covid transmission and severity, as well as the likelihood of variants developing. As we enter another wave of Covid **PEPPS encourages all who are eligible to be part of the solution and vaccinate.** We value you all and wish for our community to be protected as far as possible and we want to minimise the devastation of this disruptive pandemic.



I pray for a richly blessed holiday season for you all and pray for travel mercies over each person in our community. I also truly wish that each person finds the time to just BE over the next month.



Yours in healthy, safe and excellent education

Annabel Roberts

PEPPS Executive Head