

When I think of Elementary schools and the children there within, my heart immediately goes to a warm and positive place, rekindling memories of old; personally, with my own offspring, and as a clinical professional who works to promote the emotional wellness of young children. With the initial shock of the pandemic to our systems (both young and old), we all likely experienced stages of grief and loss, where trauma responses can ebb and flow, permeating our daily lives internally. Children are no exceptions here. Though we know that kids are generally “resilient”, that is not a given unless protective factors (physical and emotional) are put in to place. You as parents/caregivers have done that at the most challenging time our country has experienced as a whole community for decades. Remember late March 2020?

Well, now we are approaching Fall 2020, and many things are looking different. Some virus trends are not so good, but some human trends are showing those characteristics of fortitude, stamina, internal strength, ingenuity, optimism, and resiliency. I don’t know about you, but I feel there is promise for us, our families and friends, our society at large, and our children especially! CRA is making a good faith effort to encapsulate all that is important to students, their households, and those that will reside (virtually side-by-side) and educate (with creativity and steadfast conscientiousness) with your students. The Teachers and staff.

I have seen the process unfolding for CRA’s reopening this fall, and am proud to let you know that from a social-emotional perspective, I think it may be a worthy prototype for many Elementary schools in the valley. With CRA’s mission to look at the “whole” child, we are holding ourselves to this notable standard in that compassionate and loving CRA way. With your families in mind, I am confident that this “soft opening” will be successful in a “holistic” way, where every student will be looked at as a little human that craves learning and desires a return to normal some day.

With “normal” not on the horizon quite yet, I think now is the time to remember (just briefly) what we went through in the Spring of 2020, simply to give us insight about “then” and “now.” When children are faced with unusual and atypical adversity, even the integrity of resiliency waffles. CRA is setting up a “soft opening” that honors the child where they are at, embracing that they have a heart, mind, and spirit (mood), and can’t be expected to handle everything all at once. Our approach with increasing gradations of learning - with enhancement for online offerings and teacher availability remotely – stands on it’s own two feet. If you’ve heard of the word “desensitization” for anxiety and other trauma responses, it would resemble something like that therapeutically.

And, please note that I will be available remotely to guide, assist, and offer resources/tips/strategies to your students and your families as needed. It is true, that we are all in this together. For me, the CRA community is like a wonderful village of extended family. We will look out for each other, especially during hard times.

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