***The following article is intended to be used or adapted for family newsletters, school website content, or information for teachers. Please feel free to add specifics for your school or district and to adapt to the appropriate length for your needs.***

**Find Your Focus**

By (insert your name)

Here at NAME OF SCHOOL, we want our kids to reach their potential and develop skills to thrive in school and in life. This year, students and staff will be participating in national School Psychology Awareness Week, November 11-15, 2019, the theme of which is “**Find Your Focus.**” Finding one’s focus" can mean a variety of things from paying attention, to being able to see an idea more clearly, to identifying an area of interest, or to being persistent or determined in one’s effort. Focusing can help us set goals, identify action steps, communicate need, and engage in discussions to help create the connections necessary for students to develop critical academic and social emotional skills. School psychologists, along with other school personnel, work with students every day to help them find their focus—identify strengths and interests, develop persistence, see ideas and situations more clearly, and attend to important information in academic and social settings, and we believe families can do the same.

**We’re Help Our Students Find Their Focus at School**

Specifically, we will be BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR SCHOOL’S ACTIVITIES.

**Help Kids Find Their Focus at Home**

There are many ways families can help children find their focus. As parents and caregivers, you can:

1. Talk to your kids about their strengths and interests. What do they think they are good at? What activities are they interested in? What career path do they want to follow? Emphasize that learning and growing require trying new things and that success comes from small steps to a long-term goal
2. Help your children develop positive relationships with peers and adults, and model respectful, caring behaviors with others.
3. Encourage goal setting and mapping out a plan for achieving the goals. Talk with your children about steps they have taken, what worked and what didn’t, and what they might do next.
4. Praise attempts, as well as success, and make sure that you focus on the effort or hard work put into the success. Emphasize the importance of deliberate practice that talent is developed over time through skillful practice.
5. Create an environment at home that allows your children to explore building (playing with blocks, helping with projects, and more), drawing (crayons, finger paints, paper), and music (on the radio, with children’s instruments, or through formal training through school or community resources). This may help to identify special interests.
6. Help your child work through setbacks, or lack of self-confidence, by helping to identify negative thoughts that may suggest concerns about his or her ability to be successful. As a parent, you can help children see what the small steps are and how persisting and overcoming obstacles is a part of succeeding. Help your child realize that setbacks are not permanent or all-encompassing.
7. Seek out support systems available in the community to help your children learn new skills and thrive, such as tutoring or mentoring programs. Encourage your children to participate in community activities that may help them to develop positive behaviors, such as being grateful. In particular, volunteer activities may encourage the development of positive behaviors. Consider participating in community events yourself as a role model.
8. Encourage your children to participate in school and community activities that may help them to develop positive behaviors, such as being grateful. In particular, volunteer activities may encourage the development of positive behaviors. Consider participating in community and school events yourself as role a model.

**Let’s Work Together**

As the school psychologist at (insert school name), I look forward to working with you and other families in our community to encourage all of our children, whether at home or at school, to find their focus. Please feel free to contact me with questions, concerns, or suggestions related to your children’s interests, strengths, skills, and struggles so that we can partner to help them continue along a path of positive changes to reach their potential in school, in life, and as a member of the community. I can best be reached by (insert contact information).

**About School Psychologists**

School psychologists are members of school staff who support students’ ability to learn and teachers’ ability to teach. School psychologists apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally by providing direct support to students, such as individualized learning and behavioral assessments to identify students’ strengths and needs, academic and behavioral interventions, counseling, and social skills training. We also consult with teachers, families, and other educators to improve support strategies and school-wide practices and policies. We are in a unique position to ensure students’ success every day, including both small and big accomplishments. More information is available at [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)