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April 25, 2017

Dear Parent,

We teach our kids about seat belt safety; to stop, drop, and roll in case of fire; about the dangers of drug use; and about safe sex practices. Yet we often do not address the second leading cause of death in our youth after accidents. This is suicide.

Youth suicide is a quiet secret that takes the lives of over five thousand of America's youth each year. Experts estimate that for every suicide death there are between fifty and two hundred attempts. These numbers, however are what experts tell us. What do our kids tell us? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducts a Youth Risk Behavior Survey in which high school students are asked a number of health-related questions. Let's take a look at what kids reported about suicide in 2015:

- 17.7 percent of students in the 9th-12th grade seriously considered attempting suicide.
- 14.6 made an actual plan on how they would complete suicide
- 8.6 attempted suicide

What we take away from this is that our kids are challenged by thoughts and feelings about suicide and that we as their parents and caretakers in their lives need to be better prepared to deal with this disturbing reality. And because kids spend the greatest amount of their time in schools, one of the easiest ways to integrate learning about suicide prevention into the lives of our children is in the educational setting.

We have invited a suicide prevention specialist to come and administer the Lifelines course to our students. The students will be presented with relevant facts on suicide. The course will alert students to signs of suicide risk in peers and encourage serious responses. They will outline ways to respond to troubled peers and demonstrate positive attitudes about intervention and help-seeking behavior. Also, the students will identify personal and local resources that are available in suicide crisis.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Kindle,
Prevention Specialist

Supporting safer and healthier communities through awareness, education, and prevention

