

### **Empowerment for the New School Year: School Nurses are Mental Health Advocates**

School nurses play a vital role in the well-being of their students. They are responsible for handling a variety of health-related issues, including administering medication, conducting vision and hearing screenings, and providing first aid. Beyond these physical issues, school nurses also serve as mental health advocates for their students. They are trained to identify signs of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression and can provide counseling or refer the student to a mental health professional. In addition, school nurses can provide education to students and staff about mental health awareness and prevention. Overall, school nurses are an integral part of the school community, ensuring that students are healthy and prepared to learn.

Children experience a wide range of emotions, from excitement and joy to frustration and anger. While these emotions are a normal part of growing up, it can be challenging for children to regulate them. When a child is feeling overwhelmed by their emotions, it can be difficult for them to return to a calm or relaxed state. However, it is only during these calm moments that a child is able to learn effectively.

Mindfulness exercises have been found to be effective in helping children work through their emotions by bringing attention to the present moment. By focusing on the present, children are able to develop a greater awareness of their thoughts and feelings, which can help them better regulate their emotions. These exercises can be as simple as deep breathing or taking a few moments to observe one's surroundings. With practice, mindfulness exercises can become a valuable tool for children to manage their emotions and improve their overall well-being.

An easy-to-make low to no-cost sensory-based DIY craft that can help school nurses are DIY Reflection Jars. These jars can be made with items likely found around the house and can be

used in the nurses station as a mindfulness tool to help children slow down and reset when experiencing big emotions.

## DIY Reflection Shakers

Materials needs for all:

Clear bottle or plastic jar (consider upcycling a water bottle or empty plastic pickle jar)

*Note: Avoid glass and look for containers with a screw top lid*

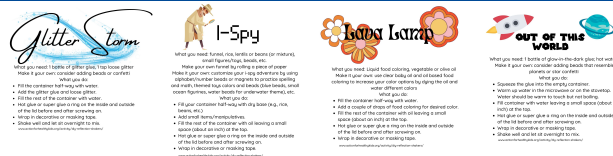
Filtered/distilled water

*Note: This helps to keep your Reflection Shakers mold free!*

Hot glue gun and glue sticks or super glue

Decorative tape or masking tape

Check the links below for ideas on different types of Reflection Shakers.



## Meet the Team

School  
Liaison



Kelly Richardson, BSN, RN

Kelly was the first employee of the FHD and has a professional background in QA/QI. She spent many years at the bedside and as a resource nurse across many different specialties. Currently she is in grad school completing her MBA/MHA degree. She is originally from Southern California, but moved to the Hoosier State in 2010. Shortly after moving to Indiana, she met her now husband and together they have 1st grader together who is very involved in sports. Besides cheering from the sidelines, in her personal time she is very involved in local animal rescue groups and has been fostering dogs for over 20 years. Since living in Indiana she has been involved with a non-profit that works with local children in the foster care system.

# Meet the Team

## School Liaison

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**Dominique Davis**

Dominique has been with the health department for 3 years. Her background is in psychology and mental health. She has a B.S. in psychology and a M.A. in Forensic and Legal psychology. She is currently working on her second masters to be licensed in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She has spent time as a volunteer substance abuse counselor in correctional facilities and has been involved with the national non-profit NAMI as a crisis helpline operator. During her free time, she is an avid traveler and enjoys all the outdoors have to offer. She also is the owner of 2 very spoiled dogs, Laila and Ali.



**School Liaison**  
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# Glitter Storm

What you need: 1 bottle of glitter glue, 1 tsp loose glitter

Make it your own: consider adding beads or confetti

What you do:

- Fill the container half-way with water.
- Add the glitter glue and loose glitter.
- Fill the rest of the container with water.
- Hot glue or super glue a ring on the inside and outside of the lid before and after screwing on.
- Wrap in decorative or masking tape.
- Shake well and let sit overnight to mix.

[www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/diy-reflection-shakers/](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/diy-reflection-shakers/)



# I-Spy

What you need: funnel, rice, lentils or beans (or mixture), small figures/toys, beads, etc.

Make your own funnel by rolling a piece of paper

Make it your own: customize your i-spy adventure by using alphabet/number beads or magnets to practice spelling and math, themed toys colors and beads (blue beads, small ocean figurines, water beads for underwater theme), etc.

What you do:

- Fill your container half-way with dry base (e.g., rice, beans, etc.)
- Add small items/manipulatives.
- Fill the rest of the container with oil leaving a small space (about an inch) at the top.
- Hot glue or super glue a ring on the inside and outside of the lid before and after screwing on.
- Wrap in decorative or masking tape.

[www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/diy-reflection-shakers/](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/activity/diy-reflection-shakers/)





What you need: Liquid food coloring, vegetable or olive oil

Make it your own: use clear baby oil and oil based food coloring to increase your color options by dyeing the oil and water different colors

What you do:

- Fill the container half-way with water.
- Add a couple of drops of food coloring for desired color.
- Fill the rest of the container with oil leaving a small space (about an inch) at the top.
- Hot glue or super glue a ring on the inside and outside of the lid before and after screwing on.
- Wrap in decorative or masking tape.

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What you need: 1 bottle of glow-in-the-dark glue; hot water\*

Make it your own: consider adding beads that resemble planets or star confetti

What you do:

- Squeeze the glue into the empty container.
- Warm up water in the microwave or on the stovetop. Water should be warm to touch but not boiling.
- Fill container with water leaving a small space (about an inch) at the top.
- Hot glue or super glue a ring on the inside and outside of the lid before and after screwing on.
- Wrap in decorative or masking tape.
- Shake well and let sit overnight to mix.

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