

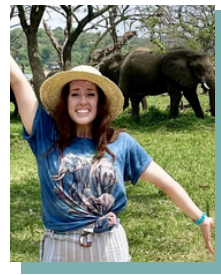


Providing evidence-based substance misuse prevention services by enriching life skills through education and strength-based practice, providing creative outlets and enhanced youth protective factors.

# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

## MEET OUR PREVENTION SPECIALIST



**BROOK LASATER**  
Central Avenue Elementary School

I joined the Eckerd Connects Prevention Services team in 2024 as the Prevention Specialist at Central Avenue Elementary. It has been an incredible adventure so far!

I love helping kids shine, finding their strengths, building confidence, and celebrating every success! I earned a Bachelor's degree in Health Psychology and a Master's in Public Health with a focus on Global Health. In 2022, I taught prevention education in Tororo, Uganda. It was an amazing experience to learn and grow!

**Fun fact:** When I'm not at school, you might find me sprinkling a little magic as a Walt Disney World Attractions Cast Member!

## COPING CORNER

### Coping with Money Stress

Sometimes money worries can make feeling feel big for both kids and adults. When families talk openly and focus on what they can control, it helps everyone feel calmer and safer. Talking about worries and making simple plans together can help lower stress and build confidence

★ Remember: You don't have to figure everything out at once.

**Try these coping tools:**

**TAKE A DEEP BREATH**

TAKE A DEEP BREATH BEFORE TALKING ABOUT MONEY



**FOCUS ON ONE THING AT A TIME**

FOCUS ON ONE SMALL STEP AT A TIME

**SHARE YOUR TIME**

REMIND YOURSELF: "WE ARE DOING OUR BEST"



## DID YOU KNOW?



### Budgeting Helps Families Feel More Confident

Budgeting is a life skill that helps families plan how to use their money. When adults and kids understand how money works, it can help reduce stress and make daily choices easier.



### Learning to budget can help families:

- Feel more in control of their money
- Plan ahead for needs like food, school supplies, and fun activities
- Lower stress by knowing where money is going

Small steps, like making a simple plan, can make a big difference.

**Try this at home:** Talk as a family about one thing you need and one thing you want. Discuss how they are different.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



### Learning Money Skills Together

Teaching kids about money doesn't have to be hard. Every day moments are great chances to practice budgeting and decision-making as a family.

- **At the store:** Let your child help choose between two items and talk through the cost.
- **Practice budgeting:** Give a small allowance or spending limit and help them plan how to use it.
- **Build confidence:** When kids make thoughtful choices, it boosts self-esteem and responsibility.
- **Talk it through:** Ask questions like, "Why did you choose that?" or "How could we save for it?"

These moments help children learn decision-making, patience, and confidence. These are skills they will use throughout their lives.



Each school day we work with youth on ways to build their personal strengths.

Join our efforts in ensuring they LIVE BEYOND these activities and have an opportunity to practice these skills with you and with their community.

# PREVENTION TOPIC: BUILDING FINANCIAL CONFIDENCE

Teaching kids important life skills, like how to manage money, helps them feel confident about making smart choices every day. When kids know how to make good decisions, they're better prepared to handle stress and face challenges.

## PRACTICING MONEY SKILLS HELPS KIDS LEARN HOW TO:

- 1** **Think before making choices** instead of acting quickly
- 2** **Setting goals and planning ahead** for things they care about
- 3** **Manage stress and big feelings** during tough moments
- 4** **Ask for help and talk things through** with trusted adults
- 5** **Feel confident and capable** when making decisions

These skills help protect kids from risky choices later in life. When families practice life skills together, kids learn that they can slow down, think clearly, and make safe choices.



This month, practice thoughtful choices together as a family. The goal is not perfection, it's learning, communication and teamwork.

### The Smart Choices Family Challenge:

**Make a simple shopping list together** and talk about why each item is needed

**Practice needs vs. wants** by choosing between two items

**Set one small family goal** such as saving for a treat or activity

**Talk about choices without judgment** and listen to each other

**Share one smart choice** each family member made during the week

Talking about choices helps kids build confidence, responsibility, and problem-solving skills. Small choices today help build strong life skills for tomorrow.

## ☀️ TRY THIS: ONE SMALL STEP TOGETHER ☀️

This week, choose one small money goal as a family. The goal does not need to be big, it just needs to be doable. At the end of the week, talk about how it felt to plan together.

**Save Money** - Save a small amount of money together

**Grocery Trip** - Plan one grocery trip using a list

**Plan a low-cost family activity** - Choose a free or low-cost family activity

**Discuss one smart choice** - Talk about one smart choice made during the week