



# Transitioning: What's New-What's Different

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# Stepping Stones to Bridge the “Tween” Years

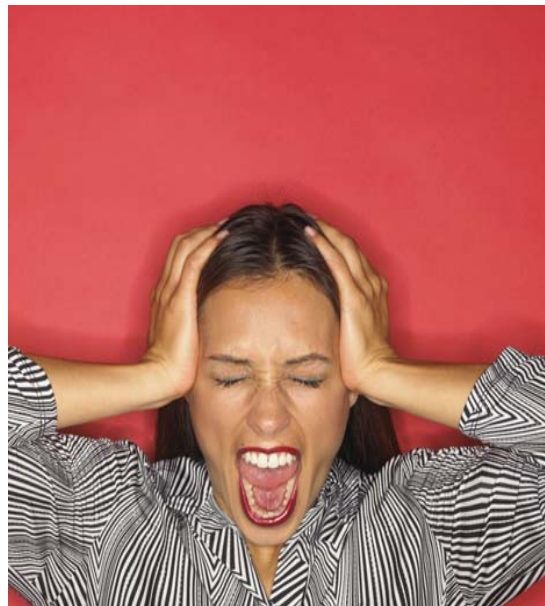
Adolescence is a time of active deconstruction, construction, reconstruction--a period in which past, present, and future are rewoven and strung together on the threads of fantasies and wishes that do not necessarily follow the laws of linear chronology.

-Louise J. Kaplan



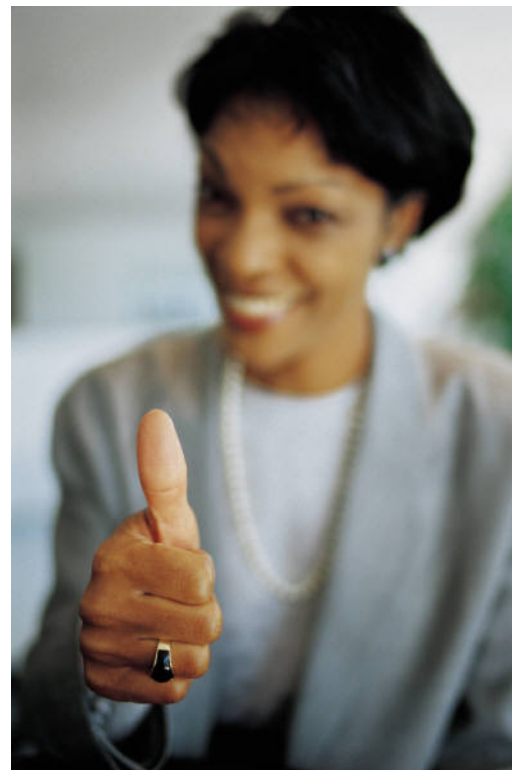
# Something to Think About...

- What are some behaviors you are observing in your “tween” or “teen” that might not have been there before, but now cause you to feel like this?



# Something to Think About...

- What are some behaviors that your “tween” or “teen” has exhibited that you want to encourage?

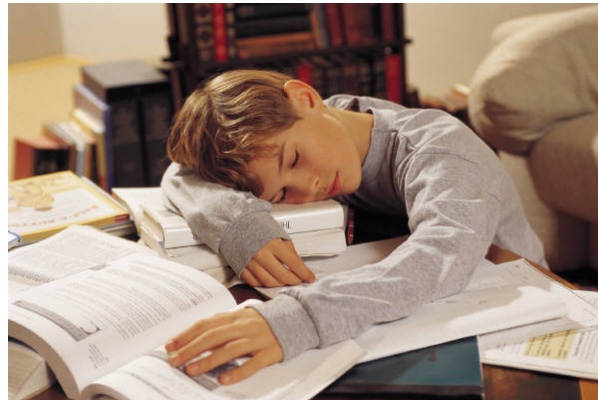


# Adjectives of a Middle School Student

- Young, Vibrant, Indecisive, Inquisitive, Spunky, Sensitive, Challenging and Emotional
- Unique, Unpredictable, Adorable, Keen, Creative, Special and Outspoken
- Tenacious, Dramatic, Playful, Witty, Exceptional, Temperamental, Gregarious, and Heart-Warming

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# Would You Go Back If You Could?



# Characteristics of Middle Schoolers

- The middle school student has a distinctive kind of energy that is hard to understand, challenges your beliefs, and yet can open new frontiers.
- They still watch cartoons while analyzing and using technology and software that we cannot even fathom.
- They love and adore you, but get embarrassed when you open your mouth or hang out with their friends.
- It's not cool to look different, yet it's ok to break dress code to be an individual.
- Their emotions range from elation to sadness, from "cloud nine" to depression, from good mood to bad mood in seconds.
- They are apprehensive about sharing their feelings and often try to deal with issues themselves.
- There is potential for greatness if their energy can be channeled.

# Characteristics of High Schoolers

- Middle to late adolescents have more self-involvement, alternating between unrealistically high expectations and poor self-concept
- Complaints that parents interfere with independence
- Extremely concerned with appearance and with one's own body
- Effort to make new friends
- Strong emphasis on the new peer group with the group identity of selectivity, superiority and competitiveness
- Periods of sadness as the psychological loss of the parents takes place
- Examination of inner experiences, which may include writing a diary

# Characteristics of High Schoolers

- Intellectual interests gain importance
- Some sexual and aggressive energies directed into creative and career interests
- Concerns about sexual attractiveness
- Frequently changing relationships
- Movement towards heterosexuality with fears of homosexuality
- Tenderness and fears shown towards opposite sex
- Feelings of love and passion
- Development of ideals and selection of role models
- More consistent evidence of conscience
- Greater capacity for setting goals
- Interest in moral reasoning



# Developmental Changes

- Physical
  - *Rapid growth in height, weight and strength which leads to need for more sleep\**
  - *Hormone changes = moodiness and physical changes*
- Cognitive
  - *Abstract thought; begin to question rules, values and behaviors*
  - *Risk taking, rebellion and exploring new interests to develop autonomy*
  - *Develop belief systems*

# Developmental Changes

- Emotional
  - *Roller coaster of emotions ~ rational to irrational*
  - *Constant worry about self-image*
  - *Turn to peers for comfort and support*
- Academic
  - *Decline in grades is possible due to rigor, increased expectations, participation in other activities*



# What is my role during this transition?

- Provide strong role models
- Continue to encourage, support and give affection ~ empathy, empathy, empathy!
- Be firm, kind and consistent with boundaries and discipline
- Allow freedom to separate
- Permit teens to have a voice in the decisions that affect them and help them learn from their mistakes
- Remind them that they are a valuable member of the family and are needed
- Help foster healthy self-image

# Effective Communication with Your Child

- Determine the *need* behind the behavior
- Remain calm even in frustrating situations
- Ask questions
- Listen
- Don't fight, argue or give in



# Big changes are coming....(what students fear most)

- What if I can't find my classes?
- What if I can't remember my schedule?
- What if I don't have classes with my friends?
- What if I forget my locker combination?
- What if other kids are mean to me?
- What if I get a detention?
- What if I don't know/forget the rules and get sent to the principal's office?





## Big changes are coming....(what students look forward to)

- Choosing classes
- Making new friends
- Participating in sports and extra-curricular activities
- Lockers
- Eating and sitting wherever they want in the cafeteria
- *Not* walking in lines
- Increased freedom

# Get organized!

- Assignment book/calendar
- School calendar – report card dates
- Homework
- Crate for college planning



# Time Management

- Make sure there is a consistent time each day for homework or study
- Check teacher websites with your student for homework assignments, project due dates, test dates, announcements, etc.
- Divide large projects into smaller ones
- Plan ahead! Merge school calendars with outside activities calendars
- Prepare the night before~ lunch, backpack, clothes, projects, etc.



# Parent Involvement

- Attend programs and events at the school
- Attend meetings of parent organizations
- Volunteer
- Read the newsletter, district/campus/teacher websites
- Check assignment book & homework regularly
- Communicate with teachers
- Sign up for on-line grade access if possible
- Get to know the specific roles of school staff



# Working Together

## **Problem:**

**“My child seems depressed.”**

**“My child is failing/not doing well in a class.”**

**“My child’s schedule is wrong.”**

**“My child is having a problem with a teacher.”**

## **Typical Chain Contact:**

**Counselor**

**Teacher-first line of contact, his/her counselor if needed.**

**Counselor- through use of the counselor request form**

**Counselor-for adjustment problems or ideas on how to better communicate.**

**Assistant Principal- for personnel issues once parent has spoken to the teacher.**



# It takes a village.....

- As a team we will celebrate each achievement, empathize with all the defeats while still holding them accountable for their actions.
- Middle school and high school are the time to equip our students with the tools they need to be successful young adults in an ever-changing world.
- Remember that your enthusiasm and support can help make this BIG change in your child's school life a positive one.

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# Children As Pets- The Cat Years



*Do Not  
Disturb*







# References

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The Voice of the School Counselor

The Parenting Center

[www.TheParentingCenter.org](http://www.TheParentingCenter.org)

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