

Back to School Night

The Adolescent Child

At age 11 or 12, the age of most sixth graders, the cycle from middle childhood which is a relatively stable period to adolescence begins. Adolescence is a period of major change, and the following changes can be expected:

1. The casting off of dependence of childhood in order to assume the independence and responsibility of adulthood.
2. Less dependence on the family and more dependence on an adolescence's peers as his/her social world expands.
3. Puberty usually begins around 12 – 13 for boys and 10 - 11 for girls.
4. The formation of adult identity begins. In order to do this the adolescent will often try out many different adult personalities and roles.
5. This can be a period of storm and stress where one minute the adolescent will be laughing and the next minute crying. Grant the right for the adolescent to have problems.
6. Overemphasis on the negative aspects of adolescent behavior may create a set of expectations which the adolescent strives to achieve.

Some of the negative aspects of adolescence begin as early as sixth grade. These behaviors are listed below with the percentage of sixth graders nation wide who engage in these risky behaviors.

Alcohol Use – 6 or more drinks in last 30 days	2% of sixth graders
Binge Drinking – 5+ drinks in a row	9% of sixth graders
Daily Cigarette Use	4% of sixth graders
Sexually Active – Has had sexual intercourse two or more times	7% of sixth graders
Sexually Active – without contraceptives	29% of the 7% of sexually active sixth graders
Illegal Drug Use – 6 or more times in the last year	1% of sixth graders
Attempted Suicide	8% of sixth graders
Police Trouble – 2+ in the last year	3% of sixth graders
Shoplifting – stole something from a store two or more times in the last month	3% of sixth graders
School Absenteeism – skipped school two or more days in the last month	7% of sixth graders

Supervision of your child is one of the most important things you can do for him/her. In fact, a USC study funded by the National Institute for Drug Abuse found that children who spend five to 10 hours a week after school in a home in which an adult is

not present, regardless of race or income level, are nearly twice as likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use marijuana. The probability goes up with each additional hour a child spends unsupervised. The study also found that children left alone are most likely to be white and live in middle to upper middle income areas.

My sixth grade program is designed with the developmental stages of the adolescent person in mind. Transition from elementary school to the middle school setting is also a large part of the program. Therefore, some of the procedures and expectations of this program may be different from what your child has been used to in the past.

The Keys to Success In Sixth Grade



Homework:

Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday nights. My emphasis is placed on “study” and reading homework rather than on worksheets. Homework is your child’s responsibility and it is listed on the board each day. Most days I check to see that students have made a “Xerox copy” of what I listed on the board in their planners.



Study:

Sixth graders often have difficulty knowing when they have studied something enough to learn it. To help them learn this essential skill, students in this class are learning to develop and select study methods that best suit their individual learning styles. Examples include the following:

- Previewing text chapters
- Outlining chapters
- Taking notes
- Making study cards
- Repetition writing
- Identification of key ideas
- Essential questions to check text reading comprehension

An average student only remembers 20% to 25% of what he/she learns in school each day. Once the student goes to sleep, information is processed from short term to

long term memory during the dreaming process. During sleep unimportant as well as important details are forgotten. It's most important that students study several days in advance of tests in order that as much information as possible is processed in long term memory.

Study, reading, and written homework is to be done in an environment free of interruptions – no telephone calls, no television, and no music.



Organization:

Students will develop the habit of filing papers behind the subject tab of their three-ring binders. Papers must be filed in the binder and should not be stored in books, desks, or backpacks. The front pocket of the binder is for graded papers, notices and the paper work that travels between the classroom and home. Students have a sticker marking this pocket.

Planners and calendars are tools students will use in order to remember important dates so they develop a time frame for studying for tests as well as pacing long-term projects.

At the conclusion of homework, a student should file all papers in the correct section of his/her binder and then pack school supplies, books, and the binder in his/her backpack. This should be done as part of homework as students who attempt to do this in the morning or later in the evening tend to lose things.



Balanced Behavior For Parents

By Kristina Sauerwien

Don't know if you're too friendly or unfriendly with your child? Parenting experts offer some guidelines.

TOO STRICT:

A mother who yells at her 8 year-old daughter for putting on lipstick and blush.

A father who swears and then severely punishes his 12 year-old son for swearing.

Parents who prohibit their 17 year-old daughter from dating.

TOO FRIENDLY:

A mother who routinely permits her 8 year-old daughter to wear makeup figuring she's going through a harmless phase.

A father who swears and allows – even encourages – his 12 year-old son to swear too.

Parents who set no dating rules – not even a curfew.

JUST RIGHT:

A mother who gently explains to her 8 year-old daughter that she's not allowed to wear lipstick and blush because she is too young. If parents act like a friend to their children, their children will push and push and push for whatever is they want and they will never be satisfied.

A father who refrains from uttering bad words and holds his son to a no swearing rule. The first time he hears an obscenity from the child, he explains why it's not allowed, and firmly tells him not to do it again explaining that there will be a consequence if he does. Discipline earns a child's respect.

Parents who allow their teen-aged daughter to date provided she obeys all household rules. Rules would pertain to curfew, completion of homework, and chores. The daughter should introduce her date to her parents.

“This type of discipline teaches children structure,” said Richard M. Eyre, author of several parenting books. “Children are grateful for it even if they don't know it. It's the classic case of the conscious versus the subconscious. For example, teen-agers may brag about having no curfew, but inside they're crying out. It gives them an unstable feeling. They feel like their parents don't care about them enough to protect them and teach them right from wrong.”

