



TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Middle School vs. Grade School

- Many classes: go from one main teacher who watches over the students and teaches most if not all subjects to having six teachers, one for each subject
- Many teachers means many different ways of doing things: expectations, organization, homework
- More freedom and options for participation (band, choir, drama, clubs, sports, etc.)
- Responsibilities that go along with that freedom: getting to class on time, completing assignments managing your schedule without a teacher overseeing your day



Identity Development

- Many students worry about fitting in
- Girls may go “underground” in 8th or 9th grade so that they won’t stand out for being different because they are “smart”—risk of underachievement
- Boys may pretend they are less intelligent beginning in 7th grade so that they won’t appear to be uncool (they may want to be recognized as being good at sports, etc. rather than “smart”)—risk of underachievement
- Students may try on “different hats”
- Students may try different groups of friends



Learning to Learn: The importance of proper sleep and nutrition

- Adequate rest: 9-9 1/2 hours per night
- Bedtime routine, limit evening electronics use, no electronics with in an hour of bed
- Breakfast
- Adequate nutrition: limit fast food, junk food, energy drinks, soda, and other empty calories like Dutch bros/Starbucks
- Fruits, vegetables, dairy, lean meats
- Obesity and binge eating disorder are becoming as prevalent as anorexia and bulimia
- Physical activity every day



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Learning to Learn

- Staying focused in class
- Taking notes: Cornell Notes, AVID
- Encourage student to ask questions in class
- Encourage student to talk to the teacher if questions arise
- Encourage student to email teacher if need be

What do Cornell Notes look like?

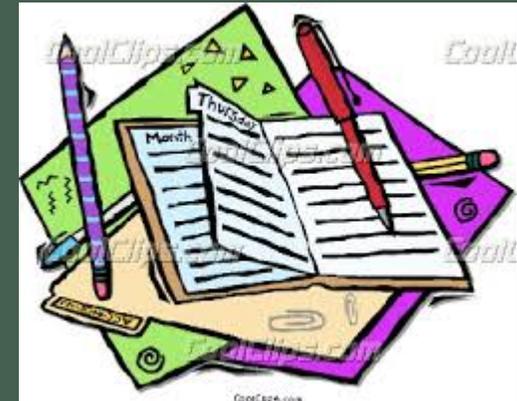
John Q. Student
Biology 101
April 1, 2000

Phylum	Arthropods
subphylum	Chelicerata
Chelicerata	2 parts: $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{prosona (first pair of} \\ \text{opisthona (are for feeding)} \end{array} \right\}$
examples	scorpions, spiders, mites, ticks
Prosona	sensory, feeding, and locomotor
Opisthona	leg
Chelicerae	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pincerlike or chelate• used for feeding• first pair of appendages
Pedipalps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• second pair of appendages• used for sensory purposes
	feeding locomotion reproduction

Phylum arthropods is made up of subphylum chelicerata. Subphylum chelicerata is characterized by two parts called prosona and opisthona. The prosona and cephalothorax are sensory, feeding, and locomotor. The chelicerae is the first appendage and refers to the pincerlike. The pedipalps are the 2nd pair of appendages, and they are used for sensory purposes: feeding, locomotion, and reproduction.

Learning to Learn

- Talk about class expectations: syllabus at beginning of year, phones put away in class
- Organization: Use the planners
- Planners can serve as a check in between parents and kids
- Time management skills—schedules



Meaningful Friendships

- Friends can develop out of mutual interests, activities, clubs (sports, dance, art, drama, band, choir, chess, leadership, etc.)
- Talk with your child about what qualities they may desire in a friend
- Work on appreciating and accepting differences
- Teach your student to choose their friends wisely and to look for friends with similar values and goals



Friendships: Compassion and Empathy

- Foster good communication skills with your child and that will translate into friendships
- Teach your child to be a good listener and to ask good questions
- Teach them gratitude and appreciation
- Teach social skills
- Teach the five "A's" of compassion: Attention, acceptance, appreciation, affection, allowance (excusing other's shortcomings)



Friendships: Managing Relationships

Teach your child what makes healthy relationships vs toxic relationships.

Toxic people:

- Become threatened if you challenge their way of thinking
- Pressure you into doing things they want
- Threaten to withhold acceptance unless you do things and think things in their way
- Feel a need to compete with you, trying to appear superior
- Demands you prove yourself over and over again
- Constantly volleys to be the center of attention



Friendships: Managing Relationships

Teach your child what makes healthy relationships vs toxic relationships.

Toxic people:

- Bullies: may belittle you in an attempt to make themselves tougher. May be masking feelings of insecurity
- Queen bees: like bullies, they seek out admiration and support in order to feel powerful. May also be masking feeling of insecurity



Social Media

- Monitor and limit all electronics, internet, and social media use
- Have student keep personal information private, so no one can impersonate them or hack into their accounts
- Talk about what is appropriate for your family
- Come up with strategies to avoid cyberbullying



Healthy Relationships

- Teach respect for authority figures including teachers, administrators, coaches, and other adults
- Decide with your student what your family expectations are. Is it a family value to not smoke or to not lie or to not steal...and then encourage your student to seek friends who fit that criteria vs. having friends who pressure them to do things they know are not right...
- Teach your child what is appropriate information to share and what should be kept private.

The Teenage Brain

- The brain does not stop growing at a certain age. Dendrites can continue to branch throughout life.
- Capacity for learning is not fixed. Stimulating the brain by exposure to new material and activities can lead to the formation of more connections between neurons
- Drug and alcohol use is not good for the brain
- Teenagers are going through another round of myelination and pruning of synapses

Develop a Success Mindset

- Optimistic attitude
- Envision success, perseverance
- Minimize perfectionism: it's Ok to make mistakes!
- Model resilience



What the Experts Say: Principal Rian Petrick at Evergreen Middle School

- Middle School is the widest developmental range: physically, emotionally, socially, academically
- Parents need to stay involved and stay connected
- Read the weekly email that goes home
- Check Parentvue and class websites
- Volunteer opportunities: Evergreen Parent Club
- Work on skills: does your student know how to organize a binder, Follow a schedule, etc.?



What the Experts Say: Principal Rian Petrick at Evergreen Middle School

- Get involved!
- Evergreen has many after school clubs to choose from: chess, drama, RC club, cooking, geography, homework club, sports through the Zone
- More electives next year including exploring foreign languages, Spanish, creative writing, drama



What the Experts Say: Principal Rian Petrick at Evergreen Middle School

- Work with your student on good nutrition and exercise habits: Dutch bros has a certain status, but is empty calories and sugar
- Set limits and expectations on how your child uses technology and monitor how your student uses social media
- Limit electronics use at night
- Too much electronics use does not help already volatile social emotional states of teenagers
- Keep lines of communication open and realize that student perceptions of events are not always what adult perceptions are

What the Experts Say: Principal John Pede, Poynter Middle School

- Involvement: all parents need to stay connected in the middle school level
- Kids need you more than ever at the middle school level
- Stay connected: Parent club, newsletter, volunteering
- Check in daily with your child: social issues can blow up really fast, executive function—boys are more day to day, girls are more global



What the Experts Say: Principal John Pede, Poynter Middle School

- TAG—parents, be aware of what is being offered in your school (accelerated options, electives)
- Know the school counselor
- Check Parentvue
- TAG activities—what is TAG enrichment?
- What does classroom differentiation look like at the middle school level vs. elementary?
- Make an appointment with the TAG coordinator for your school to learn more

What the Experts Say: Principal John Pede, Poynter Middle School

- Get kids involved, but not overloaded with activities
- Check planners, Cornell notes, regularly
- Know how students are doing on Aspire and other tests that can indicate college readiness and work on college readiness
- Know what is offered in 7th grade (probably the most important grade, foundationally)
- Ask your principal if he/she knows who your child is

References

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- Icard, M. (2014). *Middle School Makeover: Improving the Way You and Your Child Experience the Middle School Years*.
- Pede, J. Personal interview, April 2016.
- Petrick, R. Personal interview, April 2016.