

Welcome to ASA Middle School
4th Grade Transition to 5th Grade
May 11, 2010



Developmental Characteristics of Young Adolescents

*Goals of Middle School Years:

1. Strong identity,
2. Empathy for others
3. Delay gratification
4. Clearly communicate their ideas,
5. Self-reliance and interdependence
6. Emotional stability
7. Compromise
8. Sense of pride

*Adolescent brains are *developing brains*; suspended between dependence and independence

*Students struggle with independence, identity and acceptance

*Can function on a higher academic level but are full of emotion

*Pruning unnecessary neural pathways in the brain (must stimulate a complex network of synapses) by offering diverse experiences that activate all (multiple areas) intelligences

*Physical development--Muscular and bone development is asymmetric which often leads to episodes of awkwardness or clumsiness (effects self-esteem and confidence)

*Puberty—Endocrine glands are releasing hormones—affects moods and emotional development

*Social Development—students experiment with different roles, are forming their own opinions, and often criticize adults.

*Tension between asserting independence and wanting to belong

*Increased attention span, curiosity and planning skills however long-term benefit vs. short term gratification is often difficult. They speculate and consider possibilities that may not be likely...

*Need safe environment to reduce anxiety. A place where they can make a mistake and learn from it.

*Like to see the results of their efforts. Set short term goals and achieve results.

*Need to discover some information on their own....you can't tell them

*May confide in peers rather than adults; relationships with peers are very important and can be an effective learning tool

Characteristics of Successful Schools for Young Adolescents:

***Developmentally Responsive** ---keep in mind the distinctive nature of young adolescents when making decisions about organization, instruction and assessment

***Challenging**—every student learns everyday and that we have high expectations for everyone

***Empowering**—develop skills and knowledge so that young adolescents take responsibility for their lives, and make a contribution to society.

***Equitable**—advocating for each student’s right to learn by providing appropriately challenging lessons for every student

Teaching and Learning

*Teachers have made a conscious effort to work with students in this age group

*Student at the center of the learning process

*Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative and relevant

*Multiple learning and teaching approaches

*Varied and on-going assessment for and of learning

Leadership and Organization

*Shared vision by all stakeholders

*Leaders knowledgeable about research and programming this age group and committed to providing it

*Leaders model courage and collaboration

*On going professional development

*School organized for purposeful learning and meaningful relationships

Environment

*Environment is inviting, safe, inclusive and supportive of all

*All students have at least one adult advocate

*Comprehensive guidance and support services to meet the needs of students

*Health and wellness is supported in curriculum, programming, and policies

*School involves families

*School includes community and business partners