

# • TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL •

The transition to Middle School can come with mixed emotions ranging from excited to scared. Being somewhere on that scale and having emotions change daily or hourly is a normal part of growing up. Moving from 5th grade to 6th grade invites many new opportunities and experiences into the school day, of which, some are enjoyed and others... not so much. Below are some things to keep in mind during the transition to middle school. This information may help make the process smoother and help make the middle school years, in general, more enjoyable.



## FEELINGS

Feelings are a big part of growing up and all feelings are okay. What's important is how you handle them. Feelings are often at maximum strength during the middle school years. So many changes are experienced during this time academically, socially, emotionally and physically. It is important to be mindful of your own feelings and those of others. Be able to recognize and name what you are feeling and the emotions expressed verbally and non-verbally around you. Words, facial expressions and body language are a great way to get a read on feelings. Check out this link for information on feelings.

<https://youtu.be/xNY0AAUtH3g>



## BRAIN

Towards the middle-end of 5th grade and into the middle school years, some students begin to take notice of the social drama being played out around them. Some may participate. Others may sit back and watch. Understanding how the brain responds to emotions and why something, seemingly benign, can turn into a major storm can be very important in helping you get through the rough weather. Due to brain re-construction and developmental changes it is very easy for the Amygdala, in the brain, to have false alarms and assume there is danger about, when there isn't. Check out this link for more information on the brain and feelings.

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2F3bKuoH8CkFc&sa=D>



## BODY

Paying attention to one's body can be a great way to manage emotions before they get too big. Just like our body warns us to take care of ourselves by eating when our stomach growls or sleeping when we yawn, it warns us of our emotions. Stomach aches, headaches, clenched fist, butterflies or tingling in our hands and feet can be good barometers to letting us know we having feelings to care for. During the middle school years a person's body goes through many developmental changes. Those changes are a normal part of growing up and every individual has their own timeline of when they begin. It's important not to compare your timeline with the timeline of others.



## CONFLICTS

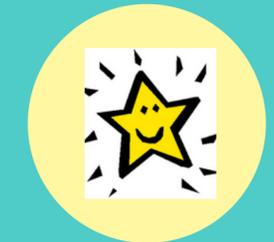
Conflicts are a part of life. Two or more people are bound to have different opinions and interest and that's okay. Having differences is what makes the world interesting and friendships entertaining. However, sometimes those opinions and differences can cause quite the uproar. In middle school, it is important to know how to "agree to disagree". Arguing with someone so they accept your point of view isn't helpful because they are allowed to be their own person, with their own life experiences, that gives them a different perspective. Often two or more people in a conflict are just looking at the problem from different points of views. Where one sees a duck. The other sees a rabbit. Even in your own family you don't always see things the same way. Try to stop and take a breath before arguing your point. Share your point of view and honor theirs, if they see things a different way. Sometimes you just have to "agree to disagree". Remember, if you disagree, that doesn't mean you still can't be friends. However, if the issue feels too big or hurtful it is okay to take a break or walk away from the friendship. Talk with a trusted adult as you decide if you should stay in the friendship, because sometimes forgiveness does not equal reunion. Check out link for information on different perceptions. (Duck/Rabbit)

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2F3bKuoH8CkFc&sa=D>



## SHAKEN UP

Middle school is a great opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. However, relationships can be complicated. It's important to be kind because everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know little to nothing about. When you speak to others or interact, remember you don't know what happened to them right before your encounter. What may look snotty, rude or mean may be their reaction to a completely separate event or situation. Don't assume that someone's words or looks are a direct reflection of their feelings about you. Please don't ever assume that information shared with you by others, about others, is accurate. Again, we all have our own perceptions and sadly, some peers just like starting a fuss. Gossip and rumors never help a situation and passing on unkind messages only makes people feel awful. For all you know their words were misinterpreted, someone in their family could have just died, their family may be struggling in some way, they may be hungry or they could have just gotten a bad grade and are worried about consequences. It's not okay for others to be rude to you but start by giving them the benefit of the doubt. There may be more going on than you know. It's not always about you. A good rule to follow with any relationship is if you aren't willing to say it to someone's face, you probably shouldn't say it all. Again, people are a lot like soda bottles. We don't know who shook them up before we got to them, so make sure you're thoughtful and open them up with kindness.



## SELF WORTH

As friendships and relationships grow and change in middle school some will strengthen and some will fade away. This is a normal part of growing up. If someone is not invited to a celebration or others talk negative about them that does not determine their worth. Each human being is inherently worthy. If a hundred dollar bill gets ripped or torn it's value does not decrease. The same goes for people. Just because others are unkind, you feel disappointed or things don't go as one had hoped, their value and your value/worth does not go down. Every human being has worth and value. Check out this book on self-esteem.

<https://youtu.be/kTLxkMa0XDk>



## ROAD BLOCKS

In a conflict there are a few key things that can escalate situations. Threatening others, "Wait till I get you later.," Blaming others, "It's all your fault." "You always do that.," Exaggerating the situation, "You ripped my shirt." "This shirt cost \$200 dollars.," and Name Calling, "Loser", "Creep" are all great ways to make a conflict/argument bigger. These actions mentioned are roadblocks to solving the problem and deescalating the conflict. Trying to avoid these road blocks can really help keep you out of the drama, arguments and overwhelming uncomfortable feelings that can occur in middle school friendships. Help yourself and avoid these traps.