

What's Going on With My 6th Grader?

The 6th Grade Year is an exciting year filled with the transition from childhood to adolescence. Here is a guide to help give you a glimpse of what might be going on inside of your brand new 6th grader.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ A "Hormone Cocktail" kick starts puberty and prepares the body to begin the process of growing into adulthood.
- ◆ These hormones are not released consistently and may cause "wild mood swings," brought on by this hormonal imbalance.
- ◆ Boys may begin to grow facial and pubic hair.
- ◆ Boys may notice their voice "cracking" and sounding deeper.
- ◆ Girls may grow pubic hair and develop breasts.
- ◆ Girls may get their period.
- ◆ There may be a high energy level, but it is balanced by a high need for rest.
- ◆ Girls typically experience growth spurts before boys do.
- ◆ Bones and muscles are not growing at the same rate, which may lead to feelings of awkwardness and clumsiness.
- ◆ There is an increased need to pay attention to personal hygiene.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The 6th grader may:

- ◆ Become moody and easily frustrated
- ◆ Experiment with "off-color" humor and silliness
- ◆ Show more concern for body image
- ◆ Begin to express feelings more frequently

- ◆ Experiences emotions in extremes
- ◆ Be characterized by curiosity
- ◆ Become more socially expansive and aware
- ◆ Express less affection for parent
- ◆ Encounter periods of sadness, depression, and desperation, which can lead to poor coping habits.

RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Friendships change due to new schools, boyfriends/girlfriends, and change of affinity groups.
- ◆ Girls tend to build friendships in groups of 2-3.
- ◆ Boys tend to build friendships in "packs" of 8-10, based on affinity.
- ◆ Boys struggle with being "loners" if they do not find a pack of friends.
- ◆ Wild mood swings cause relational turmoil in friendships.
- ◆ Struggles occur with being rejected by a friend or left out of a group of friends.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Concrete thinking begins to give way to abstract thinking, which creates a new world of questions about faith and spiritual things.
- ◆ The desire to question and disagree with their parents' beliefs arises, but it is tamed by fear to express those doubts.
- ◆ Their major concern for God is how He can help them in their daily lives.
- ◆ There is a struggle to see the relevance of the Bible in their daily lives.
- ◆ Through relationships with significant adults, spiritual lessons are more "caught" than taught.