

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.