

Fourth and Fifth Grade Parent Meeting  
October 19, 2009

Dr. Allan Gold, District Psychologist

Some helpful resources: Dr. Gold's Website: Go to Bel Aire, then –  
Parents link, then Psychological Services, then

Parent Resources

What's New

Parent Meetings

Changes in our 4th/5th Graders Since Last Year

4th

more independent  
more aware of what others think  
learning swear words  
more negotiating  
more interest in sex  
more responsible at home  
understand rewards/consequences  
they know everything

5th

less parent involvement in homework  
more aware of what other think  
comparisons calming down  
more negative attitude  
trying to act older  
more responsible at home  
understands rewards/consequences  
more desire for public independence

Some Observations about the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes:

Physical:

-Early developing boys have more status, whereas early developing girls have a more difficult time and may hide their developing bodies.

-Girls start realizing that boys are not so "icky" and begin to pursue them in a very immature way, e.g. girls chasing boys around the yard.

-As parents, we need to set the tone in terms of "dating" and "couples" – yes, this sometimes happens in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, though it doesn't have the meaning that we ascribe to it. Nevertheless, we need to be careful and not "cutify" their opposite sex interest. There is not a lot of time between 5<sup>th</sup> grade innocence and 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade early sexual experimentation.

-We have to teach kids resilience so that they are equipped to deal with their physical differences.

### Cognitive:

-4th and 5th graders are in the concrete operational stage. They are better able to reason logically than before. You can begin to have more mature conversations with them and enjoy their increased interest in the world.

### Social:

-Girls start figuring out their friendships and the dynamics. There is less "catastrophizing".

-We need to encourage kids to have a lot of different friends, in case one friendship ends.

-Kids will begin to get reputations and may be rejected or ignored.

-We have to give kids the message about being empathic. We need to teach them how and why it is important, and get that message from both parents. There needs to be communication and coordination between parents about how kids need to treat each other.

### Emotional:

--By the time kids reach the age of 9 or 10, they are much better able to manage their emotions. There are fewer tantrums and meltdowns.

-Often kids manage their emotions very well at school. They can hold it together but when they get home, it all comes out. Kids need to be taught "I-messages" and that it is not acceptable to take all of their frustrations out on you.

-Let your kids vent, be a good listener, let them listen to music and play on the computer to calm themselves down. Bike riding, hiking, screaming into a pillow, or even getting a punching bag can be good outlets.

### Some Other Issues:

#### Promoting Responsibility at Home:

-Help your child create a "To Do List". A creative way is to put each item on a post-it and have the child remove the post-it from the wall when he/she has completed the item.

## Parent Involvement in Homework:

-Data Director is a resource where teachers post homework on a daily basis. As a result, parents are getting a lot of information and may be tempted to micromanage their children's homework. This is the time to shift responsibility for homework and communication with teachers to the child. You can still keep track of what they're doing, however. If they are having some difficulty with an assignment or need to work something out with their teacher, you can role play what to say, when and how to say it – but encourage them to do it themselves. You can let the teacher know that your child needs to talk to him/her, but the child should be given the opportunity to communicate.

-Good resource (book)- Nurture Shock