

Fall Seventh Grade Parent Meeting  
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**Changes in our 7<sup>th</sup> graders since last year (observations by parents):**

they have grown ... they are bigger  
they are sleeping much more  
they are more confident about school  
there is more girl drama  
they are more on top of homework  
they have a greater understanding of responsibility & consequences  
they have more understanding of social dynamics –more selective about friendships  
they pay more attention to their appearance  
kids are at many different levels in maturity  
they have emotional storms & then they are quickly over  
the girls are not having as many friendship problems this year

There are four categories by which to view child development: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional.

**Physical Changes:** You will see a lot of dramatic changes now ... Welcome to puberty!! Physical development has a major impact on rest of life ... friendships change, interests change, emotional control, all based on what's going on physically.

**Cognitive changes:** This is the beginning of a period of time of great cognitive change... they go from dealing from concrete to abstract (starting to understand the rest of the world, envision not just what is, but what can be, understanding abstract concepts in science and history). Parents are increasingly able to have interesting conversations at home and they now seem to have an interest in what is going on in the outside world. This greater awareness this may also cause anxiety.

**Social development:** this is a period of great introspection. They are looking at what goes on socially and they are asking themselves where they fit in and whether they want to be a part of specific groups or activities? They begin to consider their reputations. They are starting to evaluate themselves as individuals. In addition once all the hormones start to kick in the differences change. Friends in one grade might not be friends in other grades.

Parents need listen... the more you, as parents, listen, the better.

Your job as a parent is now more leaning towards being a consultant ... which consists of listening, asking good questions, brainstorming solutions etc. When your children were younger your job as a parent was more of a manager.

The more you can be the consultant and let them know you are not judging them the better! Give them examples of how you handled a similar situation when you were in middle school.

As they tend to be more private and less communicative, don't be afraid to contact other parents to find out information about them. Conversely, if you know something about another child, call the other parent; there is no parent who doesn't want to know if their child is doing something unsafe or hurtful, even if it's not the kind of information they relish receiving.

**Emotional:** because of hormonal changes, kids this age often have less control over their moods and their reactions to events. It may seem like they are regressing emotionally to earlier stages, but they can recover quickly. Again, it is important to listen, though it is perfectly ok to set limits on disrespectful or hurtful behavior. They can control themselves at school, so they can control themselves at home.

### **Questions, Issues, and Concerns in Parenting 7<sup>th</sup> Graders:**

#### Boy /girl parties: Ok or not?

There is nothing wrong with boy girl parties at 12, BUT the parties should be structured and time limited. Supervision is critical, perhaps, 6 kids to 1 adult. Adults should not be invisible. Kids can do things in one part of a big house while the adults are in another part. Don't be afraid to show up to a party and don't be afraid to call the parents of a child who is having the party. Find out about the party from the parent! As a responsible parent, if you know about a party or are hosting the party, ask the other parents to help supervise.

Laptop boundaries: Laptops should be in public place (in family room, kitchen, dining room table, etc) Set blocks at home to avoid kids finding websites such as pornography or hate websites . Again, talk to your kids about how they are using the laptops; have open communication. Parents need to talk with kids about the latest websites, such as Talk Box, as well as establish rules about IMing and texting .

#### Facebook & other social networking accounts

Talk to your kids and ask questions. They should know parents can check those accounts. Think about these situations before you have to deal with them, so then you as the parent are prepared. Think of these situations as an opportunity to have a discussion about values with your children and how you feel about internet communication. Kids think they can write anything and don't see the impact of what they write. Cyberbullying has reached levels where students are being hurt, even at Del Mar.

Is 7<sup>th</sup> grade too early to discuss high school options?

Have your 7<sup>th</sup> grade students relax about high schools. High school information will come in the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. As parents, however, you can begin to think about the options. Read Dr. Gold's article "Private School Suggestions" in the Parent Resources 2 link from the Psychological Services link on the first page of the Del Mar website. You can begin to explore websites of private schools of interest. If you are thinking of private schools, you should have your child take the SSAT (Secondary School Admission Test) in the spring of seventh grade as a trial.