

Fall 2010 5th Grade Parent Meeting

October 18, 2010

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Purposes of Grade Level Parent Meeting:

- Parents will see BIG changes this year – paint a picture of the “average” fifth grader
- Communicating with other parents is even more important than in the past - get comfortable with your children’s friends parents and with communicating with them
- Create a partnership between school: teachers, staff and home
- Discuss and determine the (sometimes conflicting) values you have when parenting and try to follow them consistently

Changes in your child from fourth to fifth grade (observations from parents):

- More confidence
- Awareness of sex
- Swearing
- Physical growth
- Autonomy
- Awareness of the world around them / issues
- Vacillating between wanting to be a little kid vs. big kid
- Opinionated about the role that parents play in their lives

Parenting Values:

- Kids will start to challenge family values. Do not let other kids determine those values – hold firm
- Start providing your child with independence but hold firm to your value of safety
- Kids should earn their parents trust by being respectful and responsible (reporting in, chores, homework, etc.)
- Parents are moving from “Managers” to “Consultants” – guiding their children and providing advice while allowing them to manage their conflict resolution on their own

Physical Changes:

- Entering adolescence – many will begin to go through puberty by the end of fifth grade
- Early developing boys often have the advantage in sports and social environments. Smaller boys are often challenged more.
- Girls hit puberty two years earlier than boys. Early developing girls will often feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. Taller girls are often perceived as older – with that sometimes comes premature expectations and temptations.
- Physical changes/puberty affects all aspects of a child’s life, from relationship with parents to social relationships with friends, studying, interests, etc.

- Family Life / Sex Ed coming later this school year (late May, June). In preparing for this time, encourage your kids to ask questions to promote open communication at home.
- Parents' job is to reassure kids that no matter what their physical development they will grow or others will catch up and that who they are as a person is what really counts.

Cognitive Changes:

- Fifth graders solidly understand the concrete world
- They can start to think more abstractly and be more introspective
- They want to be bigger and more independent but they are not yet ready to grow up and have the responsibilities that older kids have
- They start to comprehend how scary the world can be. Fifth graders don't have a good perspective of probability and distance when it comes to subjects such as crime, war and natural disasters. It is a parent's dilemma how much to expose them to the scary part of the world. Parents become filters and processors of information
- Start to have deeper conversations with your child. Teach them to channel complaints into motivation to take action. This is a chance to teach them to be advocates for social issues
- Have conversations with them about what they're learning and their passions.
- Kids are beginning to see shades of gray regarding issues. They will increasingly be able to brainstorm solutions and ideas with you

Social Changes:

- This is the beginning of social "turmoil." They will struggle to determine where they fit in. Often, the friends kids have at Bel Aire will not be the same as the friends they have at Del Mar
- For social conflicts, kids will be working through issues on their own in many cases. Teach them to use the "I" statement in resolving conflicts to avoid confrontation and to help them communicate how things make them feel. MOSAIC training is very helpful in giving them language to use
- Kids should determine who is a consistent friend – make sure those that are friends during play dates are also friends at school
- Kids will want to use technology as part of their social relationships (email, texting, Facebook). This is the time to determine the importance of **Popularity** (belonging) vs. **Safety**. Establish and communicate what are your family values surrounding technology and stick to them. Always have the computer in an open area where you can see what they're typing. It is a good idea to get copied on all emails and to have passwords to all of your children's accounts. You will be constantly reevaluating the value of **Privacy** for your children vs. **Knowledge** that you need as a parent. Bel Aire also holds an assembly for fifth graders on being a good cyber citizen at the end of fifth grade as they move on to Del Mar with the personal laptop program.

Emotional Changes:

- Parents should be aware that changes trigger new anxieties. It is important to be there to listen at a time of day that works for the child and ask your child questions in a supportive manner. Do not be judgmental – rather act as a consultant. Make sure they know you're there to listen, not to judge
- Kids expect anger and will tune out when they're shown anger. If you show concern, worry, hurt, or disappointment, you're more likely to expose their feelings and have a chance to teach them
- Fifth graders are still open to advice from parents if it's given in a non-judgmental way. They tend to start closing off around mid sixth to seventh grade.
- Ten year olds are emotionally easier to work with than 13 year olds.
- Depression is a concern starting around age 10. Listen for statements and watch for signs including lack of eating and withdrawal from social groups
- If you hear concerning issues regarding kids and do not want to directly address the issues, work with the school and they can help
- Tell your kids that if they're worried about a friend to say something to school or parents

Questions about Drug Use:

- Typically drug use is not a concern in fifth grade but preventative factors are important
- Parents interested in issues can refer to the Being Adept website www.beingadept.org

Other Recommendations:

- Continue eating together at the dinner table as much as possible
- Ask kids daily about their "highs" and "lows"
- Also, ask kids if they made a "good" or "poor" choice when discussing an issue