

Fall 2014 Third Grade Level Parent Meeting
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Purpose of Grade Level Parent Meetings:

- Establishing the normal range of behaviors for children at each age
- Continuing the partnership between school and home
- Getting parents comfortable with discussing children's behavior with other parents and opportunities for networking with other parents; realizing that we're not alone
- Providing a forum for discussing values as they apply to raising children

How have our children changed in the last year? (observations from parents)

- More independent. Want to do things themselves...without parents
- More confident
- Less compliant. Strong opinions on what being asked to do. More argumentative
- More aware of feelings
- More defensive. Don't want to be wrong
- Expanding interests
- Don't want to call her mommy in front of her friends. Won't hold my hand on campus – more easily embarrassed
- More socially aware
- Wider sense of humor. Sarcasm. Snarky can be funny, but is that good or bad?
- More sense of self.

Five areas of Development

- Physical
 - Not rapid changes in body at this time
 - More adept, coordinated, better small motor hand skills
 - All kids should have home responsibilities; they are more physically capable. For example, they can make their bed, empty trash, feed the cat, unload the dishwasher... Institute home responsibilities before they start asking for more privileges and become more argumentative. This is a good way to assess their ability to take responsibility.
 - Chores should be separate from allowance. An allowance is good for learning about how to spend money. Rule of thumb on amount: how much you are willing to let them spend on their own X 3. 1/3 = spend, 1/3 = save, 1/3 = charity.
- Cognitive
 - Less egocentric. More aware of others, more self-conscious. Humor gets more sophisticated. You can have more abstract discussions.

- Exposed to more information, news. They hear, but may not understand.
 - Sarcasm, disrespectful. But may not understand what they are seeing and what it means. For example, eye rolling. Parents will need to teach what tone of voice and body movements mean.
 - Parents need to filter and interpret what they are exposed to. Be good listeners and answer their questions simply; if they are still curious, they'll ask for more information.
 - Children this age do not have a sense of probability or perspective. If they hear information that is scary, they will overgeneralize. Parents need to explain that some events (even including weather disasters) are rare and most won't even happen here.
- Social
 - This is a very complex time especially for girls. They are learning how to work out friendships. Triangles: 2 best friends, then 1 more wants to join. There is jealousy and they may not know how to have more than one friend. They'll figure it out eventually, but painful social interactions are not unusual.
 - As a parent, become a good listener. Parents gradually need to change from being a manager (you do this...) to a consultant. A good consultant listens, asks questions, helps the client brainstorm and solve problems. Children's social issues are a good area for parents to learn how to be consultants, because the issues don't involve them directly: listen to their stories, ask what they want to do, help them think of alternatives and choose what they'll try to solve the problem.
- Emotional
 - They have more emotional control; fewer temper tantrums. We expect self-control.
 - They are better at expressing their feelings. They can use words to describe it instead of acting it out. You can reflect their feelings and help them build a more accurate and broad feeling vocabulary.
 - They are holding it together at school, so may still lose it occasionally at home.
 - You can just let some situations or emotional reactions go, if they want to figure it out on their own. Check in to see if they are feeling OK. If so, you don't need to make a big deal about it. Just let them know that you're there to listen.
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- Moral
 - This area takes much longer to develop. They don't want to be bad because they don't want to get in trouble. So talk about consequences.
 - They are still able to learn about empathy, so take opportunities to teach or remind them of how their behavior affects others (including you) in both positive and negative ways. Point out how acts of

kindness really make others feel good when they are kind. Ask them about how they would feel if someone just did to them what they did to someone else?

Group Task: Consider the **Vision of the Reed Union School Graduate**.

Brainstorm what are realistic expectations for a 3rd grader in two of the main areas? Provide examples of observable behaviors (as if they were being graded on a report card, what we would look for).

- Motivated Learner
 - Responsibility & independence
 - Participate in the “Maker Fair”
 - Take on optional homework.
 - Own up to mistakes. (this needs to develop before they are 10).
 - When by themselves, independently chose to do homework.
 - Risks, not afraid to make mistakes
 - Take more risks in sports
 - Socially explore new friendships in new class
 - Make a speech for student council
 - Tell parents ahead of time when have gotten a bad grade
 - Note: Perfectionism is a damaging internal voice. Parents should not set that expectation. Children this age are more aware of which kids are good at what. Tiburon is a competitive community. Parents make mistakes – tell and show your children how you handle your own mistakes
 - Pride in accomplishments
 - Whole class won Sum Dog. Express pride in their group
 - Express pride in their sports accomplishments
 - Note: Pride vs. bragging? Talk about tone of voice. Expressing excitement is ok, but not saying things that make others feel discouraged or “less than.”. Teach them how to react to other kids’ bragging – let the other kids know that that doesn’t feel good and that bragging isn’t nice.
 - Are able to state 3 things they like about themselves. Younger kids say what they are good at, rather than their positive personality characteristics. Start to talk about social or emotional traits: kind, good humor
 - Lifelong learning
 - Too abstract. They don’t have much perspective on time. More likely to compare to others than past self
 - Point out what they have learned since last year, beginning of the year. Model what you are learning (technology)
 - When they show interest in something new, jump on it
- Balanced individual/Best Self
 - Good judgment, honor

- Observations/awareness of bullying. They stick up for others. (Work on this now, before they become more self conscious of what others think of them)
 - They have a sense of what is “appropriate” for kids their age as opposed to younger children and stop inappropriate talk
- Confidence, social acceptance
 - They stand up for themselves
 - They are aware that when others mistreat, maybe they have a bad day, and they don’t reject them
- Resilience
 - They show flexibility.
 - They don’t give up when something is difficult; they keep trying
 - They show some coping skills to deal with disappointment. They associate effort with performance.
 - They can be disappointed in sports, but look towards the next game and don’t focus on the past
 - Note: Model it as a parent. Admit when you make mistake or are disappointed
- Making positive choices
 - They choose to eat healthy food (eating disorders are not yet an issue).
 - They go to bed when they’re tired.
 - They brush their teeth
- Individual can make a difference
 - Student counsel speech. They talk about wanting to make school, their town, their home better.
 - They ask how they can contribute to the school, the family, religious institution
 - They are conscious of recycling and do so.

Parent concerns and questions:

- What do we do about our children’s Intense emotions, particularly about not feeling understood or unfairness
 - Listen. You can agree that things don’t always seem fair. Assure them that you love them as much as you do their siblings. Ask them what would feel fairer to them.
- How do we deal with our children’s perfectionistic tendencies?
 - Internal good voices: keep us safe. Bad voices: put us down, make us worry. Find a substitute persona.
- What do I do w/ emailed test scores? Should I ask kids if a test score is uncharacteristically low?
 - No, don’t draw attention to it. If you are concerned or confused, ask the teacher.
- How to tailor discussions across sibling age groups? Example: Redwood gun scare lockdown, natural disaster, divorce.

- With older siblings they are going to get exposed to facts, information, media, that will be beyond their years. There is little way to prevent this. It is particularly important to help younger siblings process what they hear or see. Ask them what they think about an event. Answer honestly and with accurate information, but not in too much detail. If they want more information, they'll ask. Kids are very good at figuring out when parents are not telling the truth, hiding, or whitewashing. Check back in later to see how they are feeling. Remind them that many of these events that they might hear about are very rare.

Handouts are available online on Dr. Gold's webpage