

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Parent Meeting  
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2nd grade Team Leader

Changes in our 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders Since August (observed by parents):

- Able to work out conflict independently
- Social life becoming more important
- Better able to handle disappointment
- More academic
- More aware of world around them
- Recognition of inappropriate behavior – able to apologize
- More conscious of peers' opinions
- Body awareness/shyness
- Attitude starting
- Playing/testing bad language
- Learning that they can choose their friends

Making Sense of These Observations: Four areas of development

**Cognitive Development:** This is the culmination of a period of about three years in children's cognitive development when they become able to understand their concrete world. This growth has some very important effects:

- They can manage academics
- They can begin to understand cause & effect (rules in games, calculations, reading)
- They begin to understand the wider world around them
- They begin having their own opinions
- They more actively choose their friends
- Recognizing their bodies/modesty

**Physical Development:** This is a relatively calm time of gradual growth, but of greater mastery of their fine and gross motor skills.

- They are more physically capable at home and school
- They want to feel they can be effective people – it's good time to make sure they have household responsibilities while they want to be helpful
- Around 8 years old is a good time to start team sports if interested, because they have the physical skills and the understanding of rules

**Emotional Development:** This is a time when children have greater control and mastery of their emotions (though not all the time)

- They are better able to handle disappointment
- They can manage conflicts and frustration better
- They can manage the demands of school
- Improved attention span

**Social Development:** This is a time of expansion of their social world, often accompanied with great drama.

- Big changes – more choosing their friends
- Vulnerable time – can be “drama”
- As parents, there is a need to determine “do I get involved?” In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, kids still need help. Relate by discussing personal experiences. Listen to the kids tell their stories. Have kids discuss issues or write them down, then give a grace period to see if the problem disappears or if it needs more attention. Encourage kids to talk about issues – even if to a stuffed animal or dog.
- Get to know as many parents as possible for communication –positive communication, finding out about other families’ values and activities, and helping to resolve conflicts if they persist and the children can’t resolve the conflicts, themselves.
- Even during conflict, encourage empathy and tolerance among the kids

**Messages from the Meeting:**

- Manage the number of activities. Kids can use time to play, rest, and think. Overscheduling is not good for kids or parents. In a “poll” of the parents, it seemed that the tide was beginning to turn, at least among this group – more parents were resisting the pressure to have their kids in many structured extracurricular activities, and to just let them have the opportunity to “be kids.”
- Make sure kids can manage computer/video game time. If they can’t pull themselves away from computer at your deadline time, disallow it. Some kids are too addicted to computer time. Kit Pappenheimer, principal of Del Mar said, “We (parents) are digital immigrants. The kids are digital natives.” We need to learn the capabilities of the computer, communication that kids engage in on the computer, the potential benefits, and risks. Using the computer comes naturally to them at younger and younger ages; we have to be prepared to continue learning and to monitor their activity. Now is the time to establish in your households that you will be involved in their computer use.
- Identify family values and stick to them: as children get older they will challenge your values. They will be exposed to values from other families that may conflict with yours. Even in your own family values often are conflictual – for example, if I want my child to be liked and popular, but also want them not to be on the computer, will I be hindering their social standing by limiting their game playing? There are no easy answers to values issues, just take the time to discuss them, figure them out as best you can, find like minded families, and stick to your values.