

**DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE, CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS
MIDDLE CHILDHOOD: 6 THROUGH 12 YEARS OLD**

**DEVELOPMENTAL
STAGE AND
CHARACTERISTICS**

- **Social Interactions Important:** interest in clubs and other social groups.
- **Emotional Swings:** fragile emotional stage for self-esteem and self-confidence.
- **Rebellious:** wants to be independent; tests limits of self and parents; "I'm not a baby anymore"
- **Gradual movement from concrete learner to abstract thinker , develops ability to reason**
- **Still heavy emphasis on experiential learning**
- **Movement toward mental independence:** gradually develops this skill by about 9 years old.
- **Shift from egocentric to altruistic:** becomes focused on others and cultures outside their own.
- **Becomes aware of social justice and injustice:** becomes engaged in moral questions of right and wrong and wants to know moral and ethical reasons for everything.

NEEDS FROM PARENTS

- Parents exercise their liberty to choose the most effective learning environment for their children.
- Parents seek the continuum of information about human development as their child grows and develops.
- Parents know where to access resources and support when their child's development takes twists and turns.
- Parents intentionally guide their children and young adults toward a life of independence and contribution.
- Parents provide opportunities to explore extracurricular interests such as sports, the arts and age-appropriate social groups.
- Opportunities and encouragement to connect with nature on a regular basis.
- Parents are role models for peaceful resolution of conflicts and guides in development of moral judgment and empathy.
- Parents provide firm, consistent and fair behavior guidelines and discipline.
- Parents provide appropriate amounts of praise for their child's efforts and abilities.
- Parents allow child to explore and learn from mistakes experienced through independent efforts and abilities.

NEEDS FROM EDUCATORS

- Educators demonstrate an understanding of human development from ages 6 through 12, and its application in learning.
- School environment is designed based on children's developmental needs and demonstrate a commitment to consider those needs when proposing any actions.
- Schools thrive on community input and view parents and students as partners.
- Provide learning environments that encourage active, hands-on, experiential learning.
- Provide learning experiences in the arts.
- Provide learning environments based on freedom of movement instead of confinement.
- Provide opportunities for peer teaching and collaborative learning.
- 9-12 year olds are developmentally ready for computer-aided research, with guidance, in critical thinking.
- Opportunities to connect with and learn in nature.
- Opportunities for in-depth, self-chosen study within their interests and timeline (6-9 year olds with guidance).
- Opportunities to build a self-image as a contributor to their school community.
- The school culture provides guidance for peaceful resolution of conflicts, development of moral judgment and empathy.
- Opportunities to help younger children and be mentored by older children.
- Children learn from mistakes experienced through their independent efforts and abilities.

NEEDS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Leaders consider their community to be a classroom where children and young people can gain real experiences and have meaningful participation.
- Communities provide opportunities for young people to participate in community events where they can use their youth as a gift.
- Communities provide opportunities for young people to build a self-image as a contributor to their community.
- Communities provide fun, educational and cultural opportunities for parents and their children.
- Organizations that interact with young children (such as Y's, youth sports, etc.) understand what children need to thrive at this age and employ adults who can be good role models for character development, self-esteem and self-confidence.