



# HELLO MIDDLE SCHOOL!

Sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride.



# AGENDA



- What's new? The Middle School Difference
- Middle Schoolers... What's going on?
- What Our Children Need from Us
- Tools & Resources
- Questions / Discussion





# WHAT'S NEW?

The Middle School  
Difference



# the MIDDLE SCHOOL DIFFERENCE

Bigger campus, new people

Multiple periods

Multiple teachers

Letter grades

Dressing for PE every day

Greater independence...

...More responsibility







# MIDDLE SCHOOLERS:

What's going on with these people?



# THE MIDDLE SCHOOL BRAIN IS BEING REWIRED

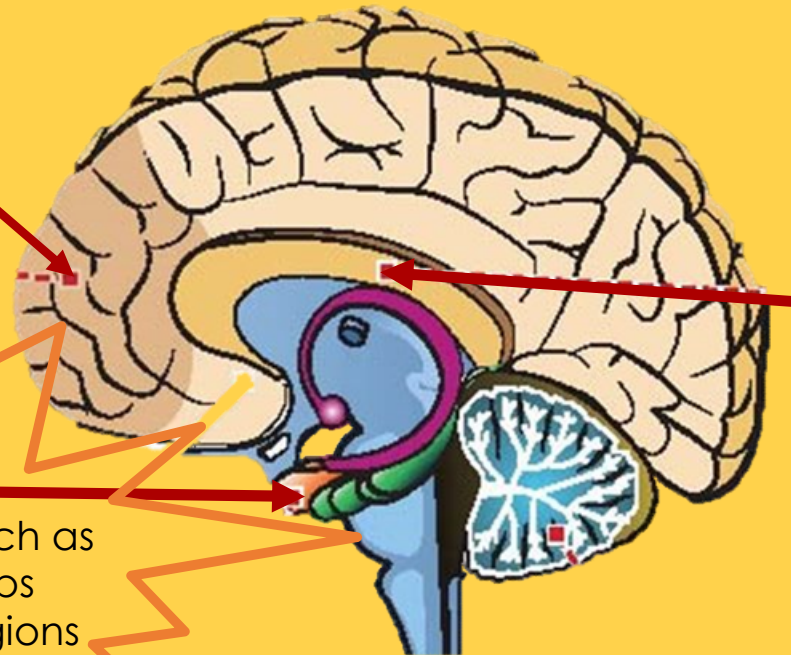
## How the Teenage Brain Impacts Behavior

### **Prefrontal cortex**

This “judgment” region reins in intense emotions but doesn’t finish developing until at least emerging adulthood.

### **Amygdala**

The seat of emotions such as anger; this area develops quickly before other regions that help to control it.



### **Corpus callosum**

These nerve fibers connect the brain’s two hemispheres; they thicken in adolescence to process information more effectively.

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Heightened awareness of peers



**What could go wrong and ruin my day?**

- Bad hair day
- A pimple
- My mom saying good morning
- ...or my best friend not talking to me anymore!





# THE PANDEMIC DIFFERENCE

**Reckoning with social-emotional, learning, and psychological impacts**



Academic gaps

Social development:

- In-person communication skills
- Peer behavior challenges
- Attitudes toward school and willingness to get involved in activities

Mental health:

- Grief – processing loss
- Depression, anxiety





# WHAT THEY NEED FROM US

Scaffolding your  
child's growing  
independence



# GETTING / STAYING ORGANIZED

## **Role of teachers**

- What happens during the first couple of weeks of school? (setting expectations, syllabus, practicing use of tools like Canvas?)
- How do teachers help MS students develop and practice organizational skills? (e.g., planning, time management, note-taking and study skills)
- “Accelerated learning”

# GETTING/STAYING ORGANIZED

## How Parents can Support

- Expect your child to feel overwhelmed, especially at first
- Parent involvement and accountability are still needed
- Support your child at home for planning and time management



**...Any tips or tricks?**

# GETTING/STAYING ORGANIZED

## Tools and Resources...

- Canvas (parent account & app) – syllabus, day-to-day assignments (planning/monitoring), communication with teachers
- Parent Portal (Aeries) – attendance, grades

## When there's a question or a problem...

- Always contact the teacher first with questions and concerns. Teachers DO want to help.
- The school counselor also is a resource
- Teach/encourage your student to advocate for him or herself





# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

What happens at school...



- Personal devices – policy and practice
- Interpersonal conflict
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Extracurriculars - opportunities for connection

# NURTURING OUR DEVELOPING ADOLESCENTS

What we can do at home...

They may not thank us for it in the moment, but 6th graders need support with:

- Hygiene
- Eating & Sleeping
- Managing (and embracing!) emotions
- Communication & social media

**Remember that brain development is a marathon, not a sprint**

- Be kind and be patient
- Lead by example



# NURTURING OURSELVES!

#1. STAY CALM



#2. Set expectations and communicate them to your children during time of calm

#3. Use scaffolding whenever possible

#4. Set appropriate, ideally natural, consequences

#5. Don't be afraid to reach out for resources





# QUESTIONS? DISCUSSION & RESOURCES

