



Support Your Child During Middle Years

11-12 years old

*Characteristics

What you can do

Physical

What children can do

- They experience rapid physical changes, especially girls.
- Their energy levels vary.
- They may find it difficult to control their emotions.
- They may feel uncoordinated at times during growth spurts.

- Be sensitive to changes in peer relationships – talk about how natural it is that kids develop at different rates.
- Good time to introduce new activities and skills that require complex movements and thought patterns (martial arts, yoga, dance, tennis, etc.).
- Be a role model: take your child for a run, bike, walk, swim, to the gym, etc. Physical activity is important in maintaining a healthy body image for children entering puberty.

Cognitive

**(thought processes):
What children can understand**

- They begin to develop abstract thinking skills.
- They learn well through imitating role models.
- They are adventurous and enjoy change.
- They have a good attention span.

- Reinforce home values and code of conduct.
- Praise and encourage your child for independent undertakings like (cleaning room, doing homework, critical thinking and not just following along, etc).
- Support their decision making skills by encouraging them in discussion / debates about current issues.

Social

What types of relationships children can have

- They enjoy working in teams.
- They seek the approval of their peers.
- They are more independent and begin to question authority.
- They enjoy projects that involve helping others and social justice.

- Identify readiness to be left alone and develop a safety plan to provide short periods where child can be left alone.
- Allow for personal space and time.
- Don't take verbal outbursts personally.
- Have clear rules on what is inappropriate behaviour and the resulting consequences.
- Walk away from "attitude" and power struggles
- Continue with praise and encouragement.
- Minimize comparisons with others.
- Deemphasize the need to be the best – focus on them trying their best.

*Source: 2008 Equitas International Centre for Human Rights Education – Play If Fair! Toolkits.



Support Your Child During Middle Years

6-8 years old

*Characteristics

What you can do

Physical

What children can do

- They learn how to control their bodies
- They have a lot of energy
- They enjoy manipulating objects
- They may find handling small objects or performing fine motor tasks challenging.

- Provide periods of down time for free play.
- Provide physical activity daily as an outlet, especially after sedentary periods.
- Establish good sleep habits – approximately 10 hours of sleep per night on average.
- Introduce games that practice fine motor skills.

Cognitive

**(thought processes):
What children can understand**

- They learn best by doing.
- They understand clear and simple sentences.
- Instructions need to be few and simple.
- They have a limited attention span and are easily distracted by their environment.
- They are very imaginative.
- Decisions are emotionally based.

- Establish routines for homework, chores, etc.
- Avoid complex and lengthy explanations.
- Use simple situations as learning opportunities (changing light bulbs – electricity, grocery shopping – money & nutrition, etc.).
- Encourage imaginative play (Lego, building games).
- Provide time to undertake creative projects (art with markers, leaves, glue, glitter, popsicle sticks, etc.).

Social

What types of relationships children can have

- They can be somewhat self-centred.
- They play better in pairs than in groups.
- They need to be constantly reminded of the group rules.
- They like to express themselves, but share personal information when asked direct and simple questions.

- Encourage playing with children outside of tight group to support maintaining other friendships.
- Provide time for solitary activities.
- Provide opportunities to join groups/teams.
- Support play dates and times with friends in a supervised setting.
- Find time to spend one-on-one (bike rides, walks, going for ice cream, etc.).

*Source: 2008 Equitas International Centre for Human Rights Education – Play If Fair! Toolkits.



Support Your Child During Middle Years

9-10 years old

*Characteristics

What you can do

Physical

What children can do

- They enjoy moving and being active.
- They enjoy sports, dancing and physically intense games.
- They can play until they are exhausted.
- Will play vigorously in one activity but will quickly drop it for another.
- May have huge appetite

- Channel competitive energy into activities that require group cooperation, not a win/lose mentality.
- Explain and be a role model for healthy activity and nutrition decisions.
- Provide a variety of activities that allow for skill level changes around endurance agility, concentration, coordination and movement.
- Allow children to participate in a variety of activities.

Cognitive

**(thought processes):
What children can understand**

- They are curious and enjoy learning new things.
- They learn best when involved in a concrete project.
- They may become frustrated when things do not turn out as expected.
- Forgetful and lazy tendencies. Don't want to do chores or basic hygiene.
- Typically a stable age. Kids generally happy and easy going but when upset can't handle emotions well.

- Provide opportunities for skill development (programs, activities, a role model who can teach them how to fix a bike, cook, knit, play a sport, etc.).
- Provide time for personal projects using technology that they like. Make a movie, write a blog or make music. Ensure computer access is supervised and limited.
- Encourage a schedule or daily reminders to brush hair, teeth, etc.

Social

What types of relationships children can have

- They place increasing importance on friendships.
- They enjoy playing and taking up group challenges.
- They are sometimes competitive.
- They can express what they like or do not like, but their judgment is sometimes not well developed.
- Still feel close to parents, siblings.
- Squabbling with younger siblings common.

- Encourage them to talk about what is bothering them.
- Encourage and talk with your kids to come up with creative ways to look at problems, there is no one right answer.
- Plan family outings.
- Keep an eye on intense friendships.
- Encourage expanding social network.

*Source: 2008 Equitas International Centre for Human Rights Education – Play If Fair! Toolkits.