

Middle School



Middle School Students' Developmental Needs

Middle school is an exciting, yet challenging time for students, their parents and teachers. During this passage from childhood to adolescence, middle school students are characterized by a need to explore a variety of interests, connecting their learning in the classroom to its practical application in life and work; high levels of activity coupled with frequent fatigue due to rapid growth; a search for their own unique identity as they begin turning more frequently to peers rather than parents for ideas and affirmation; extreme sensitivity to the comments from others; and heavy reliance on friends to provide comfort, understanding and approval.

Parents are often worried or confused by changes in their teenagers. Each teenager is an individual with a unique personality and special interests, likes and dislikes. However, there are also numerous developmental issues that everyone faces during the adolescent years. The normal feelings and behaviors of the middle school and early high school adolescent are described here.

Developmental Expectations for Middle School Aged Students

Movement Towards Independence

- Struggle with sense of identity
- Feeling awkward or strange about one's self and one's body
- Focus on self, alternating between high expectations and poor self-esteem
- Interests and clothing style influenced by peer group
- Moodiness
- Improved ability to use speech to express one's self
- Realization that parents are not perfect; identification of their faults
- Less overt affection shown to parents, with occasional rudeness
- Complaints that parents interfere with independence
- Tendency to return to childish behavior, particularly when stressed



Future Interests and Cognitive Changes

- Mostly interested in present, with limited thoughts of the future
- Intellectual interests expand and gain in importance
- Greater ability to do work (physical, mental, emotional)

Sexuality

- Display shyness, blushing, and modesty
- Girls develop physically sooner than boys
- Increased interest in sex
- Concerns regarding physical and sexual attractiveness to others
- Frequently changing relationships
- Worries about being normal



Morals, Values, and Self-Direction

- Rule and limit testing
- Capacity for abstract thought
- Development of ideals and selection of role models
- More consistent evidence of conscience
- Experimentation with sex and drugs (cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana)



Advisory Program

The Advisory program at IAA is designed to support student's growth through advisory lessons and activities. Two grade advisors are assigned to each grade level. Students meet with their grade advisors every Monday to receive lessons that are part of the Guidance Curriculum. Grade Advisors support the organizations of activities such as the outdoor school program, International day, etc. The Advisory Program and Curriculum is coordinated through the Counseling Department.

Second Step Program

Student Success through Prevention

The Second Step middle school program is a universal, classroom-based prevention program designed to decrease aggression, bullying, and substance abuse and increase students' social skills and school success. As a program for all students, it provides a foundation for creating a safe, respectful learning environment.

The Five Themes in the Second Step Program

Developmental theory and findings related to risk and protective factors are addressed in five themes developed across classroom lessons. These themes are:

- ❖ Empathy and communication.
- ❖ Bullying prevention.
- ❖ Emotion management and coping.
- ❖ Substance abuse prevention.
- ❖ Problem solving, decision making, and goal setting.



All grades in secondary receive lessons and presentations addressing Study Skills, Child Abuse Prevention, Bullying and Drug and Alcohol prevention and Sex Education in addition to the programs described above.

Counseling Program Services



Standardized Testing

Standardized assessments provide key information in order to make evidence based decisions for classroom strategies, differentiation and curricular improvement.

- MAP test (Measures of Academic Progress) three times a year. (Grades 2-10)
- PSAT (Grades 9, 10 and 11)
- Advanced Placement Test (Grades 11 and 12)

*IAA is an official test center for the SAT and the ACT.



Transition Programs

- New Family/Student Orientation and Follow up
- Transition to Middle School, High School and College

Admissions

- Admissions Process
- Assessment
- Student Placement

Other Services provided by the Counseling Department

- Master Schedule and Course Selection and Student Scheduling
- Online learning Coordination
- Parenting Workshops and Presentations
- Referral Resources
- Teacher-Counselor Consultation
- Parent-Counselor Consultation
- Individual Counseling

Young people have particular ways to react to changes and express distress. In these cases, parents are encouraged to visit the counseling office and confer with me. I would be very happy to meet with you to address any issues regarding your child's well-being and learning process at IA. Please contact me to make an appointment at 3713360 Ext. 206, or mdoylet@interamerican.edu.ec

Sincerely,



Marcela Doylet
Secondary Counselor
Student Services Coordinator