

8th Grade Developmental Guide

What's Going on With My 8th Grader?

The 8th Grader says “goodbye” to puberty issues and “hello” to the quest for freedom from parents and “kiddie” things. Major changes occur this year as the teen transitions into the middle of the adolescent journey. Here is a look at what is going on with your 8th grader.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Upper body strength begins to develop in boys.
- ◆ Boys and girls level out in height.
- ◆ Girls are almost fully developed physically.
- ◆ Boys have more of a growth spurt to continue.
- ◆ They have a need to develop exercise routines and healthy habits.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The 8th grader may:

- ◆ Have a more evident “adult” personality
- ◆ Want to try new things in an effort to discover identity
- ◆ Obtain a strong sense of accomplishment from being easily involved in various activities
- ◆ Be easily “bored”
- ◆ Begin to question authority and analyze their behavior
- ◆ Exhibit less affection for parents
- ◆ Not respond to adult lectures, feeling they know better what is going on than the adult does
- ◆ Experience periods of sadness and depression and desperation, which can lead to poor coping habits

RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Relationships with parents become focused on a negotiation to get what they want.
- ◆ There is a strong desire to be accepted by peers.
- ◆ Girls have a tendency to be interested in older boys.
- ◆ There is a desire to have and “overuse” a cell phone.
- ◆ Friendships change due to new schools, boyfriends/girlfriends, and change of affinity groups.
- ◆ Girls tend to build friendships in groups of 2-3.
- ◆ Boys tend to build friendships in “packs” of 8-10, based on affinity.
- ◆ Boys struggle with being “loners” if they do not find a pack of friends.
- ◆ A strong interest in sports is typical for both genders but is not exclusive.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ They need a trusted and loving adult to talk to them about what the Bible teaches on “adult” subjects like sex.
- ◆ Rather than being told what to believe, they need spiritual leaders to ask their opinions and let them develop their beliefs.
- ◆ Their interest and commitment to faith change rapidly back and forth, signaling an internal struggle on whether or not to accept it.
- ◆ While timid about taking on difficult intellectual tasks like studying the Bible, they are ready to begin the practice of daily Bible study (WITH LOTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT).