

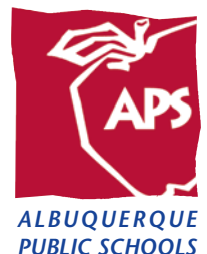


6th Grade Student & Family Guide

*Everything You Need to Know
For Success in 6th Grade*

Middle School

Compiled by The District Counseling Unit, APS Health & Wellness Department



SIXTH GRADE STUDENT & FAMILY GUIDE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There were many Albuquerque Public Schools Professional School Counselors who contributed their time and energy to the Middle School Student and Family Guides. We hope that these Guides help students and parents to navigate the middle school years successfully. Please contact your school counselor for any concerns you may have in academic, personal/social, or career development.

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SIXTH GRADE STUDENT & FAMILY GUIDE

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Introduction to 6th Grade

Starting the 6th grade is exciting and comes with more expectation and growth. This guide has been put together to help inform you and your child about the changes and expectations for them in 6th grade, the resources available to them in middle school and what can be expected for the years ahead.



The following sections give you and your child information about 6th grade; the standards for core curriculum, standardized testing, questions that might arise, and other information that you and your child should know as they start the middle school.

**“We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance.” ~
Harrison Ford**

TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL



Transition to Middle School

Researchers have found that students anticipating the move to middle school worry about three aspects of the change: logistical, social, and academic.

~Great Schools

The beginning of middle school is an important time in your child's life. The transition to middle school brings anticipation, new opportunities and challenges. Your child will have to adjust to a new and larger school, new friends, having several teachers and having a locker. Your child will be moving between classrooms each day and will have a different teacher for each subject. Our sixth grade classrooms have an average of 27 students. The required six grade courses are language arts, literature, mathematics, science, social studies and physical education.

Middle school sets the stage for future success in high school, college or advanced education or training, etc. You can help make the transition a success and help shape your child's future. Talking, listening to your child's concerns, and highlighting the positives about middle school will help with the adjustment. The principal and some school staff work during the summer. You can contact the school to visit the middle school with your child prior to the first day of school and learn where the classrooms, lockers, cafeteria and the drop-off and pick-up locations are on campus. Have your child practice using a combination lock and review your child's route to school or to the bus stop.

When school begins get to know and stay in touch with the principal, teachers, the school counselor and other school staff. Let them know you want to support your child's education. Learn as much as you can about your child's school. Attend open house which is usually held within the first few weeks of school. Review the student handbook with your child and contact the school for answers to questions you may have. Be sure you both understand the school policies, rules and consequences.

Adapted from <http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/middleschool/>

Recommended Reading:

Too Old for This, Too Young for That: Your Survival Guide for the Middle School Years by Harriet S. Mosatche and Karen Unger

The Middle School Survival Guide by Arlene Erlback

Chicken Soup for the Soul; Teens Talk Middle School (101 stories of life, love and learning for the young teens) by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Madeline Clapps and Valerie Howlett

QUESTIONS YOU OR YOUR CHILD MIGHT HAVE

Keep in mind that as your child goes through middle school, they will probably run into some challenges; everyone does. There are plenty of people who can help them. In addition to you as their parent, they can talk to, their school counselor, teachers, advisor, social worker, librarian, nurse, or any other adult school staff they trust. If something is bothering them – anything – urge them to talk to somebody about it. Nothing gets better by keeping it all inside. Remind them that they are not alone!



How can the school counselor help your child?

Albuquerque Public Schools professional school counselors provide school counseling programs, which address the **academic, career** and **personal/social** development needs of **all students**. Our goal is to help students explore their skills, abilities and interests, so they can plan and prepare for the future, and set goals to reach their educational, personal and career aspirations. Counselors also work with parents and guardians to keep them aware of and involved in their student's planning.

In other words, your counselor is there to help, guide and support your child. They are not just there for helping students deal with crises or major personal issues, although this is a service they also provide.

Here are some ways your school counselor can help your child:

- Help to deal with problems in social and emotional areas (Students can talk with their counselors about issues such as dating, peer pressure, substance abuse, depression and many more topics)
- Connect them with resources for academic difficulties, career exploration, and post-high school education
- Suggest courses to help your child reach their goals, help them stay on track, and help prepare your child for high school
- Help your child access additional school and community resources as needed
- Advocate for your child's academic, career and personal/social needs



How can the nurse assist your child?

School nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students. School nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; and actively collaborate with other school and community professionals for the health and wellbeing of all students.

Here are some of the ways the school nurse could assist your child:

- **The school nurse provides direct health care to students and staff.**
The school nurse provides care to students and staff who have been injured or who present with acute illnesses. Care may involve treatment of health problems within the scope of nursing practice, communication with parents for treatment, and referral to other providers.
- **The school nurse provides screening and referral for health conditions.**
In order to address potential health problems that are barriers to learning or symptoms of underlying medical conditions, the school nurse often engages in screening activities. Screening activities may include vision, hearing, postural, body mass index, or other screening.
- **The school nurse promotes a healthy school environment.**
The school nurse provides for the physical and emotional safety of the school community. The school nurse monitors immunizations, assures appropriate exclusion from and re-entry into school, and reports communicable diseases as required by law.
- **The school nurse promotes health.**
The school nurse provides health education by providing health information directly to individual students, groups of students, or classes or by providing guidance about the health education curriculum, encouraging comprehensive, sequential, and age appropriate information.
- **The school nurse serves as a liaison between school personnel, family, the community, and health care providers.**



What afterschool services are there?

There are a number of afterschool activities provided throughout APS. After school programs can help your child grow academically and personally. Be sure to check with your child's counselor or office personnel to see what afterschool activities are offered at their school.

Some of the programs offered at various schools (check availability at your school):

- **FAST (Family and Schools Together):** a multifamily group intervention aimed at reducing anxiety and aggression, while increasing social skills and attention spans, in children 5 to 14 years of age.
- **WhyTry:** a simple, hands-on curriculum which helps youth overcome their challenges and improve outcomes in the areas of truancy, behavior, and academics.

THE CHANGES OF PRE-ADOLESCENCE



The middle school years are a time of physical and emotional changes as your child is heading towards adolescence.

Physical and Brain Developments

While each child is an individual and develops at his or her own inner schedule, there are some general developmental milestones that occur around 6th grade.

Your typical eleven-year-old will show more self-assertion, competitiveness, curiosity, a desire to excel, and expand socially. He/she may display a range and intensity of emotions, often being moody and getting easily frustrated. She/he can relate feelings, may tease and exhibit "off-color" humor, and silliness. Your child should be able to cope with the changes, develop interpersonal skills, handle peer pressure and groups, develop personal interests, abilities, and take on greater responsibility for her behavior and decisions.

Additionally, the preteen years are a time when your child is exposed to negative activities, bullying, smoking, etc. You can help your child stay on a positive course by providing support, guidance and by continuing to be involved in your child's education.



The Pre-Teen & Parent Relationship

During this time of development staying connected with your child may seem more challenging, but it is still important. As a parent you are still a powerful influence and need to provide love, guidance, and support. A connection will provide a sense of security and provide resilience for your child in dealing with life's ups and downs. Model the qualities that you want your child to learn and practice. Below are a couple of suggestions to help maintain a connection with your child.

- **Family Meals:**

If it is impossible to eat together every night, schedule a regular weekly family dinner night instead. Turn off the TV and tune out the ringing phone. This will build closeness, a sense of responsibility, and teamwork.

- **Share Ordinary Time and Stay Involved:**

Invite your preteen to come with you to take a walk, run, wash the car, bake, rent movies, or watch a favorite TV show. Riding in the car is an opportunity to

connect. Go to games and practices when you can. Ask how things went and listen attentively.

- **Tell their stories:**

When you share your memories of the funny, sweet and infuriating things they did when they were young, teens gain a sense of being connected to your unique family history — of knowing they belong and that they matter to you.

Recommended Reading: How to Hug a Porcupine; Negotiating the Prickly Points of the Tween Years by Julie A. Ross



Parental Involvement

Your involvement matters a lot. Research shows that if you are involved, your child is more likely to earn higher grades, test scores, enroll in higher level programs, be promoted, earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills, graduate and go on to college.

You can be involved in many ways. Here are just a few:

- By establishing a learning environment at home for the whole family, attending school meetings, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Extend your child's learning by going to the library, businesses, museums, etc.
- Be sure your child is prepared for school daily.
- Talk to her/him about career choices and how doing well in school is connected to having choices in life.
- Reinforce the importance of valuing your and other's culture, heritage, and language.
- By volunteering at school, taking part in school activities that promote education, joining the school parent's email group, and/or the parent-teacher organization, the School Health Advisory Council, or other school decision making committees.
- By being an advocate for your child and others by urging state and local leaders to establish stronger programs and higher achievement standards.

It is important to be a strong advocate for your child and equal partners in the decision making process. Know what to expect from your child's school.

- You should be informed on a regular basis how your child and your child's school are doing. School districts are required to publish parent-friendly report cards every year that show both how students are performing, as well as how the school is performing as a whole.
- You should be treated with respect and as an equal partner in your child's education. Educators are hired to work for you and your children.
- You should be told clearly what the learning standards are in each grade and have access to New Mexico Content Standards just as teachers and administrators do. Know what is being taught in each core subject and how learning will be assessed so you can understand how to help your child.
- You should be told about the school's safety standards, how discipline problems are handled, and what the school is doing to ensure safety standards are upheld. Students need to feel safe in order to learn.
- You should be able to get answers to your important questions. What is my child expected to know and be able to do in core subjects? How is learning

measured? What will the school do to help if my child is behind and what can I do to help?

- In middle school, you should be told what courses your child should be taking to go to college and steps that should be taken for your child to apply for college.
- You should know your options. The *No Child Left Behind Act* has many requirements that schools must meet in order to be in compliance. Ask your school for this information or more information can be obtained on NCLB at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>.

MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

This is a great time to talk to your child about how to make and keep true friends. True friends are those who stick with them through good times and bad, who cares about their best interests, and who like and respect them for the unique individual they are. Remind them to be themselves, not someone who they think will impress people. A real friend wouldn't pressure them to do something they think is wrong, or make them feel bad if they don't do something. Also remind them that making new friends doesn't mean abandoning old friends.

Meeting Someone New:

- Find a person or group that shares your interests.
- Wait for a good time to initiate personal contact; make eye contact and smile.
- Make verbal contact. Try saying "hi", introducing yourself or ask for help.
- Greet people in a cheerful way. Stand tall and hold your head up.
- Try these conversation starters: "What are you doing?"; "How's your day been?" Open-ended questions invite the other person to share information.
- If a conversation feels awkward at first, don't worry. Your cheerful greetings have planted "friendship seeds" and may open the door for future contact.
- Join in group activities and discussions. Offer your opinions while respecting the opinions of others.

Keeping Friends:

To keep a friend, it is important to be able to share your ideas and thoughts, but you must also listen to what they have to say. To be sure you are listening well:

- Make eye contact with your friend.
- Let your friend do most of the talking. Avoid interruptions; wait your turn.
- Let your friend know that you heard the words and feelings expressed. For example, "I'll bet you're really sad about your grandmother's death."
- Keep private conversations private. If your friend asks you not to tell anyone something, don't. **The only time this rule should be broken is when someone's safety is at risk.**

Complimenting is a way to show your interest in and engage others. Recognize the value of a compliment. Everyone wants to be appreciated.

- Be sincere when giving a compliment. If you don't mean it, don't say it.
- Compliment others about behavior, skills, personality or appearance.
- Express your appreciation of others in many ways.



What your Child Will Learn in Their Core Subjects

APS Power Standards outline the specific goals for each core subject. They describe what a student is expected to know and be able to do at each grade level. Grade level standards are grouped by content standards. They outline what a student will be learning and be able to understand and perform. Each core standard may have several performance standards under it. Middle school core subject standards are in reading, mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science. Standardized testing is one way in which APS assesses what students have learned.



A major goal of middle-school education is to make students responsible for their own learning. Adolescents must be active participants in setting academic goals for themselves, deciding how to accomplish these goals, and assessing their achievements. This year we are doing this through Student-Led Conferences. This section tells you all about the core content standards, assessments and student-led conferences.

"Some favorite expressions of small children: "It's not my fault. . . They made me do it. . . I forgot." Some favorite expressions of adults: "It's not my job. . . No one told me. . . It couldn't be helped." True freedom begins and ends with personal accountability."

~ Dan Zadra

SIXTH GRADE CORE CONTENT STANDARDS

6th GRADE CORE CONTENT STANDARDS FOR LANGUAGE ARTS

READING	WRITING	EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE: SPEAKING	RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE: LISTENING AND VIEWING	RESEARCH
Increases fluency, comprehension, and insight through meaningful and comprehensive reading instruction - uses effective reading strategies (e.g., context clues, rereading, self-correcting, reading with others, predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing) to match type of text. - discusses selections in teacher-student conferences and small group discussions. - takes an active role in whole-class seminars, - discusses and analyzes the effects of literary devices (e.g., figurative language, dialogue, flashback) on text, - interprets text by explaining elements (e.g., plot, theme, point of view, characterization, mood, style), - investigates examples of distortion and stereotype, - recognizes underlying messages in order to identify recurring themes, and - reads self-selected and assigned materials. Develops a variety of strategies (e.g., knowledge of word origins and derivations, analogies, idioms, prefixes, suffixes) to define and extend understanding of word meaning.	Demonstrates proficiency in using the writing process to create a final product by drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading own written work and that of peers. Demonstrates proficiency in using elements of effective writing (i.e., idea, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions). Demonstrates proficiency with writing conventions (i.e., grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation): - uses simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, - uses effective coordination and subordination of ideas to express complete thoughts clearly. - identifies and properly uses indefinite pronouns and present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect verb tenses to convey appropriate meaning, - uses verbs that agree with compound subjects, - punctuates, using commas to link two clauses with a conjunction in compound sentences, - correctly spells frequently misspelled and confused words (e.g., there, their, they're). Demonstrates proficiency in applying appropriate types of writing (i.e., descriptive, narrative, expressive, expository, persuasive, and analytical) for the intended purpose and audience: - writes a fictional or autobiographical account, - composes a variety of written work (e.g., prose, poetry, drama) to express individual perspectives drawn from personal experience, - writes essays that identify and define the problem, describe a solution clearly and convincingly, present logical and well-supported reasons, - produces writings that incorporate a definite voice of the author, and - create a multiple-paragraph expository essay that establishes an introductory topic, key idea, or events in sequence and/or chronological order; provides details and transitional expressions which link paragraph to paragraph in a clear line of thought and offers a concluding paragraph that summarizes the key ideas and details.	Demonstrates proficiency with speaking strategies: - enhances delivery, using strategies such as eye contact, gestures, body language, volume, and pace, - uses oral clues (e.g., "what if," "very likely," "I'm unsure of") to indicate levels of certainty, and clarifies, illustrates, and expands upon topics during discussions.	Organizes information that is heard or viewed: - paraphrases the information, - differentiates between main idea and details (See also: Strand II: Reading Analysis) - makes connections to related topics/information, and asks questions when unsure of information. Follows multistep oral and written directions for a procedure.	Analyzes information from a variety of sources: - describes the characteristics of reference materials - paraphrases information, - determines the importance of information, - makes connection to related topics and information, - monitors comprehension, and - draws inferences and generates questions.

6th GRADE CORE CONTENT STANDARDS FOR MATH

NUMBER AND OPERATIONS	ALGEBRA	GEOMETRY	MEASUREMENT	DATA ANALYSIS AND PROBABILITY
Explain and perform: - whole number division and express remainders as decimals or appropriately in the context of the problem - addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with decimals - addition and subtraction with integers - addition, subtraction, and multiplication with fractions and mixed numerals Determine if a problem situation calls for an exact or approximate answer and perform the appropriate computation. Compute and perform multiplication and division of fractions and decimals and apply these procedures to solving problems.	Graph ordered pairs in the coordinate plane. Explain and use the relationship among ratios, proportions, and percents. Solve problems involving proportional relationships - Venn diagrams to show the relationship between the characteristics of two or more sets - Equations and inequalities to model numerical relationships - Three-dimensional geometric models - Graphs, tables, and charts to interpret and analyze data	Identify, describe, and classify the properties of, and the relationships between, plane and solid geometric figures: - measure, identify, and draw angles, perpendicular and parallel lines, rectangles, and triangles by using appropriate tools (e.g., straightedge, ruler, compass, protractor, drawing software) - understand that the sum of angles of any triangle is 180 degrees and the sum of the angles of any quadrilateral is 360 degrees and use this information to solve problems - visualize and draw two-dimensional views of three-dimensional objects made from rectangular solids	Apply various measurement techniques and tools, units of measure, and degrees of accuracy to find accurate rational number representations for length, liquid, weight, perimeter, temperature, and time.	Formulate and solve problems by collecting, organizing, displaying and interpreting data. Determine theoretical and experimental probabilities and use them to make predictions about events.

6th GRADE CORE CONTENT STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

HISTORY	GEOGRAPHY	CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	ECONOMICS
Describe and compare the characteristics of the ancient civilization of Egypt, Mesopotamia and China and explain the importance of their contributions to later civilizations, to include: • significance of river valleys • early irrigation and its impact on agriculture • forms of government (e.g., the theocracies in Egypt, dynasties in China) • effect on world economics and trade • key historical figures • religious traditions, cultural, and scientific contributions (e.g., writing systems, calendars, building of monuments such as the pyramids). Compare and contrast the geographic, political, economic, and social characteristics of the Ancient Greek, Ancient Roman, Ottoman, Indian, Arabic, African, and Middle Eastern civilizations and their enduring impacts on later civilizations, to include: • influence of Mediterranean geography on the development and expansion of the civilizations • development of concepts of government and citizenship (e.g., democracy, republics, codification of laws, Code of Hammurabi) • scientific and cultural advancements (e.g., networks of roads, aqueducts, art, architecture, literature, theater, philosophy) • contributions and roles of key figures, (e.g., Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Augustus).	• Identify the location of places using latitude and longitude	• Describe the concept of democracy as developed by the Greeks, and compare the evolution of democracies throughout the world	• Compare and contrast the trade patterns of early civilizations

6th GRADE CORE CONTENT STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE

SCIENTIFIC THINKING AND PRACTICE	PHYSICAL SCIENCE	LIFE SCIENCE	EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE	SCIENCE AND SOCIETY
Construct appropriate graphs from data and develop qualitative and quantitative statements about the relationships between variables being investigated. Understand that scientific investigations use common processes that include the collection of relevant data and observations, accurate measurements, the identification and control of variables, and logical reasoning to formulate hypotheses and explanations.	Understand that substances have characteristic properties and identify the properties of various substances (e.g., density, boiling point, solubility, chemical reactivity). Identify various types of energy (e.g., heat, light, mechanical, electrical, chemical, nuclear). Know that every object exerts gravitational force on every other object dependent on the masses and distance of separation (e.g., motions of celestial objects, tides).	Understand how organisms interact with their physical environments to meet their needs (i.e., food, water, air) and how the water cycle is essential to most living systems. Describe the differences between substances that were produced by living organisms (e.g., fossil fuels) and substances that result from nonliving processes (e.g., igneous rocks).	Know that the regular and predictable motions of the Earth-moon-sun system explain phenomena on Earth including: - Earth's motion in relation to a year, a day, the seasons, the phases of the moon, eclipses, tides, and shadows - moon's orbit around Earth once in 28 days in relation to the phases of the moon. Understand factors that create and influence weather and climate, including: - heat, air movement, pressure, humidity, oceans - how clouds form by condensation of water vapor - how weather patterns are related to atmospheric pressure - global patterns of atmospheric movement (e.g., El Nino) - factors that can impact Earth's climate (e.g., volcanic eruptions, impacts of asteroids, glaciers). Know that landforms are created and change through a combination of constructive and destructive forces, including: - weathering of rock and soil, transportation, deposition of sediment, and tectonic activity - similarities and differences between current and past processes on Earth's surface (e.g., erosion, plate tectonics, changes in atmospheric composition) - Impact of volcanoes and faults on New Mexico geology. Understand the history of Earth and how information about it comes from layer of sedimentary rock, including: - sediments and fossils as a record of a very slow changing world - evidence of asteroid impact, volcanic and glacial activity.	Examine the role of scientific knowledge in decisions (e.g., space exploration, what to eat, preventative medicine and medical treatment).

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Your child will have at least two standardized tests in the 6th grade. The Standards Based Assessment (**SBA**) and the Middle School Short Cycle Assessment (MSSCA) sometimes better known as Assess 2 Learn (**A2L**).

SBA

The SBA for students in the 6th grade assesses the student's knowledge and skills in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science. The test measures student performance against state standards. The SBA is required under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). As a result, the assessment does affect the school's rating in terms of student participation and performance. The test is offered in both English and Spanish.

A2L

The A2L is a standard exam that tests on the progress students are making in the core subjects/standards in the 6th grade. There are three phases of Middle School Short Cycle Assessment (MSSCA) testing for students to complete this year, Fall, Winter and Spring. The MSSCA test requires a minimum score of 71% for math and 61% for Reading.

General Test Taking Tips To Keep In Mind During Standardized Testing:

Before the test:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Eat a good breakfast.
- Relax and do the best you can.

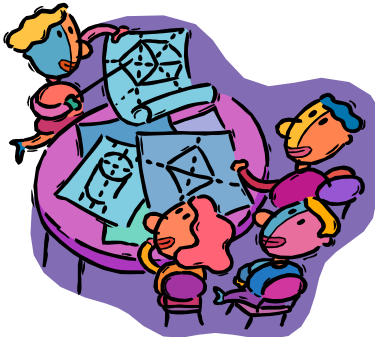
During the test:

- Keep a positive attitude, if you start to feel nervous, take a few deep breaths.
- Make sure you put your first and last name on the test.
- When you receive your test, do a quick survey of the subtest so you know how to budget your time.
- Follow directions and ask questions if you don't understand the directions.
- Pace yourself and read the entire question.
- Try to answer the easier questions first.
- If you don't know the answer, skip it and go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later.
- When looking at a difficult question, try to eliminate some of the choices that appear less likely to be the answer and then choose the best answer.
- Try to answer every question.
- When answering a question, be sure the number on the answer sheet matches the number of the question you are working on.
- Don't worry if others finish before you; focus on the test in front of you.

At the end of the test:

- Check your answers for mistakes.
- Go back and recheck your answers if you finish before your classmates.
- Make sure you have completed all of the sections.
- Bring a favorite book to read when you are finished with the test.

NEW FOR 2009-2010: STUDENT- LED CONFERENCES



Up until the 2009-2010 school year, not all APS middle schools were providing students and their families a parent/teacher conference, and often when the conferences did occur, they often excluded the student from the process. This does little to facilitate the critical educational partnership and discussion between parents, students and teachers about the student's academic progress. It also neglected the need for students to assume greater interest in, responsibility for, and control of their own academic progress.

Starting this school year, Albuquerque Public Schools is trying something new, a process which has been found to best practice when it comes to parent-teacher conferences: **student-led conferences**. The **student** is responsible for leading this conference and presenting their progress to their **parent(s)** (or a significant adult) and **advisor**. Students lead a discussion of their academic accomplishments, future goals, and their interests and dreams. Students will use the work they've collected in their **portfolios** to structure their presentations. The advisor's role in a student-led conference is that of a facilitator.

This form of conference allows all three parties to play more equal roles and establish a necessary partnership for student success. It enables students to take a more active role in their own learning, to build important skills – including self-esteem, communication, critical thinking, and analysis of their own work -- and to boost communication with their families and teachers. Because students know they will be presenting their work to an audience outside of the classroom, they can more easily see the importance and relevance of their daily work.

The new format will benefit parents by allowing them to help their students set goals, take responsibility for their own learning and planning for their future. Parents will learn more about their child's learning and skills, and be able to receive this important information in their first language. They will have the pleasure of listening to their child speak from his or her own perspective.

Students will have the opportunity to lead their own conferences **twice a year** – once in fall semester and once in spring. The conference process, including how to prepare for and present information, will be explained to students this year. Student-led conferences provide the unquestionable benefits of the "4 R's": **Relevance, Responsibility, Reporting to Parents, and Reverence**.

Back to Basics

The following sections offer information on a variety of general subjects that will help your child be safe and find success in 6th grade and beyond.



“Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information on it.” ~ Samuel Johnson

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Research supports the link between attendance and student achievement. The Albuquerque School board's attendance policy requires a student may not miss more than ten days of school during a school year. **Students with more than the ten unexcused absences are at risk of failing classes, grades, and are considered "student's in need of early intervention."** Under New Mexico law, all children must attend school until the age of 18. Students with 10 or more absences are in violation of compulsory education law. For further information refer to APS district attendance policy and guidelines on the district's website.

Consequences of missing school

- Students diminish the value of their education
- The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost
- Student may not develop the responsibility, self-discipline & effective work skills that are taught in the classroom
- Decreased test scores
- Falling behind in class work and struggling to catch up, diminishes confidence and attitude towards learning
- Being truant results in higher crime rates
- A decrease in attendance effects the performance data of the school



Helping Your Child Get to School

The district and schools will work with you and your child to increase attendance and academic performance. However, before attendance becomes an issue here are some tips to help you

- Know that school attendance is a parent and student responsibility
- Keep a school calendar on the refrigerator at home so that you know when your child does not have school
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them being late or absent
- Have a back-up plan for cars not starting
- Stay interested in what your child is doing in school
- If possible, drop your child off at school and pick them up afterwards
- Stay involved in the school by attending meetings, field trips, etc. when possible
- Talk about issues that may be making your child late to school
- Make a contract with your child to improve attendance rate
- Know your child's friends and their interests
- Help your child understand the state's and APS's attendance policies
- Do not allow your child to persuade you into making an excuse for him/her
- Contact the school for help/suggestions
- Do not give up, reward good behavior

SKILLS AND LEARNING STYLES

This section offers an overview of different way to help your child learn to become successful in 6thgrade and beyond.



Research has shown that a combination of three skill sets seems to be the key to academic and social success. These three skills sets are Learning Skills, Social Skills, and Self-management Skills.

<u>Learning Skills</u>	<u>Social Skills</u>	<u>Self Management Skills</u>
● Know Your Learning Style (see next section) ● Goal Setting & Planning ● Progress Monitoring ● Cognitive/Memory Skills ● Test Taking Skills	● Social Problem Solving ● Listening/Attending ● Character Education ● Making and Keeping Friends ● Peer Mentoring ● Encouragement	● Positive Self Talk ● Stress Management for Performing Under Pressure & Test Anxiety ● Basic Coping & Problem Solving Skills ● Anger Management Skills ● Motivation & Focusing

Multiple Intelligence and Learning Styles

In 1983, Dr. Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University developed a theory of multiple intelligences. It suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is far too limited. Instead, Dr. Gardner proposes that there are eight different types of intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. These intelligences are:

- **Linguistic intelligence** ("word smart"):
- **Logical-mathematical intelligence** ("number/reasoning smart")
- **Spatial intelligence** ("picture smart")
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence** ("body smart")
- **Musical intelligence** ("music smart")
- **Interpersonal intelligence** ("people smart")
- **Intrapersonal intelligence** ("self smart")
- **Naturalist intelligence** ("nature smart")

Knowing your type of intelligence, as well as your unique learning style helps you become better learner and help lead you to a career that matches your aptitude or type of intelligence. Sharing this information with your teachers can also help them know what your strengths are, where you may need extra help, and how to best teach you. People learn in different ways —however, the more ways information enters a brain

(see, hear, do), the better. People tend to favor one learning style over the other, however they do not necessarily choose which learning style suits them best; it is something they are born with.

 Visual Learners: Seeing	 Auditory Learners: Listening	 Kinesthetic/ Tactile Learner
Visual learners do best by sitting at the front of the classroom, taking detailed notes, seeing the teacher's body language and facial expressions during lectures to understand a lesson. They may learn best from diagrams, illustrated textbooks, videos, and other visual displays.	Auditory learners learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, and by reading text books aloud. They like to talk things through, listen, interpret the underlying meanings of speech by listening to a speaker's tone of voice, speed, and pitch, etc.	Tactile persons learn best through a hands-on approach, activities, and by actively exploring the physical world that surrounds them.

STUDYING AND HOMEWORK TIPS



Learning to study is a gradual process and you can expect some hurdles along the way. Work out a homework plan with your child and let them take more and more of the responsibility for carrying it out as time goes on.

Certain important practices will make life easier for everyone in the family when it comes to study time and study organization. Offer the following suggestions to your child, but remember some of them may require an adjustment to suit your child best.

Why should I study?

The more you **know**, the more you can **do**. Good study habits can help you succeed in school and in the future. Many skills that make you a success in school can also help you succeed on the job and in many areas of life.

Studying is *not* the same as **homework**. Studying is re-reading, re-thinking, and re-organizing, all in order to learn the material.

Here are some great ideas that will help you take control of your homework and studies:

- **Create a study routine.**
Complete your homework at the same time each day. Schedule other activities around study time. Choose a time of day when you have lots of energy.
- **Create a “Study Zone” in your home.**
Study in this “zone” each day. Make sure your study zone is free of distractions like TV, phone, music, your siblings, or a window view. Keep the top of your work area free of clutter, and be sure that your zone has good lighting. **NOTE:** If you don’t have a quiet place at home, try staying after school or visiting a public library.
- **Be sure there are good study tools in your study zone.**
These include your textbooks, pens and pencils, paper, your assignment folder or agenda, and a dictionary.
- **Think of school attendance and homework as a job.**
Successful adults treat their jobs as one of their top priorities; you must do the same.

- **Get comfortable, but not too comfortable!**
Avoid studying in your bed. It's time to study, not sleep!
- **Record assignments daily in your agenda and keep all assignments together in one notebook.**
If you don't understand an assignment, ask your teacher for clarification. When preparing to study, review all of your assignments for the day. Make estimates about the length of time each assignment will take and make a study schedule. Tackle the most difficult subject first; you'll be fresher, and it's downhill from there! Allow extra time for learning new material or for more difficult subjects.
Don't procrastinate!
- **Work steadily on major assignments, like term papers, over several weeks.**
Divide large assignments into small parts and attack them one at a time. Set goals for completion of these small sections and work steadily toward them. It is also easier to do the next assignment as soon as possible after a class while the subject and your interest are still fresh.
- **Take breaks during your study period.**
A good time to take a break is between subjects. Be sure to acknowledge your efforts and progression. During your break, you could eat a snack, call a friend, listen to music, or do something physical, like shooting hoops or taking a walk.
- **Maximize in-class learning.**
Attend class regularly and be on time. Sit near the front of the class so you can hear and see. Participate in classroom discussions and listen carefully. Take good notes and review them as soon after class as possible, adding any missing information and writing down any questions you may have. Don't try to write down every word (unless it's a quote, rule or law) – listen for **key words**. If your teacher **emphasizes** a point, such as by writing it on the board, put it in your notes. If your class discusses a topic, note any major **conclusions**.
- **When you study, experience the information in as many ways as possible.**
Read the information aloud, write it down, explain it to a friend or family member. Consider creating and using index cards as an extra way to review the material.
- **Organize the information.**
People process information in different ways. Some people like to draw pictures or charts to digest information; others like to read aloud, make detailed outlines or create index cards. Do whatever works for you.
- **Take advantage of any free time.**
If you have a study period or a long bus ride, use the time to review notes, prepare for an upcoming class, or start your homework.
- **Study with a friend.**
Unless it's too distracting, get together with friends and classmates to quiz yourselves, compare notes, and predict test questions.
- **Eat healthy.**
Good nutrition can lead to good grades. Making smart food choices will give you sustained energy and boost your brain power. Low energy and poor

concentration can mean it's been too long since your last meal. Be sure to eat three meals a day (don't skip breakfast!) and try limiting sugar, sodas, junk food and fast foods. Eat lean protein and fiber (fruits and veggies), drink plenty of water, and choose "power foods" (blueberries, walnuts, salmon) whenever possible to keep your brain and body happy and functioning at their peak!

- **Exercise regularly**

Try to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week, it will boost your mood, energy and focus.

- **Get plenty of sleep!**



"Middle and High Schoolers whose parents don't require them to be in bed before midnight on school nights are 42% more likely to be depressed than teens whose parents require a 10:00 p.m. or earlier bedtime. And teens who are allowed to stay up late are 30% more likely to have had suicidal thoughts in the past year..."

~USA Today, June 9, 2009

Adolescents (11-22 years old) need 9 hours and 15 minutes of sleep. Due to normal hormonal changes during adolescence, teenagers naturally want to stay up late. Unfortunately, they have to be up early for school. In addition to contributing to depression and suicidal thoughts, lack of sleep can make their mind dull and keep them from functioning effectively. Creating bed-time rituals can be helpful for teens to get enough sleep.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS



1. Make a “to do” list every day:

Put things that are most important at the top of your list and do them first. Use your agenda to track all of your tasks. And don't forget to recognize and reward yourself for your accomplishments.

2. Use time wisely:

Taking time to think and plan is time well-spent. If you can get some reading done on the bus ride home from school, for example, you'll kill two birds with one stone.

3. Know that it's okay to say “no”:

If your friends ask you to go out on a Sunday night and you have school the next day, realize that it's okay to say “no.” Keep your short and long term priorities in mind, and don't feel pressured to drop your plans to please your friends. Planning in advance to spend time with friends and family can help, but first you must be convinced that your priorities are important. Once you are convinced of that, saying “no” gets easier.

4. Work smarter, not harder:

You'll work more efficiently if you figure out when you do your best work. For example, if your brain handles math better in the afternoon, don't wait to do it until late at night.

5. Review your notes daily:

You'll reinforce what you've learned, so you need less time to study or cram. You'll also be ready the next day if your teacher calls on you or gives a pop quiz.

6. Get a good night's sleep and eat healthy:

Running on empty makes the day seem longer and tasks seem more difficult.

7. Are text messages, calls, computer usage or video games proving to be a distraction from homework or time wasters?

If so, manage your time so that electronics don't undermine your academics.

8. Don't sweat the small stuff!

Have you ever wasted an entire evening by worrying about something that you're supposed to be doing? Was it worth it? Instead of agonizing and procrastinating, just do it. If a project seems daunting and you find yourself avoiding it, try the “Swiss cheese method”: break it into smaller tasks and just do one, or set a timer and work on the big task for just 15 minutes. By doing a little at a time, eventually you'll reach a point where you'll want to finish. Also, avoid perfectionism, which can be a form of procrastination.

9. Keep things in perspective:

Setting goals that are unrealistic sets you up for failure. While it's good to set high goals for you to achieve, be sure not to overdo it. Set goals that are challenging yet reachable.

BALANCING ACADEMICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR LIFE

It is important to be involved in activities that enrich and expand your life outside of the classroom. These are called extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular involvement will:

- Increase your self-confidence and self-awareness;
- Enable you to meet other students with interests similar to yours;
- Help you determine your future career goals by identifying and developing your talents, values and strengths;
- Improve your communication, leadership, and teamwork skills;
- Enhance your college applications by preparing you academically for college, and enable you to contribute to college campus life as an involved student;
- Increase your chances of receiving college scholarships. Scholarship selection teams look for leaders and students, who are involved in, and contributing to, their communities.
- Be lots of fun!

Familiarize yourself with the extracurricular opportunities at school and in your community. Don't be afraid to check out several to see which the best fit is for you. Be on the lookout for posters and announcements, and contact your school's activities department for opportunities. Careful selection of extracurricular involvement and dedication to chosen activities will enrich your life and develop your talents. What's more, involvement in extra-curricular activities helps you to become a well-rounded student - just what colleges/universities are looking for. It may even help you to receive scholarships.

Involvement in extracurricular activities can reinforce academics and help kids to learn social skills. Also, research has shown that involvement in extracurricular activities can improve a child's sense of belonging to the school and reduce his chance of failing or even dropping out. But, remember that kids need to focus on their academic achievements as well. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia gives suggestions to help your children maintain a good balance between academics and extracurricular activities:

- **Check in:**
Get together regularly with your children to make sure their involvement in extracurricular activities isn't negatively impacting their academics. Discuss scheduling and time management to be sure they are not overwhelmed.
- **Divide your attention equally:**
Be sure that you spend as much time with your child going over schoolwork as you do in helping them to prepare for a school play or practice for a ball game.
- **Promote real-world activities:**
Getting involved in a language club or the school newspaper makes learning a child's favorite subject, such as English or Spanish, even more enjoyable.

FALLING GRADES AND MOTIVATION

As teens today are confronted with new and unfamiliar issues, many parents struggle to identify the catalysts or strategies to stimulate and motivate their teens. If your child loses their enthusiasm at a young age, it is important to guide them towards more positive performance to help prevent long-term consequences. To boost your child's feelings of enthusiasm and drive, you as the parent can consider some expert advice and strategies for support.

- **Self-Motivate**

Many experts assert that teens are most successful when they motivate themselves. Teens can learn how to motivate themselves by engaging in student clubs, groups, or organizations that foster positive peer influence solutions. For example, some clubs focus on interests that may connect with a teen's desired future career. In this case, students can determine their interests and goals, and then can simultaneously encounter clearer catalysts that drive their motivation and focus. If a student realizes he/she needs to attend college in order to achieve his/her dream, then the teen may encounter a new self-motivation to strive and succeed in school.

- **Tutoring Programs**

Many schools offer after school programs or have access to other tutoring programs to help your child improve his/her grades. See the following page of this guide for other free tutoring or homework help opportunities.

- **Mentor Programs**

Many schools have implemented mentor programs for students, where high-achieving students volunteer to support students who are struggling. Check with your child's school for possible mentor programs.

- **Encouraging**

Parents can also support un-motivated teens by helping their child identify their strengths and abilities. In doing so, parents should simultaneously encourage their child's achievements, while supporting them with enthusiasm and optimism. By motivating your child to learn what is in the curriculum, honoring their learning styles, and helping them discover their unique abilities, you are giving them some appropriate tools for successful achievement.

FREE TUTORING AND HOMEWORK HELP

Talk to your child's school counselor or teachers about tutoring opportunities in your school and community, if they need some extra help. Don't wait until they get behind in classes or feel overwhelmed! Many students benefit from tutoring, extra homework help, or studying assistance outside of their classes. Take advantage of these **FREE** resources!

Dial-A-Teacher/Albuquerque Teachers Federation: 344-3571

- Monday-Thursday 5:30-8:30 PM, closed during APS holidays
- Homework help from licensed teachers, in **English and Spanish**

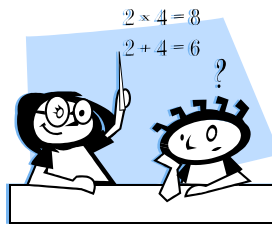
Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System:

- Online help at <http://www.cabq.gov/library/homework.html>
- You need to use a computer but do not need to have an e-mail address to log in
- 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM, 7 days a week
- Homework help with math, sciences, social studies/history, English and writing

Online Homework Assistance:

- www.homeworktips.about.com
This site offers tips for doing certain types of homework and projects.
- <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/>
Offering trustworthy study guides written by real teachers and professors.
- <http://chatterbeeshomework.homestead.com>
This site offers a list of other websites that give help and tips on certain subjects.

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS STILL NOT SUCCEEDING?



If your child is still not succeeding, you may want to consider talking to your child's teacher or school counselor about getting your child more help. Below are some processes in place at the school site that can be helpful in getting your child back on track with the help they need.

I. The Academic Improvement Plan (AIP)

Your son/daughter may qualify for an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) based on the fact they have **failed to attain proficiency on a specific school district determined assessment**, designated or approved for the grade level. Proficiency on the district determined assessment is the measure of adequate yearly progress for the student. If your son/daughter qualifies, you must be notified by the school and the initial Academic Improvement Plan should be developed before the end of the second grading period. The plan is developed in conjunction with you as parents. The plan must include the specific academic deficiencies to be addressed, the remediation strategies/interventions that will be applied, measures that will be used to determine if your son/daughter has overcome the deficiencies, and the academic expectations. The teacher is responsible for implementing the AIP. The Student Assistance Team (SAT) must convene a meeting with you and the teachers to determine intervention for the next school year.

II. Student Assistance Team (SAT)

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) is required to hold a meeting in April or May of the current school year to review your child's AIP progress which shall determine the recommendations made by SAT. If your child has made adequate yearly progress may be promoted to the next higher grade without an AIP. If your son/daughter has not made adequate yearly progress:

- He/she may be promoted to the next higher grade with an AIP developed by SAT, or
- He/she may be promoted with an AIP developed by SAT and be required to attend a summer remediation program, or
- He/she may be retained in the same grade, recommended to participate in a required summer remediation program and AIP for the following year is developed by SAT.

The SAT team will also convene a meeting if you have referred your child special education testing, if your child is being considered for retention, or to if a teacher realizes that the AIP intervention for your child is not working.

II. 504 Team Education Plan

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a civil rights law prohibits discrimination solely based on disability. This applies to students, parents, employees and other individuals with disabilities. The US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights enforces Section

504. A student must have a substantial limitation in one of the following areas to be eligible for section 504: walking, breathing, learning, seeing, hearing, speaking, working, or caring for one self. The disability must substantially limit a major life activity and impact education. The Section 504 accommodations/services a student receives will be based upon the unique needs identified during the evaluation process by the 504 team. If inquire about a 504 education plan contact the school principal, nurse, counselor, or teacher for a referral.

IV. Health and Wellness Team

Every school in the district has a health and wellness team. Some schools call the Health and Wellness team, the Mental Health Team. The members of the Health and Wellness Team include the school counselors, social workers, psychologist, and the nurse. The school Health & Wellness team usually meets on a weekly basis to discuss student concerns such as attendance, behavior, and emotional issues that may be interfering with student academic progress. Referrals are made by parents, teachers, principals, and other staff. If you have concerns about your child, contact your child's school counselor to discuss if a referral to the Health and Wellness team is appropriate.

THINGS TO BE-AWARE OF

The pre-teen and teen years bring many wonderful growth milestones, but sometimes it can also bring up troubling issues. While not every child may be faced with these issues it is important for parents to be informed and prepared to take action if necessary.



“Home is the place where boys and girls first learn how to limit their wishes, abide by rules, and consider the rights and needs of others.”

— *Sidonie Gruenberg, author*

ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE IN 6TH GRADE



May your child only succumb to positive peer pressure.
~unknown

Negative Peer Pressure

Family is important to preteens:

- Develop a close, open, and honest relationship with your child. He/she is likely to come to you when she/he is in trouble or are having problems. Listen and talk about the strong need to belong and fit in. Let him/her know it is normal to want to fit in and that peer pressure is something all children and adults experience at some time. Plan regular and frequent activities the whole family can participate in such as picnics, sports, etc. Children are less likely to give into peer pressure or gangs if parents spend quality time with them.

Stay Involved in Your Child's Life

- Encourage your preteen to pursue a wide variety of friendships with positive role models, and to join groups or do activities which involve interacting with positive role models (i.e. sports, church groups).
- Get to know your child's friends and their parents to determine if they are a positive influence and have similar values. Don't criticize friends who might be a negative influence. Your child is likely to become defensive and continue to be with them. Do discuss specific behaviors and actions, "It seems like every time you are with Tom you get into trouble."
- Know where your child is at all times and who he/she is with. Supervise them at home.
- **Help Your Child Develop a Positive Self-Image**
- **Encourage responsibility, individuality, independence, and assertiveness:** model, role play, and demonstrate these behaviors. Stress the importance of being one's own person and doing what one's feels is right.
- **Praise assertiveness and good decisions**
- **Provide appropriate discipline** when he/she gives into peer pressure, such as restricting privileges, or not letting your child spend time with the friend(s) with whom he/she got into trouble.

If you are suspicious that your child may have given into negative peer pressure, try to figure out the reason and address it. **Seek help** if she/he is consistently giving into peer pressure.

Signs of Peer Pressure

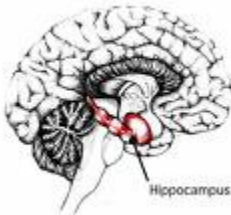
- Excessive demands for material things his/her friends have
- Disregarding your rules in order to do things with friends
- Stealing with friends
- Any hint of alcohol or drugs
- Seriously misleading you about friends or whereabouts
- Doing things to avoid rejection like going along with friends who use poor judgment

Show You Care

- Always take time to really listen and be accepting of your child
- Give children privacy; preteens need space
- Don't rush the teen years or raise false expectations
- Develop a strong sense of family unity by spending time together
- Talk about sex, drugs and alcohol

Alcohol Use

As much as parents may not like to think about it, the truth is that many kids and teens try alcohol long before it's legal for them to drink it. Although experimentation with alcohol may be common among kids, it is not safe or legal. So it's important to start discussing alcohol use and abuse with your kids at an early age and keep talking about it as they grow up.



The brain's hippocampus (responsible for learning and memory) can be 10% smaller in underage drinkers.

~Underage Drinking, 2009

The Effects of Alcohol Abuse

Short-term effects of drinking include:

- distorted vision, hearing, and coordination
- altered perceptions and emotions
- impaired judgment and decision making ability
- impairs impulse control
- bad breath
- hangovers

Children who begin drinking at age 14 have a 45% chance of becoming alcohol dependent.

~Underage Drinking, 2009

Long-term effects include:

- cirrhosis and cancer of the liver
- loss of appetite
- serious vitamin deficiencies
- stomach ailments
- heart and central nervous system damage
- memory loss
- an increased risk of impotence
- high risk for overdosing

What parents may not realize is that children say parental disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink.

~Underage Drinking, 2009

Talk to Your Child about Alcohol

Long before your kids are presented with a chance to drink alcohol, you can increase the chances that they'll just say "no."

Childhood is a time of learning and discovery, so it is important to encourage kids to ask questions, even ones that might be hard to answer. Open, honest, age-appropriate communication now sets the stage for your kids to come to you later with other difficult topics or problems

Ages 12 to 17

By the teen years, your kids should know the facts about alcohol and your attitudes and beliefs about substance abuse. So use this time to reinforce what you've already taught them and focus on keeping the lines of communication open.

Teens are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, and their increasing need for independence may make them want to defy their parents' wishes or instructions. But if you make your teen feel accepted and respected as an individual, you increase the chances that your child will try to be open with you.

Kids want to be liked and accepted by their peers, and they need a certain degree of privacy and trust. Avoid excessive preaching and threats, and instead, emphasize your love and concern. Even when they're annoyed by parental interest and questions, teens still recognize that it comes with the territory.

Teaching Kids to Say "No"

Teach kids a variety of approaches to deal with offers of alcohol:

- Encourage them to ask questions. If a drink of any kind is offered, they should ask, "What is it?" and "Where did you get it?"
- Teach them to say "no, thanks" when the drink offered is an alcoholic one.
- Remind them to leave any uncomfortable situation. Make sure they have money for transportation or a phone number where you or another responsible adult can be reached.
- Teach kids never to accept a ride from someone who has been drinking. Some parents find that offering to pick up their kids from an uncomfortable situation — no questions asked — helps encourage kids to be honest and call when they need help.

General Tips

Fortunately, parents can do much to protect their kids from using and abusing alcohol:

Be a good role model. Consider how your use of alcohol or medications may influence your kids.

- Educate yourself about alcohol so you can be a better teacher. Read and collect information that you can share with kids and other parents.
- Try to be conscious of how you can help build your child's self-esteem. For example, kids are more likely to feel good about themselves if you emphasize their strengths and positively reinforce healthy behaviors.

- Teach kids to manage stress in healthy ways, such as by seeking help from a trusted adult or engaging in a favorite activity.
- Keep tabs on where your kids go.
- Know the parents of your child's friends.

Recognizing the Signs

Despite your efforts, your child may still use — and abuse — alcohol. How can you tell? Here are some common warning signs:

- the odor of alcohol
- sudden change in mood or attitude
- change in attendance or performance at school
- loss of interest in school, sports, or other activities
- discipline problems at school
- withdrawal from family and friends
- secrecy
- association with a new group of friends and reluctance to introduce them to you
- alcohol disappearing from your home
- depression and developmental difficulties

It's important not to jump to conclusions based on only one or two signs. Adolescence is a time of change — physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. This can lead to erratic behavior and mood swings as kids try to cope with all of these changes. If your child is using alcohol, there will usually be a cluster of these signs, like changes in friends, behavior, dress, attitude, mood, and grades. If you see a number of changes, look for all explanations by talking to your kids, but don't overlook substance abuse as a possibility.

Additional Information:

- http://www.cdc.gov/Alcohol/quickstats/underage_drinking.htm
- <http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/>

Tobacco Use



It is important to make sure kids understand the dangers of tobacco use. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States. It can cause cancer, heart disease, and lung disease. Chewing tobacco (smokeless or spit tobacco) can lead to nicotine addiction, oral cancer, gum disease, and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attacks.

The Facts about Tobacco

Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 different chemicals. At least 43 are known carcinogens (cause cancer in humans). The chemical nicotine in tobacco is what causes someone to become addicted to tobacco. This can happen within days of first using it. Nicotine affects mood as well as the heart, lungs, stomach, and nervous system.

Other health risks include short-term effects of smoking such as coughing and throat irritation. Over time, more serious conditions may develop, including increases in heart rate and blood pressure, bronchitis, and emphysema.

Finally, numerous studies indicate that young smokers are more likely to experiment with marijuana, cocaine, heroin, or other illicit drugs.

Preventing Kids from Picking up the Habit

Kids might be drawn to smoking and chewing tobacco for any number of reasons — to look cool, act older, lose weight, win merchandise, seem tough, or feel independent. But parents can combat those draws and keep kids from trying — and getting addicted to — tobacco.

Establish a good foundation of communication with your kids early on to make it easier to work through tricky issues like tobacco use. Some guidelines to keep in mind:

- Discuss sensitive topics in a way that doesn't make kids fear punishment or judgment.
- Emphasize what kids do right rather than wrong. Self-confidence is a child's best protection against peer pressure.
- Encourage kids to get involved in activities that prohibit smoking, such as sports.
- Show that you value your kids' opinions and ideas.
- It's important to keep talking to kids about the dangers of tobacco use over the years. Even the youngest child can understand that smoking is bad for the body.
- Ask what kids find appealing — or unappealing — about smoking. Be a patient listener.
- Discuss ways to respond to peer pressure to smoke. Your child may feel confident simply saying "no." But also offer alternative responses such as "It will make my clothes and breath smell bad" or "I hate the way it makes me look."
- Encourage kids to walk away from friends who don't respect their reasons for not smoking.
- Explain how much smoking governs the daily life of kids who start doing it. How do they afford the cigarettes? How do they have money to pay for other things they want? How does it affect their friendships?

Warning Signs:

If you smell smoke on your child's clothing, try not to overreact. Ask about it first - maybe he or she has been hanging around with friends who smoke or just tried one cigarette. Many kids do try a cigarette at one time or another but don't go on to become regular smokers.

Signs of tobacco use include:

- coughing
- throat irritation
- hoarseness
- decreased athletic performance
- greater susceptibility to colds
- stained teeth and clothing (also signs of chewing tobacco use)
- shortness of breath

If Your Child Smokes

Sometimes even the best foundation isn't enough to stop kids from experimenting with tobacco. It may be tempting to get angry, but it's more productive to focus on communicating with your child.

Here are some tips that may help:

- Resist lecturing
- Uncover what appeals to your child about smoking and talk about it honestly.
- Many times kids aren't able to appreciate how their current behaviors can affect their future health. So talk about the immediate downsides to smoking: less money to spend on other pursuits, shortness of breath, bad breath, yellow teeth, and smelly clothes.
- Stick to the smoking rules you've set up. And don't let a child smoke at home to keep the peace.
- If you hear, "I can quit any time I want," ask your child to show you by quitting cold turkey for a week.
- Help your child develop a quitting plan and offer information and resources, and reinforce the decision to quit with praise.
- Encourage a meeting with your doctor, who can be supportive and may have treatment plans.

Quitting Tobacco Resources:

The State of New Mexico has a valuable tool to help smokers quit: The Quit Line, 1 800 QUIT NOW (1 800 784-8669) is open from 6 a.m. - 10 p.m., 7 days a week. Use this free service to help you or your child quit smoking and improve your health, and add years to your life. More than 400,000 New Mexicans who have quit smoking using this resource. For more information go to:

http://www.smokefreenm.com/static_pages/get_help_quitting/

Other online resources:

- <http://www.lungusa.org/site/c.dvLUK9O0E/b.39871/>
- <http://www.tobaccofacts.org>

Drug Use

Drug use by teens increases the risk of addiction and can change the developing brain for life. Parents are the most important influence in a teen's decisions about drug use. You can and do make a difference.

Help Prevent Drug Use with You Child

When it comes to drug use and your child, be proactive as opposed to reactive. The tips offered below give ways to help your child from starting the use of drugs.

- **Set rules.** Let your teen know that drug and alcohol use is unacceptable and that these rules are set to keep him or her safe. Set limits with clear consequences for breaking them
- **Know where your teen is** and what he or she will be doing during unsupervised time. Research shows that teens with unsupervised time are three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs. Unsupervised teens are also more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as underage drinking, sexual activity, and cigarette smoking than other teens. This is particularly important after school, in the evening hours, and also when school is out during the summer or holidays.
- **Keep them busy — especially between 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.** and into the evening hours. Engage your teen in after-school activities. Enroll your child in a supervised educational program or a sports league. Research shows that teens who are involved in constructive, adult-supervised activities are less likely to use drugs than other teens.

- **Check on your teenager.** Occasionally check in to see that your kids are where they say they're going to be and that they are spending time with whom they say they are with.
- **Get to know your teen's friends** (and their parents) by inviting them over for dinner or talking with them at your child's sports practices, dance rehearsal, or other activities.
- **Stay in touch with the adult supervisors** of your child (camp counselors, coaches, employers, and teachers) and have them inform you of any changes in your teen.

Warning Signs

- Changes in friends
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Lack of interest in personal appearance
- Negative changes in schoolwork, missing school, or declining grades
- Increased secrecy about possessions or activities
- Use of incense, room deodorant, or perfume to hide smoke or chemical odors
- Subtle changes in conversations with friends, e.g. more secretive, using "coded" language
- Change in clothing choices: new fascination with clothes that highlight drug use
- Increase in borrowing money
- Evidence of drug paraphernalia such as pipes, rolling papers, etc.
- Evidence of use of inhalant products (such as hairspray, nail polish, correction fluid, common household products); Rags and paper bags are sometimes used as accessories
- Bottles of eye drops, which may be used to mask bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils
- New use of mouthwash or breath mints to cover up the smell of alcohol
- Missing prescription drugs—especially narcotics and mood stabilizers

If You Suspect Your Child is Using Drugs

Don't blame yourself if you suspect or know that your child is using drugs, but take action now. Remember, the longer you wait, the harder it will be to deal with your child's drug use.

When you have a suspicion, what do you do? First, learn as much as you can. The next thing you can do is sit down and talk with your child. Be sure to have the conversation when all of you are calm and have plenty of time. This isn't an easy task. By staying involved, you can help them stop using drugs and make choices that will make a positive difference in their lives. Tell your child what you see and how you feel about it. Be specific about the things you have observed that cause concern. Show them that you care for their well-being and this is why you are trying to address the concerns you have.

- Other avenues for information or assistance:
 - Pediatricians or family doctors
 - School counselors
 - School nurses
 - Faith leaders
 - Community health centers
 - Adolescent prevention or treatment professionals
 - Local community anti-drug coalitions

Drug Prevention Program in Middle School

One of the programs that will be offered throughout the district to Middle School students is “**ProjectALERT**”. The goal of this curriculum is to reduce and prevent substance use and abuse among Albuquerque youth by coordinating strategies that address change at the individual, classroom, school, family and community levels. Check with your school for more information and availability.

ProjectALERT’s core strategies:

- Motivate students against drug use
- Provide skills and strategies to resist drugs
- Establish new non-use attitudes and beliefs

Additional Information:

- <http://www.theantidrug.com>
- <http://www.drugfree.org>

Bullying



What is bullying?

Bullying is abusive behavior by one or more students against a victim or victims. It can be a direct attack -- teasing, taunting, threatening, stalking, name-calling, hitting, making threats, coercion, and stealing -- or more subtle through malicious gossiping, spreading rumors, and intentional exclusion. Both result in victims becoming socially rejected and isolated.

Bullying is a common experience for many children and teens. Direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary school years, peak in the middle school/junior high school years, and decline during the high school years. Although direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant.

Whether the bullying is direct or indirect, the key component of bullying is **physical or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.**

APS has a district bullying policy and take bullying problems seriously. Being bullied or bullying is not just part of growing up! Bullying is a learned behavior that can be prevented. Bullying occurs in several forms such as hitting, treats, and insults, spreading rumors, or leaving a person out of an activity or group.

Cyber bullying occurs when the bully uses the internet or a cell phone to threaten, harass or embarrass people.

Being bullied can cause academic problems, social isolation, and mental health problems. Bullies are at higher risk for academic problems, violence, and crime. If your child is a bystander encourage him/her to report the bullying to school staff. Many of our schools offer bully prevention programs. Inquire at your child’s school about the bullying programs that are offered at school.

The difference between bullying and normal conflict:

Normal Conflict	Bullying
Happens occasionally	Happens repeatedly
Accidental	Done on purpose
Not serious	Serious threat of physical or emotional harm
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction on part of the victim
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power or control
Not trying to get something	Trying to gain material things or power
Shows remorse takes responsibility	No remorse blames victim
Effort to solve the problem	No effort to solve the problem

What if I think my child is a bully?

If you suspect your child is bullying others, it's important to seek help for him or her as soon as possible. Without intervention, bullying can lead to serious academic, social, emotional and legal difficulties. Talk to your child's pediatrician, teacher, principal, school counselor, or family physician. If the bullying continues, a comprehensive evaluation by a mental health professional should be arranged. The evaluation can help you and your child understand what is causing the bullying, and help you develop a plan to stop the destructive behavior.

What if I think my child is being bullied?

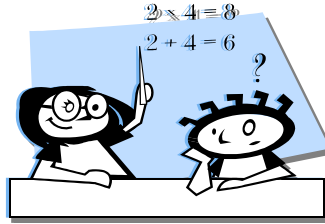
Victims of bullies often fear school and consider it to be an unsafe and unhappy place. Victims will often stay home 'sick' rather than go to school or travel on the school bus. Victims experience real suffering that can interfere with their social and emotional development, as well as their school performance.

If you suspect your child may be the victim of bullying ask him or her to tell you what's going on. It's important to respond in a positive and accepting manner. Ask your child what he or she thinks should be done. What's already been tried? What worked and what didn't? Help your child practice what to say to the bully so he or she will be prepared the next time.

Other specific suggestions include the following:

- Know the school policies that protect students from harassment, bullying, and physical violence. All students have the right to a safe and secure learning environment. Get copies of these policies and procedures.
- Seek help from your child's teacher, the school counselor, and school administrators.
- Notify the police if your child is assaulted.

If your child becomes withdrawn, depressed, reluctant to go to school, or if you see a decline in school performance, additional consultation or intervention may be required.



Additional Information:

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>

<http://www.bullybust.org/>

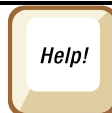
<http://www.bullying.org/>

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/parents/resources/bullies.html>

<http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>

<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/topics/bullying.asp>

Cyber Bullying



What is Cyber bullying?

Cyber bullying is threatening, lying about, stalking or otherwise harassing a person online or via other electronic communication devices like a cell phone. It is becoming a bigger problem as more and more people spend time on the Internet and on their cell phones.

There are a number of behaviors that are considered cyber bullying, including:

- Sending harassing messages
- Impersonating another person and gaining trust
- Posting someone else's personal information
- Posting false or unsavory information about another person
- Posting private or doctored pictures about another person
- Using the Internet to encourage others to bully the victim

How to Prevent Your Child from Being Victimized

- **Be your child's support system.** The biggest way to prevent your child from being a victim is to keep the lines of communication open.
- **Be firm.** Set rules regarding when and how long your child can be online. Accessing the Internet is akin to inviting someone into your home, so you may choose to only allow Web time when you're at home. Use Internet filters, timers, and whatever else you need to do to protect your child. Also see the section on internet safety tips on page 34 of this guide
- **Know your child.** This is very important. Kids who are already suffering from low self-esteem or depression are prime targets for cyber-bullying. It can be tempting to assume that your child is just going through a phase or that they're just in a "bad mood," but you are better off seeking professional help if there is a problem than simply waiting things out.

- **Know the danger signs.** Your child may become more withdrawn or moody. They may spend more time online, or may refuse to use the computer altogether. They may cut off ties with friends. If your child gives any indication that they are being bullied on or offline, take it seriously.
- **Educate.** Teach your child what to do in cases where they feel threatened or bullied. They should ignore the offender and contact an adult immediately. They should never engage with the person who is threatening them as that is only encouragement for the behaviors to continue. As an adult, if you feel threatened by someone online, contact the police just to be safe. You can also use built-in measures on certain websites, such as ignoring or reporting someone else.

Additional Information:

- <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/parents/index.html>
- <http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying>
- <http://www.cyberbullying.us/>



Sexual Harassment

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior -- of a sexual nature -- that makes a person feel uncomfortable, fearful or powerless, and can even interfere with schoolwork. Sexual harassment can happen to anyone -- male or female.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

- Sexual comments about your body
- Sexual advances/propositions/suggestions
- Sexual touching
- Sexual graffiti
- Sexual gestures
- Sexual "dirty" jokes
- Spreading rumors about other students' sexual activity
- Touching oneself in a sexual fashion in front of others
- Talking about one's own sexual activities in front of others
- Showing offensive/sexual pictures, stories, objects

What should my child do if they are being sexually harassed at school?

Sexual harassment can be a humiliating, embarrassing or frightening experience. There are steps you and your child can take to bring an end to sexual harassment, some your child can take on their own, and others they should take with adults who are both willing, and required by law to help:

- Do not ignore the sexual harassment.

- Tell or write the person who's harassing you to STOP. It may not always be clear to your harasser that the behavior is unwelcome.
- Talk to someone they trust about how they're feeling. Friends, the school counselor, a trusted teacher, siblings and parents can all be helpful in giving support as well as ideas for how to stop the harassment.
- Inform your teacher, school counselor or school principal that your child is being sexually harassed.
- Be aware of the school's sexual harassment policy. It can be located on the APS website procedural directives under "About Us."

Other ways to help:

- **How to Get Help-** Kids may be able to resolve some minor incidents on their own. When they can't, make sure they know where to go for help. Tell them to keep reporting until they get help. Encourage them to keep a record documenting each occurrence, as well as noting who else may have witnessed the incidents.
- **Comfort and Support-** Kids who are experiencing sexual harassment need validation and support. Give them an opportunity to talk and express their feelings. Teens who are victims of unrelenting sexual harassment are at increased risk for problems like depression, academic problems and skipping or dropping out of school.

Possible Ways to Prevent Sexual Harassment:

- **Be a Positive Role Model-** Watch what you say to kids and how you say it. Be sure you aren't modeling disrespectful behavior, and let kids see you honoring limits and choices. Don't downplay concerns or brush them off as "he said, she said". If kids confide in you, take their concerns seriously.
- **Social Skills Development-** Kids need opportunities to learn what behaviors constitute sexual harassment, and learn the importance of developing respect and empathy for others. Teach them the components of healthy, respectful relationships.
- **Good Communication-** You can help them develop confidence in speaking up for themselves when boundaries are unclear in a way that strengthens, rather than hurts, friendships. Good communication skills are key in helping kids learn how to avoid mixed messages about what behavior they will and will not tolerate.

Additional Information:

- http://youthdevelopment.suite101.com/article.cfm/teens_and_sexual_harassment
- <http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep01/harassment.html>
- <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/sexharassresources.html>
- <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/sexhar00.html>
- <http://www.aauw.org/research/harassmentFreeHallways.cfm>

STUDENT SAFETY TIPS



General Safety Guidelines from the Albuquerque Police Department to Tell You Children

General Safety Guidelines:

- Know and follow the school's safety policies.
- If you walk to school, walk with a friend.
- If you drive to school, always secure your vehicle.
- Carry your keys in hand. You'll be ready to move into your car quickly.
- Never carry large sums of money with you.
- Always tell your parents where you plan to be before and after school.
- Make sure that your emergency contact card at school is updated.
- Report all suspicious activity whether on or off campus.
- Immediately report any information about a student with weapons.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Investigate the campus during broad daylight. Be familiar with the general layout of the buildings and walkways.
- Walk in groups and stay in well lit areas.
- Carry a whistle with you. If in danger you can blow it to create attention and it cannot be used to harm you.
- Avoid high risk situations and seek help from an adult.
- Speak up about and refuse to participate in negative or criminal behavior.
- Follow instructions of school, law enforcement officials or other emergency response personnel.
- Refrain from teasing, bullying and/or harassing other students. While others may be different from you, be accepting and respectful of their differences. Remember, you also want to be accepted and respected for your uniqueness as well.

Cell Phone:

- Never leave your full name on your answering machine.
- Have 911 programmed on your phone.
- Report any threatening text messages.



**SCHOOL CRIME STOPPERS: 243-STOP
TO REPORT A WEAPON ON CAMPUS: 1-866-SPEAK-UP**



Internet Safety Tips

The first step in reducing risks online is talking. Talking to your children about what they should and should not do when they are online. Keep the computer in a common area. Find out the activities they are currently doing online and talk about them. Then, review these important tips with your child to help keep them and their personal information safe when using the computer.

General Tips:

- Do not go to private chat rooms without your parents being aware.
- Always tell you parents when you are going online.
- Never give out any personal information about yourself, particularly where you attend school, your name, address, or phone number.
- Report all electronic harassment and/or abuse to your parents.
- Never set up meetings with anyone. If someone tries to arrange a meeting with you immediately notify your parent or guardian, and notify local law enforcement.

Tempted to meet someone face-to-face that you know only from online chats?

Remember: anyone can pretend to be anyone online. A skilled predator will pretend to be exactly the type of person you are looking for; otherwise you wouldn't be interested in getting together, would you? If you think you can't come in contact with a predator, think again. Predators go anywhere you go on the Internet. MySpace found 30,000 sex offenders with profiles and they are just the ones who used their real names to register.

Sharing too much information about yourself?

Giving out personal information could lead a predator straight to your door. Set all online profiles of yourself to PRIVATE or FRIENDS ONLY. You, your friends, and your athletic teams are putting information about you onto the web. If the world can see that information, so can a predator or a stalker. Guard your personal information and ask others to be careful with it as well.

There is another potential problem that you might not consider: Identity Theft.

This is a crime in which someone establishes credit in your name. Unfortunately for you, the credit history that is established will not be a good one and it will take a lot of time and effort to clean up the mess. Giving out personal information should be **your** decision. Just because an interesting website asks for your personal information doesn't mean you should give it out. **Be careful posting photos of yourself on the web.** Photos placed on public sites can be manipulated and placed back on public sites. Such photos of you might prove to be embarrassing or worse – not the kind of photo you would want a college admissions committee or potential employer to see.

What do you know about intellectual properties?

Do you know that intellectual properties are protected by copyright law? Using another's intellectual properties without their permission is illegal. Many owners of intellectual properties view piracy and plagiarism as stealing. Illegal downloading of movies and music can have serious legal and monetary consequences. The music industry has taken legal action against some offenders, typically costing the person thousands of dollars to resolve.

Here are some examples of intellectual property: music recordings; videos; photographs; drawings; magazine articles; computer games; computer software; books.

Plagiarizing can seriously damage your academic record, which could adversely affect college admission or getting a job.

HELPFUL LINKS

- www.cybercrime.gov/rules
- www.cybercitizenship.org
- www.copyrightkids.org
- www.bsacybersafety.com/index.cfm



PROTECTING YOUR COMPUTER

- **E-mails from unknown sources** may contain attachments that introduce viruses that permanently damage your computer. **Forwarding e-mails** from unknown sources can reveal your friend's email address to the sender and possibly infect your friend's computer with a virus.
- **File sharing** can lead to a virus or provide access to information contained on your hard drive.
- **Installing a firewall** can help protect your computer from the problems created by hackers.
- **Anti-Virus software** can help protect your files.
- **Disconnecting your Internet when not in use** is the best way to prevent anyone from using the Internet's "two way street" to get into your computer.
- **Posting your e-mail address on public sites** allows spammers to find it and send you junk mail.

Remember: Your first and best line of defense in cyberspace is self-defense.

Looking Ahead

The next few sections offer information on preparing for your child's transition into Middle School as well as his/her future.



“To be prepared is half the victory.” ~ Miguel De Cervantes

CAREERS/EXPLORING OPTIONS



While your student is just starting middle school and life after High School may seem far away, now is a great time to start exploring your child's interests, talents, and things they enjoy doing all while asking them if they think they could build a career from these interests and abilities.

There are many exciting careers waiting for those who are interested and prepared. It is never too early to look carefully with your child at their interests and start to explore different careers. People work an average of 35-45 years, so it's important that you select a career you'll enjoy. Don't panic, though; this process takes time and many people change careers an average of three times in their lifetime.

How will my child know what career is right for them?

Helping your child find and express their interests, abilities, values, and job outlook can help them to answer this question. Below each will be discussed and possibilities for exploring each is offered.

Interests: What sorts of classes, subjects, or hobbies interest your child? Would they prefer working more with things, people, data, or ideas? Use the school's career center/school counseling office to explore careers and advanced educational opportunities. Advise your child to ask their counselor to help them explore their strengths and interests through interest inventories. The following interest inventories help you recognize areas that you might be interested in:

- www.nycareerzone.org/text/index.jsp
- <http://schooltoworld.org/docs/cis2.pdf>
- <http://www.aps.edu/aps/careers/index.htm>

Abilities: Ask your child: What comes easy to you? What are your strengths? What type of a career would require those abilities and strengths? Some careers require 4-8 years of post-high school education. Do you have the ability to endure the academic rigors of college and possibly graduate school? Some careers require physical strength and coordination, others are very technical, and still others call for strong people skills.

Values: We often forget to consider our own personal values when choosing careers. It's important to discuss with your child about what they value most in life. It's helpful to choose a career that is compatible with those values. If they love being outdoors, explore careers that would allow them opportunity to be outside when working. Discuss what careers support those values?

Job Outlook: Our world is changing so quickly that it's hard to stay on top of the job market, the jobs that are in high and low demand, and the new careers that will be created. As you and your child discuss their list of the possible careers that match their interests, abilities and values, have them research the job outlook, availability of particular jobs and in what regions of the country or world they are located.

Explore Careers by Cluster: Because there are so many different jobs out there, jobs are grouped into "career clusters". Jobs in the same cluster are alike in some way. Once your child knows more about their interests and strengths, they should be able to narrow down the career clusters and jobs within them that might be a good fit (see page 46 for details).

Interviews: Suggest that you and/or your child talk to people who work in jobs that interest them. Ask about their work. What do they like about it? What kind of training or education was required? They may do this in person, by phone, through a letter or by e-mail, be sure to choose a communication option that is both appropriate and safe for your child.

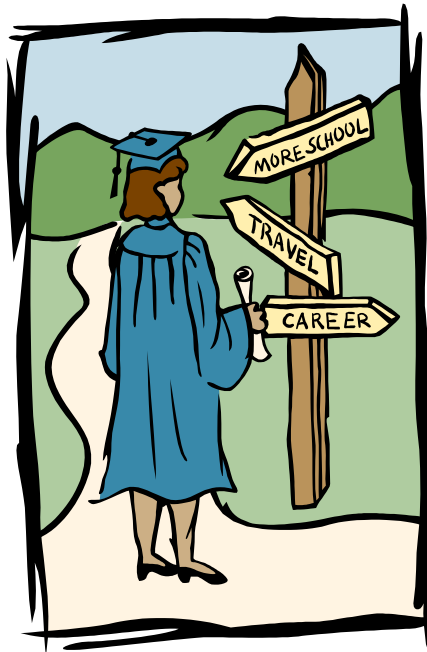
Once your child has explored their interests, strengths and values, and has looked at the career clusters, pathways and jobs that might be a good fit for them, start discussing what classes and extracurricular activities might be good for life after 6th grade. Also, continue to research what education and/or training beyond high school will be required to pursue the career that interests them. Below are some general post-high school options:

- **Four-Year Colleges:** There are colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and around the world. Also, New Mexico has many excellent public and private universities with varying degrees of competitiveness. Check each school for unique programs and majors as well as entrance requirements.
- **Junior/Two-Year Colleges:** Students may take a one-year certificate or two-year associate's degree program in a variety of vocational and technical fields, as well as liberal arts. Upon program completion, students may go directly into jobs or transfer to a four-year college. Tuition is less expensive than for four-year institutions. Requirements: High school diploma or equivalency and placement testing.
- **Applied Technology Centers – Vocational/Technical/Business Schools:** There are many local private schools offering training in a variety of fields, such as: secretarial work, computer training, travel, court reporting, massage, cosmetology, automotive work, and more. Requirements vary according to the program.
- **Apprenticeships:** Formal training programs are available in over 800 manual occupations, such as building trades (electrician, carpenter, and bricklayer) and manufacturing (machinist, welder). An entry-level worker signs a contract to receive supervised on-the-job training and related technical studies. He/she learns the entire range of skills within an occupation over a set period of time (average of 4-6 years). The worker's pay starts low and increases as skills are acquired. Requirements: 18 years old, high school diploma (for most), physically fit, aptitude and/or manual skills. You must go through an application process, requiring a high school transcript, letters of recommendation and an interview. It may take months or years to be placed if accepted.

- **Employment:** The Career Center or school counseling office at your child's high school offers many resources to help research careers, such as books and pamphlets, and career searches on the computer. Many jobs offer "on the job training", and some offer pre-employment training programs. The counselor is available to help your child develop a plan of action for pursuing a job during and after high school.
- **Military:** Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, National Guard, and Coast Guard are the different branches of the US Military. For more information about careers in the Armed Forces — both full-time (active) and part-time (reserve) duty -- call to speak to a specialist. Also, check out: www.militarycareers.com.
- **Armed Services Academies:** U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, West Point, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy are examples of the Armed Services Academies. These are extremely competitive, and application/nomination must be started in junior year.
- **ROTC:** Two- and four-year programs for military training are offered at select colleges and culminate in an officer's commission upon graduation. Educational scholarships are available.

The New Mexico Department of Higher Education is a great place to get up-to-date information on all of these options in New Mexico:

<http://hed.state.nm.us/default.asp?CustComKey=193313&CategoryKey=&n=&DomName=hed.state.nm.us> Another New Mexico resource is <http://www.carveyourpath.org/>



New Mexico Career Clusters

“What does this mean to my child?”



Think about how many different kinds of careers and jobs there are in the world. How are students supposed to decide which ones appeal to them, which ones they would be good at, and which they could realistically train for? The whole process can be confusing and overwhelming!

By thinking of jobs in terms of the Clusters and the Pathways that they fit in, it is easier to see what is out there, which cluster might be a good fit for you, and which path you should focus on. Once you take some **career interest inventories** (see your school counselor, your advisor, and this guide) and learn what your **strengths** are, it will be easier to **narrow down your career choices**. You can then check out jobs within those areas, by interviewing and shadowing people in those jobs, and by researching what education and training is required. Then, with the help of your school counselor, teachers, family and other available resources, you'll find it much easier to launch yourself on the right pathway which will take you toward the career that works for **YOU!**

New Mexico's 7 Career Clusters	New Mexico's Career Pathways within each Career Cluster (46 total)
Arts & Entertainment	☐ Design ☐ Entrepreneurship ☐ Foreign Language ☐ Performing Arts ☐ Visual Arts
Business Services	☐ Administrative & Information Support ☐ Business, Financial Management & Accounting ☐ Consumer Sales & Service ☐ Economics & Management ☐ Education and Training ☐ Human Resources Management ☐ Information Technology Systems Administration ☐ Legal Services
Communications & Information	☐ Communications ☐ Marketing ☐ Media Technologies ☐ Network Systems ☐ Printing Technology ☐ Software Application Development ☐ Web Development

Energy & Environmental Technologies	❑ Civil Engineering ❑ Environmental Systems ❑ Government Relations ❑ Health, Safety & Environmental Regulation ❑ Machining, Instrument & Electrical ❑ Maintenance Operations ❑ Process Engineering ❑ Product Engineering
Engineering, Construction & Manufacturing	❑ Architecture & Drafting ❑ Construction ❑ Logistics & Inventory ❑ Project Management ❑ Quality Assurance ❑ Systems Integration Engineering ❑ Trades, Installation & Repair
Health & Biosciences	❑ Applied Research Engineering ❑ Basic Science ❑ Medical Diagnosis Services ❑ Para-Professional Healthcare Treatment
Hospitality & Tourism	❑ Culinary Arts Pathway ❑ Destination & Events Management ❑ Environmental, Historic & Cultural Preservation ❑ Hotel & Resort Management ❑ Recreation & Gaming ❑ Restaurant Management

Additional Information: <http://www.workinnewmexico.gov/clusters.html>

While reviewing this information, keep in mind that it is OK for your child not to have their interests and career dreams set in stone by this point. What is important is to open the discussion about their future. Keep those lines of communication open so that your child can feel more comfortable the closer they get to planning and preparing for life after middle and high school.



EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Employability skills are “skills that are essential and transferable to a variety of situations and are necessary for an individual to function in the 21st century workplace”. These skills are ones that your child should be working on and continuing to hone. Below is a chart from School-To- World that shows how skills and behavior seen at school will translate into the workplace.

Performance	Successful	Average	Unemployable
Attendance	0-3 absences per semester	4 absences per semester	6 or more absences per semester
Punctual	Always on time	Occasionally late	Often late
Team Player	Team leader	Solid contributor	Limited contributor
Independent Worker	Self-starter – Always on task	Limited guidance – Usually on task	Requires constant monitoring – often off task
Appropriate Behavior	Encouraging & respectful of others	Respectful of others	Disrespectful & inappropriate
Appropriate Dress	Clothing meets dress code & is presented neatly	Clothing meets dress code	Clothing violates dress code
Interested & Focused	Great attitude & interested	Generally positive & engaged	Negative attitude & little interest
Able to Give & Take Suggestions	Always willing to give & take suggestions	Often offers & accepts suggestions	Seldom offers or accepts suggestions
Communicates Clearly	Speaks & writes with excellent clarity	Generally speaks & writes with clarity	Unable to speak or write clearly
Math & Technology Skills	High level of math & technology skills	Basic math & technology skills	Limited math & technology skills
Manages Resources Effectively & Safely	Manages resources extremely effectively & safely	Manages resources effectively & safely	Wasteful & unsafe with resources
Listens, Reads & Follows Directions	Able to listen, read & follow directions without assistance	Able to listen, read & follow directions with limited assistance	Unable to listen, read & follow directions
Creative	Able to generate many new ideas	Able to generate some new ideas	Not able to generate new ideas
Completes Tasks	Completes tasks ahead of deadlines	Completes tasks by deadlines	Unable to complete tasks by deadlines
Open to New Learning & Ideas	Seeks out & uses new learning often	Open to new learning	Rarely ventures out of comfort zone
Plans Ahead	Able to plan ahead, manage time & anticipate problems	Able to plan ahead & manage time effectively	Unable to plan ahead or manage time

In addition to the skills or performance listed above there are also **employability “soft skills”** which include:

- **Problem Solving:**

Problem solving goes beyond math skills. It is the higher order thinking necessary to find an answer. This can take the form of a question such as, “write a new ending to the given story.” Students need to think critically about what they already know and then draw a conclusion before producing the requested result.

- **Team Work:**

Team work is the ability to effectively solve a problem or work within a diverse group. It requires good communication skills and the ability to both support and compromise with others.

- **Adaptability:**

Being able to adapt to changes in technology and the workplace itself is critical in today's businesses. It is also described as the flexibility to accept new ideas and the ability to simultaneously work on multiple projects.

Other helpful websites:

<http://schooltoworld.org/>

www.workinnewmexico.gov

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