8th Grade Student & Family Guide
Everything You Need to Know For Success in 8th Grade

Middle School

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

**Professional School Counselors**
Iona Barela
Debbie Behnfield
Donna Cole
Thomas Cordova
Helen Edmonds
Denise Gomez
Charlene Lutz
Rosario Magallanes
Karla Mendoza
Bob Monclova
Blasa Munoz
Rachel Ochoa-Tafoya
Robert Szenasi

**District Counseling Staff**
Devon Ehardt
Laura Owen
Bernadette Sanchez
Freida Trujillo
Valerie Velhagen
# EIGHTH GRADE STUDENT & FAMILY GUIDE
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Introduction to 8th Grade

Starting the 8th grade is exciting and comes with more expectation and growth, all while your child prepares for High School and life after school. This guide has been put together to help inform you and your child about what is available to him/her at school and what can be expected for the years ahead.

The following sections give you and your child information about 8th grade; the standards for core curriculum, standardized testing, questions that might arise, making and keeping friends and other information that you and your child should know as they start the 8th grade.

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

Eighth grade and middle school in general, is a time of great moments and some challenges. There many changes that are taking place as your child moves from childhood to young adulthood, this section offer some brief insight into those changes.

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 8th grade.

Around the time of 8th grade your child may have more insecurities, self-consciousness and moodiness. Self-esteem may take a hit this year as they become more concerned and focused on how they look, talk and act with peers. They tend to assume that everyone is looking at them and judging them.

During 8th grade your child may spend a lot of time isolating and not want to do things or spend time with the family. Their peer relationships and friendships still tend to be focused on "the group", while they may be starting to develop one or two intimate friendships. The social scene may be volatile, though, with constant changes and shifts in friends and comrades.

Physically, this is a time of rapid growth spurts. With these physical changes, parents may notice increased appetite, need for more sleep and more erratic sleep patterns, "typical" signs of adolescence such as acne, oily skin and oily hair.

The 8th grader is developing intellectually as well. Problem-solving and decision-making skills are evolving, as is the ability to grasp more complex concepts and the world may begin to seem less “black and white” as the 8th grader is able to ponder some of the complexities of life. With this increased ability to grasp complex concepts parents may notice that their 8th grader is beginning to argue and debate more and may challenge authority and established rules.

The Pre-teen/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.
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 for the 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 improves outcomes in the areas of truancy, behavior, and academics.
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 are 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
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<th><strong>READING</strong></th>
<th><strong>WRITING</strong></th>
<th><strong>EXPRESSION LANGUAGE: SPEAKING</strong></th>
<th><strong>RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE: LISTENING AND VIEWING</strong></th>
<th><strong>RESEARCH</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>● Increases comprehension of informational text: uses graphic elements of a text to locate specific information, uses skimming and scanning of organizational elements to increase understanding of the text, generates questions to be answered while reading, and reflects on what has been learned after reading.</td>
<td>● Demonstrates competence in using the writing process to create a final product: prepares an outline based upon a chosen organization, including an introduction, thesis, transitions, previews, summaries, a logically developed body, and an effective conclusion, uses specific rhetorical strategies, edits to remove extraneous details and inconsistencies, and revises written work to make it clear.</td>
<td>● Demonstrates competence with speaking strategies: prepares an outline for a speech based upon a chosen pattern of organization to include an introduction, transitions, previews, summaries, a logically developed body, and an effective conclusion (See also: Strand III: Expressive Language: Writing), and revises a speech for word choice, appropriate organization, consistent point of view, and transitions between paragraphs, passages, and ideas.</td>
<td>● Develops and uses constructive criteria to evaluate the quality of communication: uses knowledge of language structure and literary or media techniques to assess meaning, draws conclusions based on evidence, reason, or relevant information, considers the implications, consequences, or impact of those conclusions, identifies and explores the underlying assumptions of the author/speaker, remaining open to different interpretations, and recognizes the point of view of the author/speaker by considering alternative points of view.</td>
<td>● Uses a variety of techniques for researching topics: cross-references related topics while gathering information from print and non-print sources, summarizes and/or paraphrases information, uses news sources, both traditional and electronic, government publications, reference tools, and other library resources for oral, written, or multimedia presentations, and makes use of notes and memory aids.</td>
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<td>● Uses a variety of reading processes and strategies when independently reading a variety of literary and informational texts in order to understand main story elements, author perspective, and style.</td>
<td>● Demonstrates competence in using writing conventions, uses correct and varied sentence types and sentence openings, revises for word choice, appropriate organization, consistent point of view, and transitions between paragraphs, passages, and ideas, compares items for emphasis, evaluates the use of dialects in standard and non standard English, identifies and uses parallelism to present ideas in a series, and uses subordination, coordination, apposition, and other devices to indicate relationship between ideas.</td>
<td>● Demonstrates competence in applying appropriate types of writing for the intended purpose and audience: describes the significance of the subject to the author, writes a personal account that establishes a point of view and sharpens focus, describes remembered responses, selects details that best illuminate the topic, and connects events to self and society, compares, contrasts, and evaluates details, main ideas, themes, and actions in response to something that has been read or viewed, supports a thesis citing evidence from a reliable source, and creates written arguments to persuade by establishing context, creating a persona, developing interest, developing a controlling idea that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment, arranging details, reasons, and examples effectively, and anticipating and addressing reader/listener concerns.</td>
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<td>● Applies strategies (e.g., knowledge of word origins and derivations, analogies, idioms, prefixes, and suffixes) to define and extend understanding of word meaning.</td>
<td>● Analyzes the author’s use of a variety of techniques to convey meaning.</td>
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<td>● Analyzes the author’s use of a variety of techniques to convey meaning.</td>
<td>● Identifies conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution of conflict in a variety of literary works.</td>
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<td>● Describes how tone and meaning are conveyed in poetry and expository writing through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.</td>
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<td>● Analyzes personal perspective towards texts and the influence of society, culture, and historical issues on the reader.</td>
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### CORE CONTENT STANDARDS FOR 8TH GRADE MATH

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<th>NUMBER AND OPERATIONS</th>
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<th>GEOMETRY</th>
<th>MEASUREMENT</th>
<th>DATA ANALYSIS AND PROBABILITY</th>
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<td>Perform arithmetic operations and their inverses (e.g., addition/subtraction, multiplication/division, square roots of perfect squares, cube roots of perfect cubes) on real numbers</td>
<td>Use variables to generalize patterns and information presented in tables, charts, and graphs: Graph linear functions noting that the vertical change per unit of horizontal change (the slope of the graph) is always the same. Plot the values of quantities whose ratios are always the same, fit a line to the plot, and understand that the slope of the line equals the quantities.</td>
<td>Use the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse to find the missing side of a right triangle and the lengths of the other line segments.</td>
<td>Use changes in measurement units (e.g., square inches, cubic feet) to perform conversions from one-, two-, and three-dimensional shapes.</td>
<td>Analyze data to make decisions and to develop convincing arguments from data displayed in a variety of formats that include: Plots, Distributions, Graphs, Scatter plots, Diagrams, Pictorial displays, Charts and tables, Venn diagrams.</td>
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<td>Perform and explain computations with rational numbers, pi, and first-degree algebraic expressions in one variable in a variety of situations.</td>
<td>Solve two-step linear equations and inequalities in one variable with rational solutions.</td>
<td>Describe and perform single and multiple transformations that include rotation, reflection, translation, and dilation (i.e., shrink or magnify) to two-dimensional figures.</td>
<td>Apply strategies to determine the surface area and volume of prisms, pyramids, and cylinders.</td>
<td>Use appropriate central tendency and spread as a means for effective decision-making in analyzing data and outliers.</td>
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<td>Select and use appropriate forms of rational numbers to solve real-world problems including those involving proportional relationships.</td>
<td>Generate different representations to model a specific numerical relationship given one representation of data (e.g., a table, a graph, an equation, a verbal description).</td>
<td>Recognize and apply properties of corresponding parts of similar and congruent triangles and quadrilaterals.</td>
<td>Use theoretical or experimental probability to make predictions about real-world events.</td>
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- Analyze data to make decisions and to develop convincing arguments from data displayed in a variety of formats that include: Plots, Distributions, Graphs, Scatter plots, Diagrams, Pictorial displays, Charts and tables, Venn diagrams.

- Use appropriate central tendency and spread as a means for effective decision-making in analyzing data and outliers.

- Use theoretical or experimental probability to make predictions about real-world events.
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<th>HISTORY</th>
<th>CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>ECONOMICS</th>
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<td>• Describe, evaluate, and interpret the economic and political reasons for the American Revolution, to include: Attempts to regulate colonial trade through passage of Tea Act, Stamp Act, and Intolerable Acts Colonists’ reaction to British policy (e.g., boycotts, the Sons of Liberty, petitions, appeals to Parliament). The ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence, including the Preamble.</td>
<td>• Explain the structure and functions of the national government as expressed in the United States Constitution, and explain the powers granted to the three branches of government and those reserved to the people, states, and tribes, to include: The federal system dividing sovereignty between the states and the federal government, and their supporting bureaucracies The sovereignty of Native American tribes in relation to state and federal governments (and government to government relationships) Bill of Rights, amendments to Constitution The primacy of individual liberty Constitution is designed to secure our liberty by both empowering and limiting central government Struggles over the creation of the Bill of Rights and its ratification Separation of powers through the development of differing branches John Marshall’s role in judicial review, including Marbury v. Madison.</td>
<td>• Identify how fundamental characteristics of the United States' economic system influence economic decision making (e.g., private property, profits, competition) at local, state, tribal, and national levels.</td>
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<td>• Describe the aspirations, ideals, and events that served as the foundation for the creation of a new national government, to include: Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the success of each in implementing the ideals of the Declaration of Independence Major debates of the Constitutional Convention and their resolution (e.g., The Federalist Papers) Contributions and roles of major individuals in the writing and ratification of the Constitution (e.g., George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, John Jay) Struggles over ratification of the Constitution and the creation of the Bill of Rights.</td>
<td>• Describe political philosophies and concepts of government that became the foundation for the American Revolution and the United States government, to include: Ideas of the nature of government and rights of the individuals expressed in the Declaration of Independence with its roots in English philosophers (e.g., John Locke) Concept of limited government and the rule of law established in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights Social covenant established in the Mayflower Compact Characteristics of representative governments Anti-Federalist and Federalist arguments towards the new Constitution, including those expressed in The Federalist Papers Concepts of federalism, democracy, bicameralism, separation of powers, and checks and balances.</td>
<td>• Understand why various sections of the early United States developed different patterns of economic activity and explore why and to what extent those differences remain today.</td>
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<td>• Describe, explain, and analyze the aims and impact of Western Expansion and the settlement of the United States, to include American belief in Manifest Destiny and how it led to the Mexican War and its consequences Compare African American and Native American slavery Westward migration of peoples (e.g., Oregon, California, Mormons, and Southwest) Origins and early history of the Women’s Movement.</td>
<td>• Explain how sectionalism led to the Civil War, to include: Different economies that developed in the North, South, and West Addion of new states to the Union and the balance of power in the United States Senate, Extension of slavery into the territories.</td>
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<td>• Explain the course and consequences of the Civil War and how it divided people in the United States, to include: Contributions and significance of key figures. Major turning points in the Civil War, including Gettysburg Unique nature of the Civil War (e.g., impact of Americans fighting Americans, high casualties caused by disease and type of warfare, widespread destruction of American property) Role of African Americans Purpose and effect of the Emancipation Proclamation.</td>
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<td>• Understand and apply the problem-solving skills for historical research, to include: Use of primary and secondary sources Sequencing Posing questions to be answered by historical inquiry Collecting, interpreting, and applying information Gathering and validating materials that present a variety of perspectives.</td>
<td>• Identify how fundamental characteristics of the United States' economic system influence economic decision making (e.g., private property, profits, competition) at local, state, tribal, and national levels.</td>
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<td>SCIENTIFIC THINKING AND PRACTICE</td>
<td>PHYSICAL SCIENCE</td>
<td>LIFE SCIENCE</td>
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<td>• Evaluate the accuracy and reproducibility of data and observation.</td>
<td>• Understand the differences among elements, compounds, and mixtures by: classification of materials as elements, compounds, or mixtures interpretation of chemical formulas, separation of mixtures into compounds by methods including evaporation, filtration, screening, and magnetism.</td>
<td>• Explain how a change in the flow of energy can impact an ecosystem (e.g., the amount of sunlight available for plant growth, global climate change).</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Know that scientific knowledge is built on questions posed as testable hypotheses, which are tested until the results are accepted by peers.</td>
<td>• Know that energy exists in many forms and that when energy is transformed some energy is usually converted to heat.</td>
<td>• Understand that all living organisms are made mostly of molecules consisting of a limited number of elements (e.g., carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen).</td>
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<td>• Use mathematical expressions and techniques to explain data and observations and to communicate findings (e.g., formulas and equations, significant figures, graphing, sampling, estimation, mean).</td>
<td>• Analyze the separate forces acting on an object at rest or in motion (e.g., gravity, elastic forces, friction), including how multiple forces reinforce or cancel one another to result in a net force that acts on an object.</td>
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<td>• Understand and apply Newton’s Laws of Motion: Objects in motion will continue in motion and objects at rest will remain at rest unless acted upon by an unbalanced force (inertia). If a greater force is applied to an object a proportionally greater acceleration will occur if an object has more mass the effect of an applied force is proportionally less.</td>
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Your child will have at least two standardized tests in the 8th 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 8th 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 8th grade. There are three phases of the 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.
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 care 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.
Back to Basics

The following sections offer information on a variety of general subjects that will help your child find success in 8th 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
SKILLS AND LEARNING STYLES

This section offers an overview of different ways to help your child learn to become successful in 8th grade and beyond.

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

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<th>Learning Skills</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
<th>Self Management Skills</th>
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<td>• Social Problem Solving</td>
<td>• Positive Self Talk</td>
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<td>• Goal Setting &amp; Planning</td>
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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 a 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.

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<th>Visual Learners: Seeing</th>
<th>Auditory Learners: Listening</th>
<th>Kinesthetic/ Tactile Learner:</th>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Tactile persons learn best through a hands-on approach, activities, and by actively exploring the physical world that surrounds them.</td>
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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, 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. As well as keeping your body healthy, 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.
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:
- 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.
  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.
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 yourself to achieve, be sure not to overdo it. Set goals that are challenging yet reachable.
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 one is the best fit 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 give 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.
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 students 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
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 8TH GRADE

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.

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

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

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

~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 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
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:

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

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

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**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 cyberbullying. 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/
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 essential to 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
### 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 can not 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 High School as well as his/her future.

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

While 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.


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 42 for more information)

**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 you 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 8th 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](http://www.militarycareers.com).

- **Armed Services Academies:** Some examples of Armed Services Academies are U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, West Point, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. These academies are extremely competitive, and application/nomination must be started in the 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=&p
n=&DomName=hed.state.nm.us](http://hed.state.nm.us/default.asp?CustComKey=193313&CategoryKey=&p
n=&DomName=hed.state.nm.us)

Another New Mexico resource is [http://www.carveyourpath.org/](http://www.carveyourpath.org/)
THE CAREER ACADEMY

YOUR path to YOUR future

THE CAREER ACADEMY CONCEPT

RELATIONSHIPS
Experience a personalized education where groups of students have common teachers

RIGOR
Be prepared for both college and career by integrating college preparatory curriculum with a career theme

RELEVANCE
Apply what you are learning and see how it fits in the real world through partnerships with employers, community, and higher education

NEW MEXICO’S SEVEN CAREER CLUSTERS

- Arts & Entertainment
- Business Services
- Communication & Information
- Energy & Environmental Technologies
- Engineering, Construction & Manufacturing
- Health & Biosciences
- Hospitality & Tourism

FIND OUT WHAT CAREER ACADEMIES ARE OFFERED AT THE HIGH SCHOOL YOUR CHILD WILL BE ATTENDING NEXT SCHOOL YEAR!
In an effort to help young people figure out and pursue the careers and jobs that best suit them, the U.S. Department of Education came up with a list of 16 Career Clusters. The state of New Mexico narrowed these down into 7 Career Clusters, and identified 46 Pathways that fall within those 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 Pathways they fit in, it is easier to see what is out there, which might fit you best, 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!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Mexico’s 7 Career Clusters</th>
<th>New Mexico’s Career Pathways within each Career Cluster (46 total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>□ Design &lt;br&gt; □ Entrepreneurship &lt;br&gt; □ Foreign Language &lt;br&gt; □ Performing Arts &lt;br&gt; □ Visual Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>□ Administrative &amp; Information Support &lt;br&gt; □ Business, Financial Management &amp; Accounting &lt;br&gt; □ Consumer Sales &amp; Service &lt;br&gt; □ Economics &amp; Management &lt;br&gt; □ Education and Training &lt;br&gt; □ Human Resources Management &lt;br&gt; □ Information Technology Systems Administration &lt;br&gt; □ Legal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications &amp; Information</td>
<td>□ Communications &lt;br&gt; □ Marketing &lt;br&gt; □ Media Technologies &lt;br&gt; □ Network Systems &lt;br&gt; □ Printing Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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](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.

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.

• **School-To-World** is a collaborative partnership between Albuquerque businesses, local government, and education. They have partnered to present 8th and 9th grade students with School to World, an event to light the pathway towards future education and career choices.

The next School to World event will be held on Saturday, February 27, 2010 at the Albuquerque Convention Center from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Some Parent Tips from School-To-World:**
- Encourage your child to investigate a variety of careers. Talk about your work.
- Stress that school is their work and attendance is important.
- Explore their personal talents, strengths, likes and dislikes. What skills do they have?
- Help your child experience, first hand, as many different work situations as possible.
- Provide as many opportunities as you can for your student to learn new technologies.
- Talk to your child about a career as a goal of education.
- Give your child responsibility, the more the better. Begin with jobs around the house or for a neighbor or an older relative. Young people need to learn that we all have to carry our own weight, we are all important and that families rely on each other to get things done around the house. At work, people rely on you to get your part of the work done too. We all contribute!

To find out more about School-To-World and watch a video about the event visit their website at: [http://schooltoworld.org/](http://schooltoworld.org/)

**Other helpful websites:**
- [www.workinnewmexico.gov](http://www.workinnewmexico.gov)
- [www.collegesuccessnetwork.org](http://www.collegesuccessnetwork.org)
- [www.newmexico.ja.org](http://www.newmexico.ja.org)
- [www.careerpronews.com](http://www.careerpronews.com)
The purpose of the Next Step Plan is to provide a structure for students to think ahead through conscientious planning about their future. However, because the plan is to be revisited and updated each year, it should be considered flexible. The mandated process for completing this form includes the involvement of many stakeholders: the student (your child), the student’s parents or guardian (you), the school counselor, an advisor/teacher and/or other school official charged with coursework planning. They work together to help students explore, examine and determine his/her respective interests, goals and plans. The process helps to ensure that all students are informed about honors, advanced placement, dual credit and distance learning course options and opportunities in high school and beyond.

While the bulk of the Next Step Plans will be worked on in High School, 8th graders will have to complete a Next Step Plan to prepare for their entrance into High School. You will be asked to review your child’s Next Step Plan in the spring and sign the form indicating that you have reviewed your child’s plan.
TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

The transition from middle to high school can be nerve-racking for parents and their children alike. While this trepidation is normal, this section can offer some suggestions to help ease the transition process.

Have your child identify their support system(s):
The high school already has people in place that will help your child make the leap. Teachers, school counselors, and administrators who are trained and available to help freshmen get adjusted.

Help your child get a taste of high school life:
A great way to feel more familiar with their future school is to:
- Attend high school plays and musical productions.
- Check out sports games.
- Get a hold of school publications like the newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine.
- Surf around the school’s website, which may help you and your child identify teachers, students, and important locations in the school.

Get involved:
The more you and your child look at this transition as a team project between parents and child, the easier it will be. The adults in the family can:
- Help decide which courses and electives to take.
- Give advice on which clubs and activities to try. Be sure to talk about how extra time spent at school might affect the family, such as with transportation or childcare duties.
- Talk to the high school teachers and school counselors about any questions you or your child might have.
- Talk to parents of existing students and other incoming freshmen.

See who’s been there, done that:
If your child has an older brother or sister who’s already in high school, then they’ve probably already heard and seen a lot through his or her experiences. Still, it’s worth sitting down with older siblings to ask some specific questions and clear up any misconceptions your child may have. If your child does not have older siblings who have already attended high school, seek out the siblings of friends and neighbors who have. They can tell your child the inside scoop on high school life. Some questions you may want to ask include:
- How different is the homework?
- Are there any electives that are especially great?
- Know any good shortcuts from one part of the school to the other?
RESOURCES

American School Counselor Association (ASCA):  http://schoolcounselor.org/


Bullying: what parents and teachers should know. Focus Adolescent Services Retrieved from http://www.focusas.com/Bullying.html

Career Pro News Website:  www.careerpronews.com


College Success Network website:  www.collegesuccessnetwork.org


For teens, later to bed, the worse the outlook. USA Today, June 9, 2009.


Junior Achievement of New Mexico website:  www.newmexico.ja.org

Kid’s Health Website:  http://kidshealth.org


Middle school; Movin’ on up. It’s My Life. Retrieved from http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/middleschool/


Underage Drinking. A publication made possible through the Office of Drug Policy, the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Partnership, the Department of Juvenile Corrections, The Treasure Valley alcohol Drug Coalition, and grant #2006-AH-FX-009 from the


Work in New Mexico website: www.workinnewmexico.gov