

Navigating the Middle School Years



Presented by

FOOTHILL FAMILY

Development



verywell

- Physical
 - Growth spurts
 - Body image
 - Puberty
 - Social cognitions
- Emotional
 - Wide range of emotions
 - Independence: Decision-making skills
- Social

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

PUBERTY

- Physical growth in children
 - Taller
 - Increase in weight
 - Change in general appearance
 - Changes in mood
 - Changes in energy level



How has your child changed during the pandemic?

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

How to respond to the changes in your child

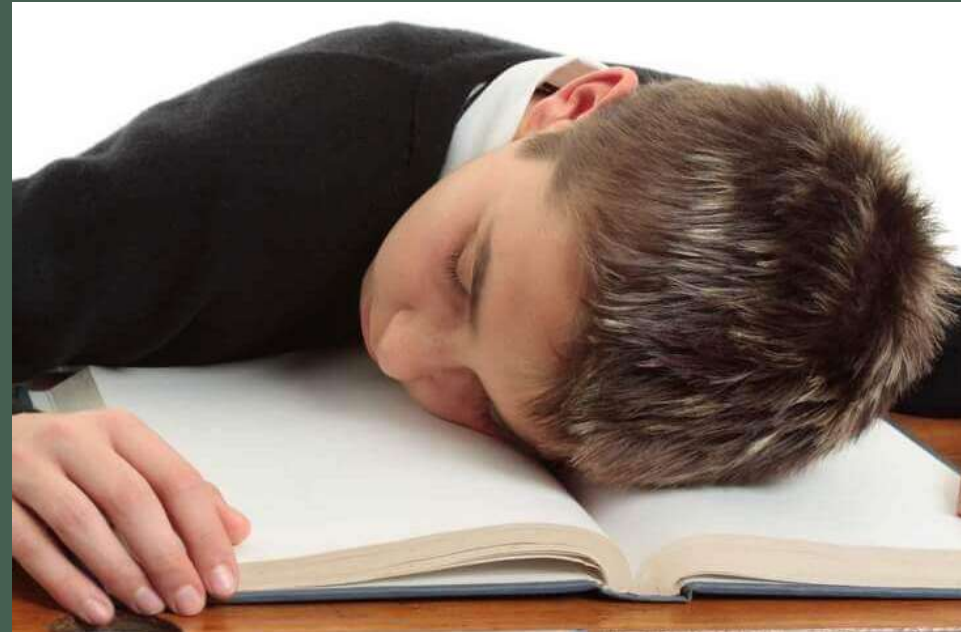


- Validate their mixed feelings about puberty
- Normalize any questions they may have about puberty
- Watch for possible feelings of insecurity
- Emphasize there is no perfect body
- Instill positive self-talk
- Foster open communication with your child regarding any questions they may have about changes

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Stress Responses

Common Stressors

- Tests
- Homework
- Peer relationships
- Bullying
- Family conflict



EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Stress Responses



- Irritability and anger
- Changes in behavior
- Trouble sleeping
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Eating changes
- Getting sick more often

EMOTIONAL NEEDS: Stress Responses



Support your child by:

- **Doing consistent check ins**

- Do not be afraid to ask your child about their feelings in regards to current challenges

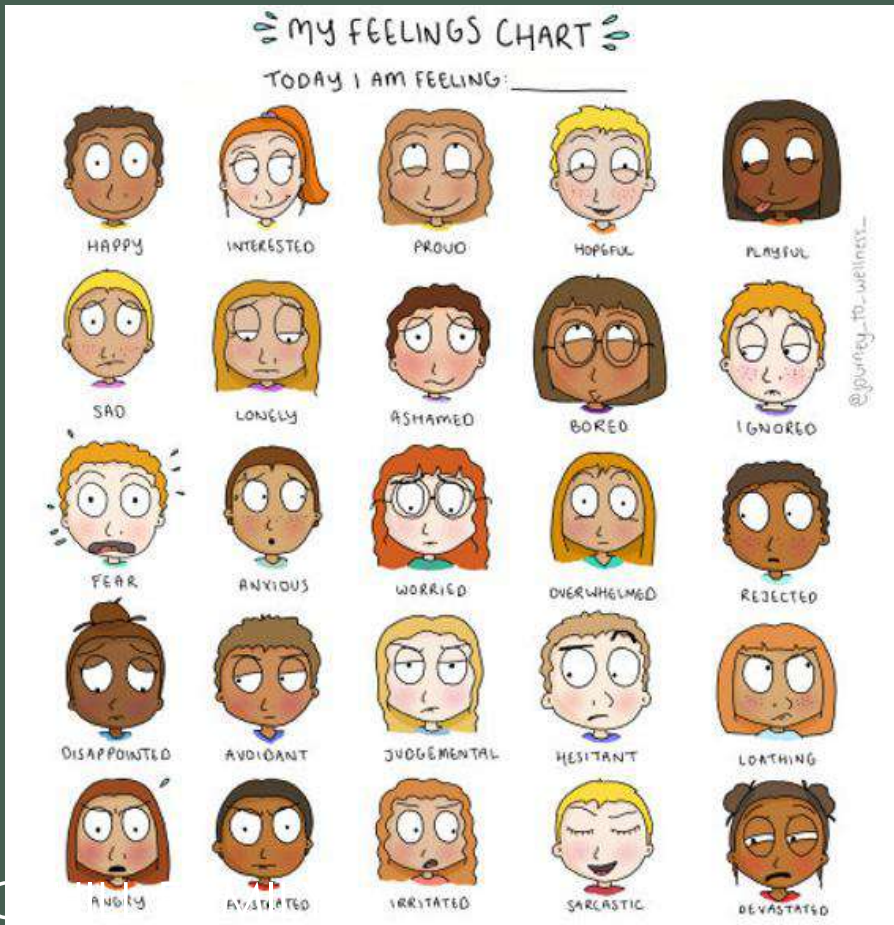
- **Listen and Validate**

- Listening without criticizing
- Letting your child know that their words are valid

“I understand you, it sounds like not being able to see your friends makes you sad.”

- **Helping them identify/express feelings**

Feeling Identification Tools



EMOTIONAL NEEDS: Stress Responses

We can use "I" statements.

I feel  happy  sad  angry _____

when you _____.

Can you please _____?

Support your child by:

- Encouraging them to express themselves in healthy ways (i.e., using I statements)

This can be helpful when engaging in conflict resolution strategies

EMOTIONAL NEEDS: Stress Responses

Support your child by:

- Modeling healthy coping as caregivers
- Encouraging independent problem solving skills
- Promoting media literacy
- Helping them combat negative thinking
- Making sure they get enough sleep and eat well – can be managed by setting up *ROUTINES/SCHEDULES*

EMOTIONAL NEEDS: Stress Responses




Support your child by:

- Catching your child being good!
- Praising them! Praise should be immediate, specific and sincere
- Labeling what you see, describe what you feel, and sum up the child's praiseworthy behavior in a word:
 - ex: "I see a really clean floor. I appreciate your help with cleaning because it made my day easier. You are great helper!"

Being and Doing Messages

BEING AND DOING MESSAGES

B		D
E		O
I		I
N		N
G		G

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Being Messages

- It's a way to communicate unconditional love
 - "I love you"
 - "I'm glad you are my kid"
 - "Welcome home"
 - "When you feel sad, you can always talk to me about what's bother you"
 - A hug, kiss, pat on the back

Doing Messages

- Catch your child doing something good
 - “Look how hard you worked on this assignment!”
 - “With practice, you can do it.”
 - “Thank you for your help. It made things easier for me.”
 - “You have a talent in coloring!”
 - “It was thoughtful of you to help out your friend.”
 - High fives, thumbs up, a nod of approval when the child accomplishes something

It's all about balance



Balancing both types of messages is crucial. Overdoing one message and not balancing it with the other can result in a child who does not feel worthy or lovable if the child is not achieving, feels the need to be a perfectionist, and who feels empty and insatiable inside, as if the child can never get enough love.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



- **Friendships:**

- Social relationships are a big component to their development. Fostering ways to connect with others would be beneficial virtually

- **Conflict Resolution:**

- Sheltering at home may increase conflicts so it's important to resolve them

- **Monitoring Online Activity & Social Media:**

- There may be an increase in online use more than usual during this time. Monitoring and implementing appropriate content and use would be helpful.

How can I monitor my child's online activity?

5 tips to monitor child's online activities:

1. Use the apps that they are using. The best way to understand what your child is doing online is to be on the same app with them.
2. Google search the app to find out what it is about.
3. Talk regularly to your child about online safety.
4. Set internet rules and regulations.
5. Monitoring by age & Parental control - call your internet company and ask about parental controls and how to use them.



Conflict Resolution Strategy

1. Identify the problem or root of conflict
2. Identify possible options for resolution
3. Weigh the cost and benefits of each resolution before choosing
4. Implement resolution
5. If chosen resolution did not resolve the conflict review the other options previously listed and choose another.

❖ When going through this process set guidelines to not allow accusations or name calling and model appropriate volume to avoid escalating the conflict



Modeling Healthy Behaviors

- **Use problem-solving skills** to deal with challenges or conflicts in a calm and productive way. Getting upset or angry when a problem comes up teaches your child to respond in the same way.
- **Show kindness and respect to others** in your words and your actions.

Self-Compassion

Be supportive and understanding towards yourselves when you're having a hard time, rather than being harshly self-critical



Remember that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficulties at times. You are not alone!

WHERE CAN YOU GET HELP AND INFORMATION?

- Foothill Family Service Intake/Departamento De Admision 626 993-3000
- 211 LA County Information - DIAL 211
Linea Informativa Condado De Los Angeles –
Marque 211
- Para *Español* <http://v5.healthycity.org/es>

Thank you!