**Middle School Bullying Prevention Information**

This section provides a program outline specific to bullying prevention targeted for middle schools. An overview of developmental characteristics of middle school students is included to assist with the development of age-appropriate instruction. The outline offers a three-tiered approach when responding to the requirements of P.L. 285-2013: a) tier one minimally meets the requirements of the law, b) tier two builds upon minimum requirements to offer additional program components that contribute to increased program effectiveness, and c) a tier three approach contains all elements of tiers one and two. Additionally, tier three provides strategies to help schools build a data-driven comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention program. This data-driven programming provides administrators with the information necessary for informed decision-making and continual program improvement that best meets the needs of their students. Resources to aid in a school’s program development are also offered. Please use these resources as you find appropriate.

**Developmentally Appropriate Instruction**

Anti-Bullying education should be delivered in a developmentally appropriate way.

For all developmental levels, the following core components should be considered:

**Knowledge about child development and learning**

Having knowledge of general characteristics at each age and stage of early development is crucial. This knowledge, based on research, helps us decide which experiences are best for children’s learning and development.

**Knowledge and skills in individualized instruction**

It is important that we have an understanding of the individual characteristics, strengths, and challenges of the students in our classrooms. By continually observing children’s play and interaction with the physical environment and others, we learn about each child’s interests, abilities, and developmental progress so we may customize our instruction delivery and interventions.

**Knowledge and skills in culturally appropriate instruction**

Educators need to acknowledge and address cultural differences among their student population. We should make an effort to get to know the children’s families and learn about the values, expectations, and factors that shape their lives at home and in their communities and allow these values to permeate within learning. This background information helps us provide meaningful, relevant, and respectful learning experiences for each child and family.

**The following page provides an overview of developmental characteristics specific to middle school students.**

**Middle School Developmental Characteristics**

**Grades 6-8**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Physical*** May appear awkward due to rapid physical growth
* Differing rates of maturation and stages of puberty
* Increase in appetite
* Enjoy competitive and cooperative game play
 | **Cognitive*** Capable of abstract thinking
* Beginning to plan for future
* Ability to postpone instant gratification
* Can plan and organize without adult assistance
* Increasing interest in social issues and forming opinions about societal issues
 | **Social/Relational*** Sensitive to appearance
* Critical of parents and adults in authority
* Exploring/forming personal identity (may change dress, appearance, speech, mannerisms, etc.)
* Enjoy smaller peer group discussions
* Strong desire for independence and individual thought
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| **YOUNG TEENS** • are testing independence while desiring to belong. • are capable of abstract thinking. • are self-conscious. • are post-child, BUT pre-adult. • are influenced by their peers. • have fluctuating emotions. • have active imaginations. • have a good sense of humor. | **SO TEACH THEM BY** • guiding them, not pushing! • using positive peer pressure to your advantage. • accepting them as they are. • being patient. • having lots of fun. Laugh with young teens, not at them. • remembering that many students have been bullied themselves at some time and so although they can have compassion for the target, they may be wary of standing up to the bullies themselves. |