

An Introduction for Families



Adolescence: A challenging developmental stage

The middle grades years are a time of enormous physical change. It is also the dawn of the capacity to think conceptually, and a time of great curiosity about life, the world, and peers. It is a time of preoccupation with self, when many young adolescents are full of self-doubt. It is a time when some young people declare their families to be irrelevant to what's really happening, although in fact family support is crucial for them.

The Developmental Designs approach encompasses both the academic and social needs of adolescents. It provides structures for teaching the whole child, so that academic growth is enhanced, not limited, by the social and emotional realities of young adolescents. The Developmental Designs academic day includes active and interactive learning relevant to young people's interests and needs. The approach to behavior management is based in our belief that all children want to be good and can succeed. The goal of correction is to help children build self-control.

Based on developmental science, the Developmental Designs approach addresses four essential adolescent needs:

Relationship: I want to connect with others.

Autonomy: I want to be independent.

Competence: I want to do well in school, and to feel

like a worthwhile, significant person.

Fun: I want to have a good time!



How Does the Developmental Designs Approach Look in a School?

The Developmental Designs approach offers a set of strategies designed to keep young people safe, connected, responsible, and engaged in learning. These strategies fall into three basic areas—Relationship, Social Skills, and Engagement. When educators integrate these areas, learning is optimized.

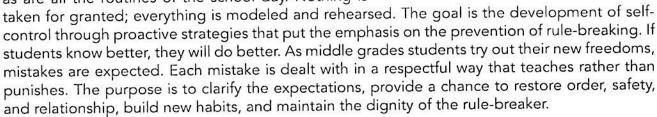
Relationship

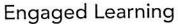
The Developmental Designs approach makes respectful, caring relationships a high priority. Every day begins with an advisory period in which students circle up to greet each other, share what's happening in their lives, and do activities together that purposefully teach social and academic skills. This morning meeting (we call it the Circle of Power and Respect) helps students transition from home to school and establishes a clear path into the learning day.

During the day, teachers continue to build relationships through their language and through face-toface meetings, team work, and reflection.



Transitions between classes are taught and practiced, as are all the routines of the school day. Nothing is





The Developmental Designs approach is based on the belief that all children with appropriate support can do high-quality work.

Students who succeed in school academically are engaged in their learning. Each class has an opportunity for students to get to know each other, to do meaningful work, and to share and reflect on work afterward. Students ask and answer open-ended questions. They have frequent opportunities to help design and make choices in assignments. There is a balance in each class between teacher-directed lessons and independent and group work on skills and projects. The work is rigorous and carefully orchestrated for success.

You can learn more about the Developmental Designs approach at WWW.DEVELOPMENTALDESIGNS.ORG.

ABOUT ORIGINS

Origins, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering learning in community, is the founder and sole provider for the *Developmental Designs* approach. It provides workshops, on-site consulting, and publications to teachers and school communities.

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