

# Transitions: The Intermediate Grades

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Ottawa  
Catholic  
School Board

## Parents as Partners in Education Workshop # 15

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# Intermediate Transitions

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- Grade 6 to grade 7
- Grade 8 to grade 9

In our board, the grade 6 to 7 transition almost always includes a change in school.

The grade 8 to 9 transition usually does not.

# Common Transitions

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- Starting school
- Leaving home
- Getting married
- Becoming a parent



Most transitions are accompanied by excitement and fear.

# Intermediate transitions usually include:



- A change of school
- New teachers
- Bigger school
- More students
- New type of schedule
- Separation from friends

# The grade 6 to 7 transition:

## What's new?

- Rotary system
- Many teachers/day
- Students from many feeder schools
- Bigger building
- Locker – combinations
- Youngest in the school



# The grade 8 to 9 transition

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## What's new?

- Semester system
- 4 classes/day
- 75 minute classes
- More homework
- Less monitoring
- Credits



What do you remember about your transition to a new school?

Do your remember what you were feeling?

# Students in the intermediate grades need...

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- To be listened to
- To have their fears validated and understood
- Support

They need their parents more than ever.



# Common student concerns:

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- Keeping up academically
- Forgetting their schedule
- Being accepted
- Forgetting their combination (locker)
- Navigating a new building

# Keeping up academically:

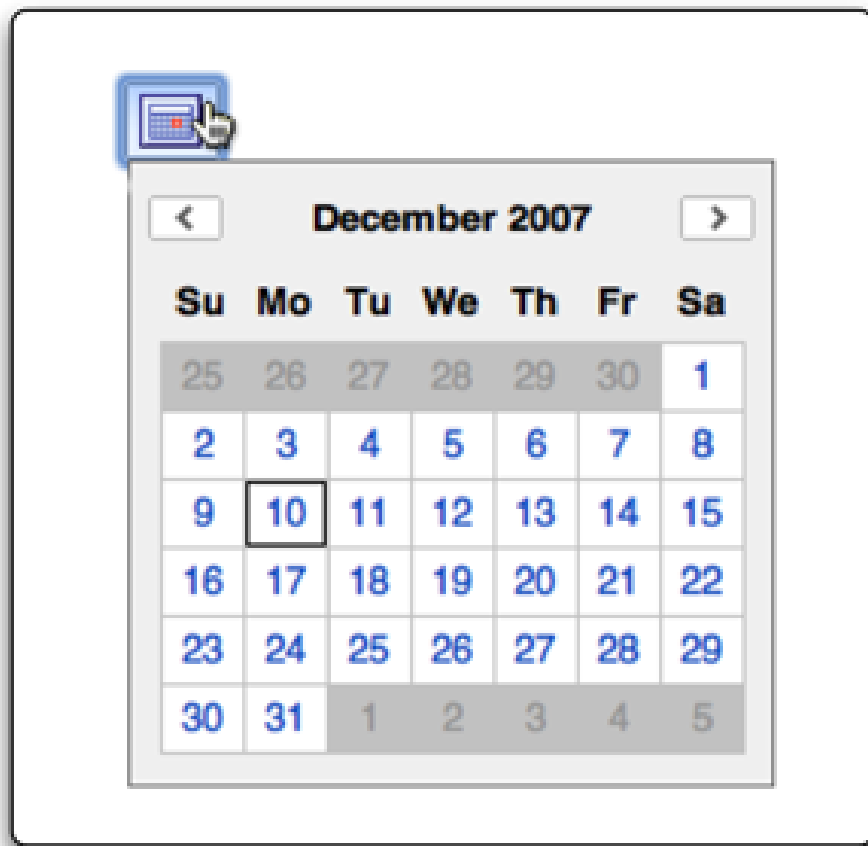
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## **Encourage**

- Organization – especially use of the agenda
- Asking questions at school
- Homework completion

# Keeping up academically:



- Make sure backpack is ready to go before bedtime
- Put key dates on the calendar in the kitchen
- Plan assignments – “chunk” into manageable pieces

# Schedule:

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Ensure a copy of your teen's schedule is :

- In each binder
- In his locker
- At home

# Being accepted:

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## **Encourage your child to:**

- Join teams or clubs at school
- Work with new people on school projects
- Attend school events (games, play, fashion show etc)
- Invite new people to your house

*Keep reminding her that everyone is in the same situation.*

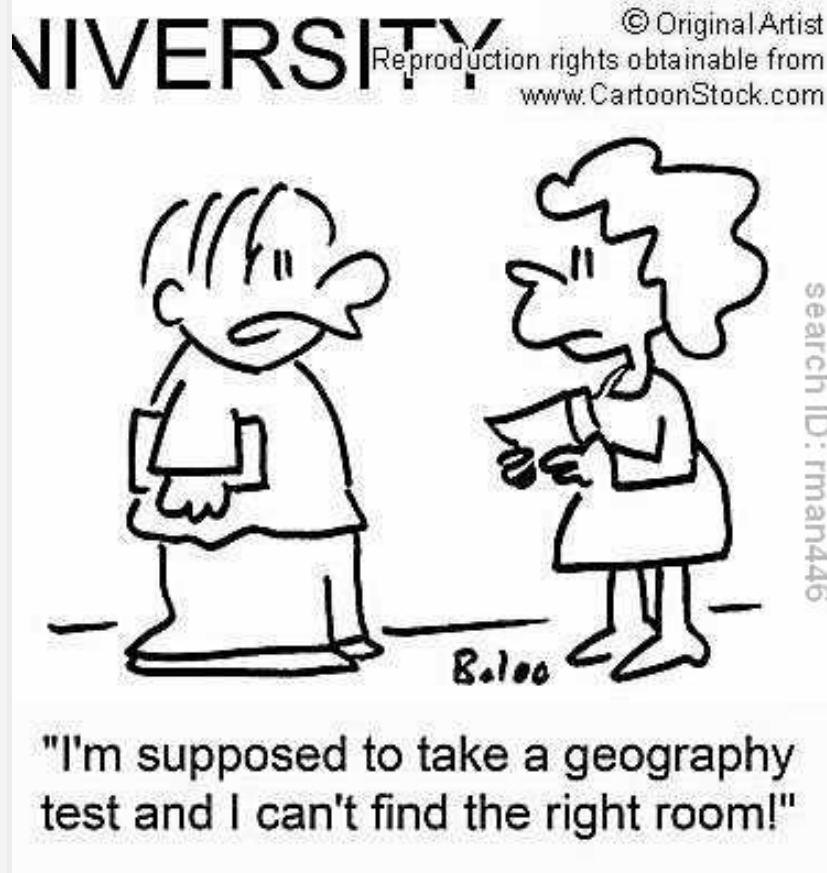
# The locker:

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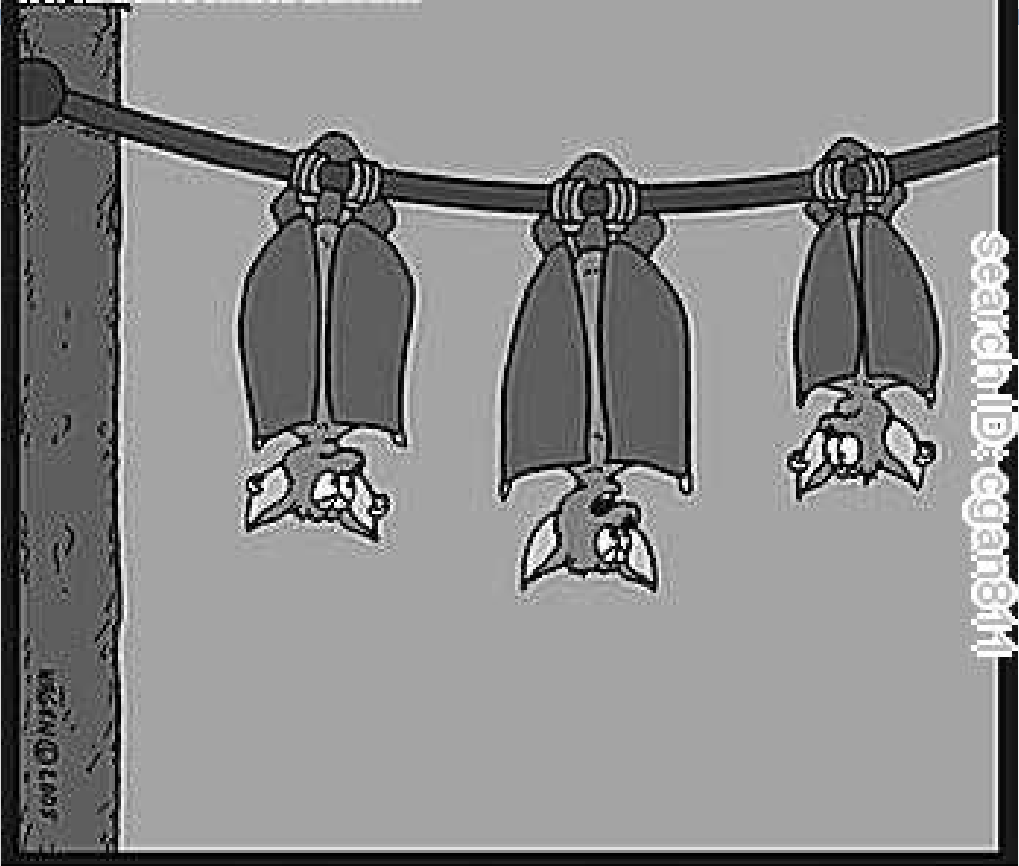
- Buy the lock a few weeks before school starts
- Practice the combination several times
- Give the combination to a parent (Remind your child not to give it to anyone else)

# Navigating the new school building:



- Ask for a floor plan
- Visit the new school as often as possible before the new school year begins – open house, welcome BBQ, feeder school visits

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What do  
parents  
worry about  
during the  
teen years?

And where have you been all day young lady?  
Your mother and I have been worried sick!



# Peer Groups

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- Big influence on adolescents
- Help teens to create their own identity
- Interactions with peers help teens to examine their own views of themselves
- Can exert both positive and negative influence

*Healthy self-esteem is built through positive relationships with parents, teachers and peers.*

# Preparing your teen

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- It is very important that you help to prepare your child for negative peer pressure situations
- They must learn to stand firm, have a good comeback and have a reason for not taking part in the activity.

*Actions have consequences – there are often long-term consequences for short term choices.*

# “On the Spot” – Role Play

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## Scenario #1

You are at a friend's house. Nobody else is home. Your friend brings out a package of cigarettes. What will you say? What will you do?



# Scenario #2

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You are out with a group of friends and you are “dared” to shoplift a pair of sunglasses from Shoppers Drug Mart.



# Scenario #3

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You are walking to your period 4 class (last period), and your friends say, "Let's go to the mall".



# Scenario #4

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You are at a party,  
and someone  
hands you a beer.



As a parent, how would you handle the following situation?

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Your grade 9 son has a new friend. You have heard that this friend's older brother is a known drug user.

# As a parent, how would you handle the following situation?

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Your grade 7 daughter comes home from school with a few new friends. You really don't like the way they dress, and none of them seem very friendly to you.





# As a parent, how would you handle the following situation?

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Your grade 8 daughter comes home from school in tears because her friends have told her that they do not want to hang out with her anymore.



# As a parent, how would you handle the following situation?

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Your grade 6 son has made two new friends who will be attending the same school as him in September. Your son has asked to go watch their soccer games twice a week. These games take place during your supper hour. You have always had a strict rule that the family eat dinner together.

# Emotional Changes during Adolescence

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During the teen years, children tend to become more

- self-conscious
- irritable
- emotional
- easily frustrated
- anxious
- moody
- oversensitive
- impulsive
- stressed out

# How do we support our children during this difficult time?

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Your teen seems very unhappy, but doesn't want to talk. What can you do?

- Be approachable
- Provide an opportunity to talk – eg. car ride, walk, preparing a meal (better without eye contact)
- Provide an opening – “you seem preoccupied”
- Show genuine interest
- Talk about something your teen is interested in

# As a parent, how would you handle the following situation?

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Your child did not get invited to a party that all of his friends are going to. He is very disappointed.

- Be careful not to trivialize the situation
- Share a story from your own experience in which you have been disappointed
- Empathize

# Teach a child how to deal with anger.

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- Take deep breaths
- Count to ten
- Talk to someone you trust
- Do something you enjoy to take your mind off the anger
- Exercise
- Cry

# What to do when someone upsets you:

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- Talk calmly
- Listen to his/her side of the story
- Don't use the "silent treatment" – this will not solve anything
- Walk away from a situation if you feel you can't handle it at the time
- Don't spread rumours about the situation
- Ask an adult for help with the situation

# The teen years:

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- Children are undergoing a lot of very big changes – physically, emotionally, socially
- They are also experiencing imposed changes at school (new school, new expectations etc)
- As parents, we need to support them



# How do we support our teens?

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- Be present, available, approachable
- Be understanding, empathetic
- Stay connected
- Help them vent
- Look for opportunities to have conversations
- Give advice when asked
- Try not to interrogate or lecture