



7th grade is the middle of middle school here in Big Sky. This is an interesting year. You're not the top dog of the school, but you're also not the newbie 6th grader. [Developmentally](#) your child may have peers at very different stages of maturation on the spectrum of puberty. Your child has one year of middle school under their belt and they are able to understand the rules and inner workings of the 7 period day schedule; along with having multiple teachers.

[12 year old children](#) need a lot of support, love, and understanding. Their physical, social, intellectual and emotional development is so interconnected, that even though your child is capable of stating to you good reasoning and judgement / right and wrong, it doesn't mean that in the moment with their friends or at home with you, that they will consistently show that skill. Their [social and emotional system](#) in their brain may trump their intellect.

Our middle school children are also wired to take risks. [This is an important biological fact](#). The best part is that it doesn't necessarily mean they should be taking dangerous, negative risks. Positive risks like trying out for a sport team, joining a club or auditioning for a play will fill that biological need. We as parents can guide them through this stage.

7th graders are selective sponges. They take in what they think is important and get rid of things that don't make sense for them. They try on different attitudes, personas, clothing styles, hairstyles and behaviors to see what fits and what doesn't fit with who they are. In addition to trying to find their identity, your 12 year old is also seeking to fit in. They do not want to be seen as different. It is more important to be part of a group. Finally, the middle school years are a time in their lives when they are becoming more socially aware both in their community and the world around them.

For more on developmental stages and parenting information, contact your Thrive Parent Liaison, Lori Swenson at lsvenson@bssd72.org or 995-4281.