

INSIGHTS

by Michael Grose - No. 1 parenting educator



When you are 12

Children born in the year 2000 are now turning 12. Here's what they are like.



When you are 12.....

You don't want to stand out much.

You take a really big step away from your family. In fact, there are times when you don't want anything to do with your family. You often want them to **Go Away**.

You constantly think "Do I fit in?" "Do the people I want to be friends with like me?"

But the question that mostly occupies your mind is: "How popular am I?"

You become more sensitive to social interactions and rejection.

You are experiencing **rapid physical development**.

You see all around you pronounced extremes- some kids surprise with their physical and social maturity while others haven't grown at all since Year 5.

The influence of your peer group takes precedence over that of your family.

You maybe are thinking about going on a double date..... such as going to movies with a couple of girls and boys.....it's fun. Romance is still a long way off.

Your peer groups are expanding to include online friends, but the boundaries between your real friends and your online friends, many of whom you've never met, is starting to blur.

If you are a girl you will probably begin menstruating soon, if you haven't already started that is.

You will be more likely to talk to your friends about your body changes, which is a really good thing. Boys don't do this nearly enough, so their body changes can be bewildering.

If you are a boy I've some news. You are behind your female classmates in terms of physical maturity, but you'll catch up eventually.

If you are a girl your well-being is more tuned into that of your friends; you feel a strong connection to your friends, but the politics of the schoolyard can be a burden.

If you are a boy you may be well be clueless about this stuff and would prefer to be physically active. **In a way, your life is simpler, less complex.**

Whether you are a girl or a boy, the hormonal changes you experience drive you to be in conflict with your parents. Your parents are expecting conflict, but not at twelve.

You are less motivated to please them.

Physical affection between you and your parents has probably dropped off, so your parents maybe experiencing grief. **Not only are they missing their lovely child, but they are being denied affection**, which is one of the most rewarding parts of raising you.

You have started secondary school which requires a great deal of new organisational skill. This is at a time when your developing brain puts a hold on your ability to process and organise. There is a lot to remember including the volumes of homework you have, and a lot to take in.

You appreciate teachers who make your life easier at school; who smile and don't get mad when you get lost or turn up late for class. And parents who are supportive rather than punitive.

You are probably very busy with after-school activities such as sport, music and clubs. **You are happier far more than you are unhappy**; but you experience extremes of happiness and unhappiness and you need reassurance when you are sad, that you won't always feel this way.

You tend to be happiest around your friends and grumpiest when you are with your parents, so they think that you are always unhappy. But by and large, you are happy and going okay.

They are happy for you too; but are little bewildered by the changes and a little sad, too.

They need a hug.

Surprise them. Give them a hug when they least expect it. They'll feel relieved. They'll also feel like a parent again. They need to feel that. They need to know you are still there.

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