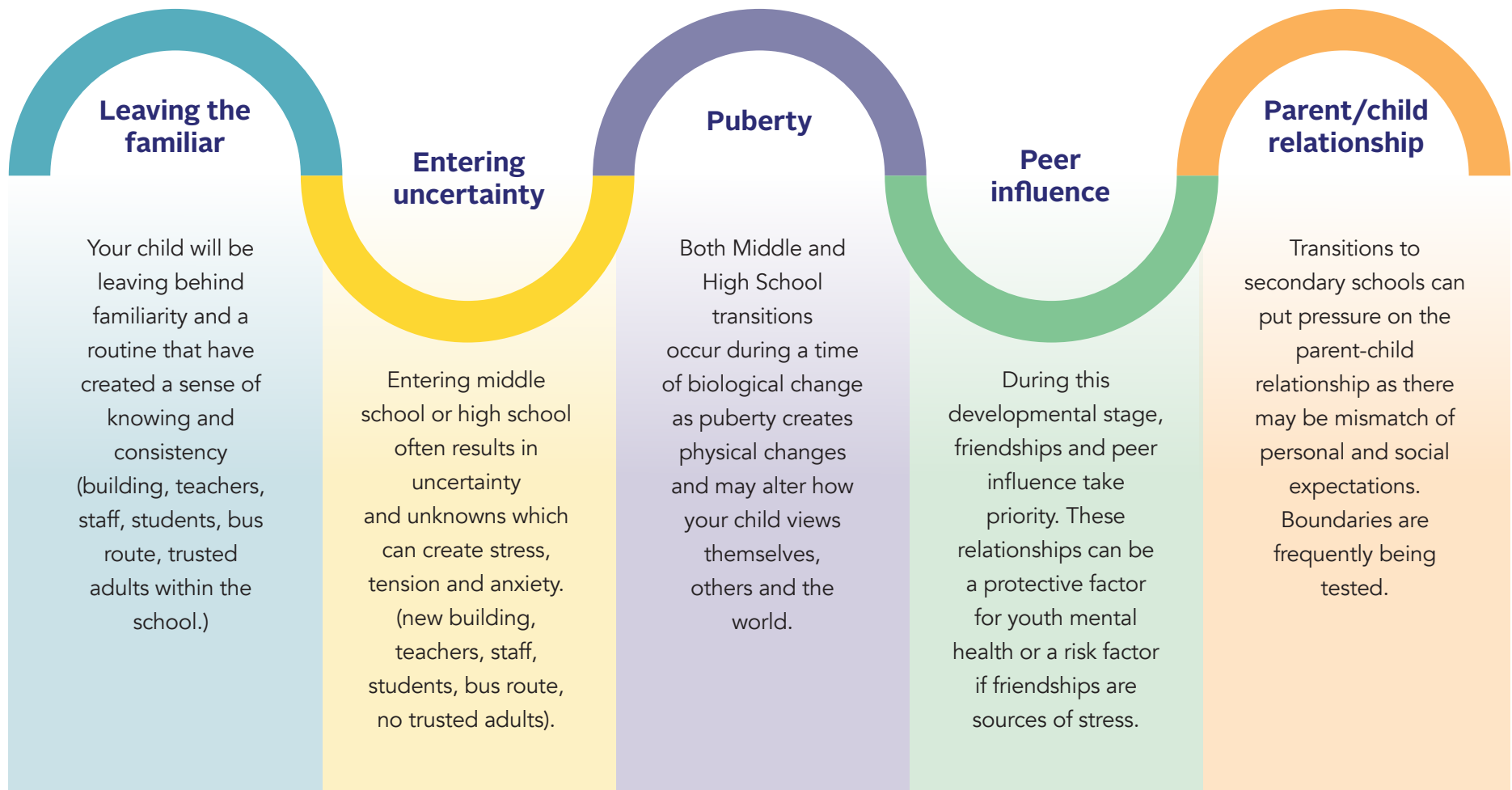


Middle and High School Transitions:

What parents should know

Transitioning to Middle and High School can be challenging for children due to various biopsychosocial factors. To help parents understand these dynamics and stressors, we've highlighted some essential points. While parents have experienced these transitions, it's a completely new journey for their children. Demonstrating grace, empathy, and curiosity can foster a supportive environment and improve communication.



Middle and High School Transitions:

Signs of a challenge

Signs of a challenging school transition

Listed below are some signs that could indicate your child is struggling with their school transition:

- Child frequently communicates school related challenges
- Withdrawal from previously enjoyed activities
- Increase in irritability, changes in mood, motivation and/or energy levels
- Isolating from friends and family (ie., staying in room, avoiding meals)
- Exhibiting low confidence or self esteem
- Increased avoidance of tasks
- Changes in previously supportive friendships
- School avoidance behaviors

Supportive steps parents can take

Highlighted below are some steps parents can take if a child is struggling with the transition to middle or high school:

- Address the changes with respectful curiosity (when parents express a genuine willingness to understand without judgment.)
- Be aware of assumptions and judgments: The goal is to engage your child.
- Validate your child's thoughts and feelings.
- Reach out to child's teachers and school counselor about your concerns. Ask for feedback and teacher observations.
- Don't push through resistance. Notice it and revisit the conversation when child is better regulated. Timing matters!

Additional Supports: If your child's behaviors and/or mood do not improve, seeking out the support of a mental health professional may be needed. Below is list of supports that are available for youth of North East Florida.

School-based supports

Duval County utilizes Full Service Schools to support students. St. Johns County has district wide mental health Counselors to support students.

Community-based agencies

- **Duval County** - Child Guidance Center And Daniel Kids
- **St. Johns County** - EPIC Behavioral Health and BRAVE Program through UF Health
- **Clay County** - Clay Behavioral Health Center

Private health insurance

Private Insurance Companies:
Request a referral list

Use an online therapist directory to find a therapist that accepts your insurance and match your child's needs.

Directories include: Psychology Today; Grow Therapy; Hello Alma, etc.