

WHY THE JUMP FROM SECOND TO THIRD GRADE IS THE BIGGEST LEAP YOUR CHILD WILL MAKE

(An article from knilecenter.com)

For children, advancing to the next grade in school always brings a little nervousness and excitement - and maybe a little confusion. The jump from second to third grade, however, is about a lot more than social jitters and getting used to a new classroom. Although it has been said that odd years and transitional years (elementary to middle school, middle school to high school) are difficult, most educators believe 3rd grade is the biggest leap a child will make during his or her school years.

Academics

The jump from second to third grade will bring changes, and parents should be aware of these changes, so they can support and encourage their children. Where academic performance and school expectations are concerned, big changes are on the way.

1. In K-2, students are still pretty much "hand-held." In third grade, they'll be expected to function more independently.
2. Through second grade, kids *learn to read*. Now they'll *read to learn*, so it's critical that they possess grade-level skills in this area.
3. In second grade, concepts taught were generally concrete; in third grade, students will begin to explore abstract ideas.
4. Third grade will see students engaged in more Q&As on the material they read to ensure comprehension.
5. Math in third grade will introduce word problems that challenge students to start thinking "off the paper" and use more critical thinking skills instead of just relying on memory and facts.

Social

Many parents who lament, "Oh, they grow up so fast!" may be talking about their third-graders. At this age, children begin breaking from their parents and forming closer bonds with friends at school. Confidence and independence increase, and part of the mind begins turning to music, clothing, recreation and pop culture in general.

These social changes can be difficult at times and affect performance in school. Parents need to walk that fine line between full-time monitoring and giving their children the freedom to grow into the people they someday will become - remembering always that academics should never be lost in the shuffle.