

The Missing Middle: The Importance of the Middle Years

Catalysing Connections for Adolescent Health & Wellbeing



Thursday 15 October
3.30 to 4.30 pm AEDT

Zoom Webinar

Register here:
<https://middle-years-webinar.eventbrite.com.au>

SYNOPSIS

The middle years, from 8-14 years, have often been described as a phase of 'latency'. However, we now understand that this is not the case and the middle years are in fact a foundational period for development. Indeed, these middle years are a sensitive phase in social and emotional development, and a time when an individual's identity emerges. It is during the middle years that an individual begins to engage very differently with his/her social world beyond the immediate family. These years are also the peak time of onset for emotional and behavioural problems; one half of all adult mental disorders have their onset by the age of 14 years with symptoms often appearing well before then. The transition from primary school is one of the most significant and disruptive events in the lives of young people and coincides with puberty, which brings a suite of physical, biological, and social changes. Yet in contrast with the transition into primary school, research on this phase of life has been scarce and there are currently no effective system-wide evidence-based strategies in Victoria or nationally to support students. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional challenges for this cohort in terms of the impact on mental health and school engagement.

This *Catalysing Connections for Adolescent Health and Wellbeing* event will involve a panel discussion with thought leaders in education, adolescent health research and service provision.

Questions this event will address:

- What makes these middle years so important?
- What can schools do to maintain engagement and support wellbeing through the middle years and the transition to secondary school?
- What is the impact of COVID-19 likely to be?

PANELLISTS

Dr Lisa Mundy, Senior Research Fellow and Program Manager, Centre for Adolescent Health, MCRI

Nat Oska, Family Therapist, Drummond Street Services

Kristy Gray, Community Liaison and Engagement Manager, Wyndham Central College

Alasdair Roy OAM, Consultant Psychologist

MODERATED BY

Elly Robinson, Senior Specialist, Parenting Research Centre

This event is supported by funding from the Geoff and Helen Handbury Family Trust