

PRINCE Leadership MONTHLY

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Are you growing?

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When a baby is born, after asking the name, the next most often asked question is the length and weight of the newborn. Newborns typically have 8-10 well-checks during the first two years of life. Each time doctors measure and weigh the child, they also verify other milestones such as smiling, kicking, making sounds, or playing with their toes. The doctor and parents want to know that the baby is growing as anticipated. Usually, the doctor will tell the parents how the child's height and weight compares to other children of a similar age. This continues throughout the next years as doctors annually look at a child's growth as an indicator that the child is developing appropriately.



As a child reaches school age, physical growth continues to be monitored, but emotional and social growth begin to be monitored as well. We expect students to begin "playing with others" instead of "playing beside others" at a certain age. Every parent is excited when a child learns that screaming and crying is not the best way to communicate!

God created us to grow spiritually as well. Regardless of age, from the moment one becomes a Christian, a journey of trusting and following Jesus begins. We grow spiritually throughout this journey through regular Bible study, worship, and fellowship with other believers. Like physical growth, spiritual growth sometimes comes in "spurts" due to our circumstances. Times of great struggle often lead to great spiritual growth. Our continued growth is expected, and it is an indication that we are developing appropriately spiritually.

Academic growth is equally as important but may not be as readily apparent. While grades received on assignments in the classroom are an indicator of success, they may or may not indicate growth. The testing instruments used by one teacher are often different than those used by another, making comparisons difficult.

The achievement tests we administer each spring are a good measure of academic growth. Companies invest both time and resources in testing instruments and their scoring. The ITBS and ACT Aspire both give multiple scores on each subtest. The scale score (SS) is the easiest score to measure growth from year to year. Each grade level has a possible range of scores, and those ranges overlap from one year to the next. If the scaled score on a specific subtest improves from one year to the next, that is an indication that knowledge in that specific area has grown.

Our focus as a school is that each grade level and each individual student is at least maintaining, but hopefully growing, each year. Significant growth each year is unrealistic. However, we strive to ensure that every student is challenged and experiences some growth each year. Just as "growing pains" often accompany physical growth, students will often experience struggles as they grow academically. We strive to offer each student the opportunities necessary to experience the academic growth they are each capable of achieving.