Beginning and Becoming

As we journey on the road of life, we learn about ourselves, others, and the natural and constructed worlds. Childhood and youth lay the foundation for life, for learning and experiencing, for developing personal volition, for shaping identity and sense of self, and for health and well-being. The paths of childhood and youth are not the same for all, however. For some children and youth, it is a time of wonder, imagination, inquiry, discovery, play, experimentation, and innocence; for others, it is a time of neglect, abandonment, abuse, disillusionment, pain, exploitation, and innocence destroyed. Through relationships with the social, natural, and spiritual worlds, children and youth establish their identities among family members, caregivers, friends, peers, and others. Every culture celebrates or recognizes significant developments or rites of passage in children and adolescents; these milestones may be acknowledged formally or informally. Although the roles of, and attitudes about, children and youth have developed over time and varied across cultures, by examining the complex nature of childhood and youth, we have the opportunity to understand how childhood and youth contribute to who we are and who we would like to be.

Big Questions:

How do the experiences of youth and childhood provide a foundation for life? How do the experiences of childhood and youth affect our development – mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually?

How do relationships with others (e.g., parents, Elders, siblings, grandparents, role models, mentors) affect the identity, values, and beliefs of children and adolescents?

What ways of knowing, thinking, doing, and being have you developed as a result of your relationships in childhood and adolescence?

What issues do children and youth face in the twenty-first century? How are the issues that children face today different from the issues experienced by children in previous generations?

Maggie’s Musing by Kim Parkhill

Before: Write a brief statement that beings with “I remember when…” and ends with “and to this day…”.

During: As we read this selection, note any similarities between what you wrote and this selection.

After: Create a timeline that includes 10 events that have affected, or shaped you, to who you are today.

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| Composition and Presentation | Product is well-crafted, fully developed, and appropriate to purpose and audience. | Product is adequately developed, appropriate to purpose, and shows some awareness of audience | Product is understandable but uneven in its development. Product maintains the purpose on a basic level but may not show awareness of audience. | Product is difficult to follow. The purpose is unclear, and/or the subject may be off topic. |
| Organization | The text shows thoughtful and coherent organization and development. | The text shows sufficient and logical organization and development. | The text shows acceptable but unrefined organization and development. | The text shows poor, unclear, and unfocused organization and development |