

## Suggestions to Ease the Transition

Whether or not your child has told you that he is feeling stressed-out about entering middle school, he most likely is. The following suggestions will help you calm his fears and help him get excited about this next step toward adulthood:



- **Read the school rules** or handbook together. Pay particular attention to the dress code, attendance requirements, and behavioral expectations. Discuss the differences in expectations from elementary school to middle school.
- **Find a school map** in the handbook (or ask the school for one) and together visually “walk” through his schedule. Let him know that everyone gets lost, and it is okay to ask for directions.
- **Attend the school's orientation** for new students. This will give your child an opportunity to see the building and meet some of the faculty members.
- **Foster a sense of his belonging** to the school. Find newspaper articles about the school's sports teams or clubs. Check out the school website. Help your child feel that he is on the inside track to understanding how the school works. This will empower him to be successful before he steps foot on campus.
- **Give your child a combination lock** to practice opening so he can get a feel for opening his locker.

- **Establish a regular place for doing homework** and plan a routine, including the time homework will start. Offer suggestions on how he can organize his materials.
- **Help him practice getting up for school** by having him set his alarm clock for the time he will actually have to get up. Make it easy for him to get up by having a good breakfast waiting for him. The smell of pancakes wafting from the kitchen might be all the encouragement he needs to get out of bed. But if you don't have time to make breakfast every morning, provide something nutritious for him to eat before school. A healthy breakfast will give him energy to get his day off to a great start.



- **Teach your child conversation starters** to help him make new friends in the crowded cafeteria or hallway. Encourage him to share an experience, give a compliment or ask about personal interests.
- **Talk to your child about how being comfortable** on the first day is more important than showing off a new outfit. It will be easier for him to maneuver through his schedule without the pinch of new shoes slowing him down.
- **Discuss with your child how to get along** with his teachers. Let him know that each teacher will have different priorities. While one teacher might demand complete silence, another teacher encourages class participation.

