Middleton Middle School
Ms. Diana Wold, Principal

Middle Years

Working Together for School Success

Short Stops

Waiting patiently

Does your child expect everything to happen *now*? If a friend doesn't call back immediately or his teacher hasn't graded his project yet, encourage him to come up with possible explanations. Maybe his friend is watching a movie or the teacher has 100 assignments to grade. Thinking reasonably can help him be patient.

Digital moods

Tweens may not be aware of how electronic devices affect their moods. Encourage your middle grader to notice how she feels when she's online. For instance, a virtual pottery-making app might be relaxing. But a drama-filled group chat could stress her out. Suggest that she stick to activities that make her feel good—online and in real life.

DID YOU KNOW? Research shows that most tweens would like to talk more with their parents about schoolwork. Ask your middle grader to share what he's learning in his classes. Be specific: "What did you work on in science today?" or "Tell me about the book you discussed in English today."

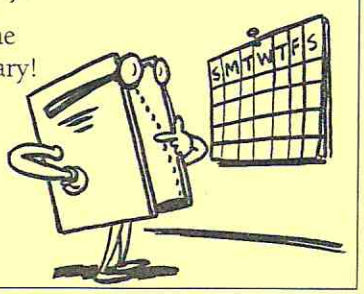
Worth quoting

"The time is always right to do what is right." *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Just for fun

Q: When does Friday come before Thursday?

A: In the dictionary!



Hints for homework



Maddy has her evening planned. She'll do her math homework before dinner, then follow up dessert with French and history. Afterward, she can unwind from a busy day.

Sound impossible? It's not. Help your middle grader make homework go like clockwork with these strategies.

Think it through

Before your youngster begins, have her make a to-do list. *Example:* write a poem, read history chapter, solve 10 math problems. Then, suggest that she number the tasks, from toughest to easiest, and start with the hard stuff. This "save the easiest for last" strategy will help her finish on a high note, perhaps inspiring her to get in some extra studying.

Think about time

Ask your child to consider different time slots she can use to get work done. For instance, maybe she could set aside a weekend morning or Sunday night. Also, some middle graders have time during study period or after lunch to tackle homework. Encourage your child to complete one assignment during school hours each day. The more she does then, the more time she'll have for fun later.

Think positive

Help your middle grader see homework as a chance to prove her independence by getting her work done on time and doing it by herself. Boost her confidence by telling her, "Homework gives you a chance to show all that you know." And give her a thumbs-up when she does just that.

Be there!

Being on time for every class, every day helps your child get the most out of middle school. Encourage good attendance with these ideas:



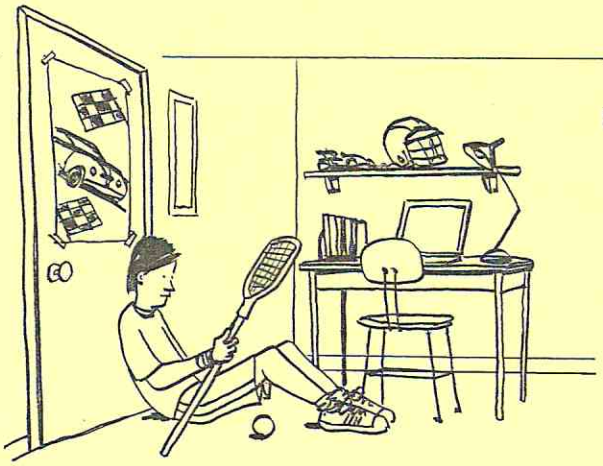
- Point out that there is no substitute for being in class, whether in school or online. Your youngster needs to be present to hear teachers explain concepts, to participate in group projects and class discussions, and to ask questions.
- Schedule doctor, dentist, and orthodontist appointments for before or after school hours whenever possible. If you can't, try to arrange them for lunchtime.
- It will be easier for your child to get up on time for school if he has had at least nine hours of sleep. Set a reasonable bedtime, and make sure he puts away his phone or video games so he isn't tempted to stay awake and use them.

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Emotions in the middle

Moody, private, self-conscious … if this sounds like your tween, you're not alone. At this age, his body and emotions are changing rapidly. Here are ways to help him cope.

Managing moods. Physical growth and worries about friends, sports, and schoolwork can cause moodiness. Let your child know you're available to talk. A quiet statement, such as "I remember what it feels like to not be included," can invite him to open up about what's bothering him.



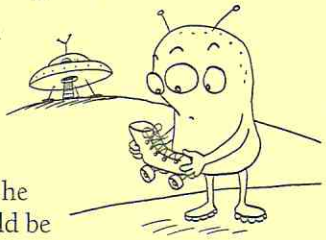
Finding privacy. It's natural for your middle grader to want some time to himself. He might close his bedroom door or walk outside to take a phone call, for example. Show him that you respect his growing need for privacy by giving him space.

Fitting in. Many middle graders feel self-conscious. Being part of a group of people who share his interests can help your youngster focus on his strengths and feel more confident. Encourage him to keep in touch with friends from his school activities like ukulele club or robotics team.

Nice thinking!

Becoming a good thinker will help your middle grader solve problems and make daily decisions. Use these fun family activities to grow her creative and critical thinking skills:

- If an alien came to Earth and found a roller skate, what might he think it could be used for? Take turns calling out answers. For example, your child may say the wheels would make a good back massager. Continue until no one can think of a new answer.



- Secretly think of an object, and imagine you are holding it. "Pass" it to another person, who tries to guess your item based on how you handle it. For example, how would you hold and pass an ice cube, a bowling ball, a hot potato, or a Frisbee? After guessing, the catcher pretends it's something different and passes it to the next family member.

Parent to Parent: More nonfiction reading

My son, Kevin, reads mostly fiction. His English teacher mentioned that reading nonfiction, too, helps prepare students for high school, college, and careers, where informational text is important.



Mrs. Ross suggested a few ways to help Kevin enjoy nonfiction at home. First, she said, we could leave the newspaper out and mention articles about topics that affect him. For instance, I pointed out stories on road construction where he rides his bike and one about an award his soccer coach got.

Also, the teacher said to encourage him to read nonfiction books about things he's interested in. Knowing Kevin is fascinated by car racing, I got a few books about the sport and a biography of his favorite driver. I was happy to see him reading one, and he even asked for a specific title about another driver. As we browsed the library's online catalog, he picked out a new novel—plus a few books on speed records and breaking the sound barrier!

Q&A: Shift the responsibility

Q *My daughter says I'm always "on her case," reminding her to practice her clarinet, take a shower, or pick up her shoes. I don't want her to feel like all I ever do is correct her. Help!*

A It may feel natural to give your daughter reminders. But try making her responsible for reminding *herself.* Suggest she create a daily checklist that includes big jobs (practicing her instrument) and smaller ones (putting shoes away). Or she could list her to-do tasks in a daily planner to keep herself organized.



Giving her positive—and specific—feedback will also help. Rather than saying, "You're so talented!" if she practices without a reminder, try, "I heard you practicing that tough part in your new clarinet solo. I know your hard work will pay off at your band concert."

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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