

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 at a movie or the teacher has 100 assignments to grade. Thinking reasonably can help him be patient.

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 she's learning in her classes. Be specific: "What did you work on in French today?" or "Tell me about the science experiment you did in lab today."

Keep electronics in check

Encourage face-to-face interaction by putting away devices (including yours) at set times, such as during meals, family outings, or game night. If you're using a device and your child interrupts, switch your attention to him. You'll help him see that the person in front of him is more important than what's on the screen.

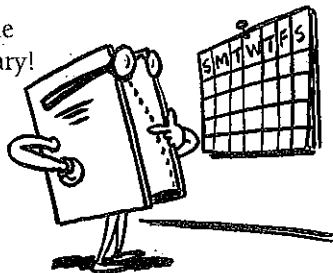
Worth quoting

"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 English and science. 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 at school 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. 👍

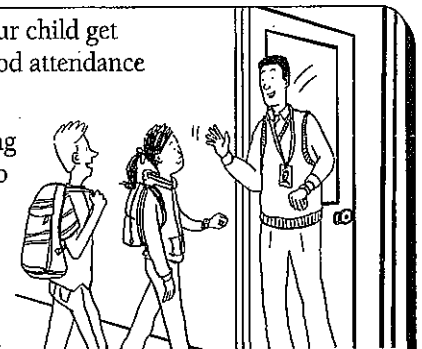
Be there!

Being in school all day, 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. 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.

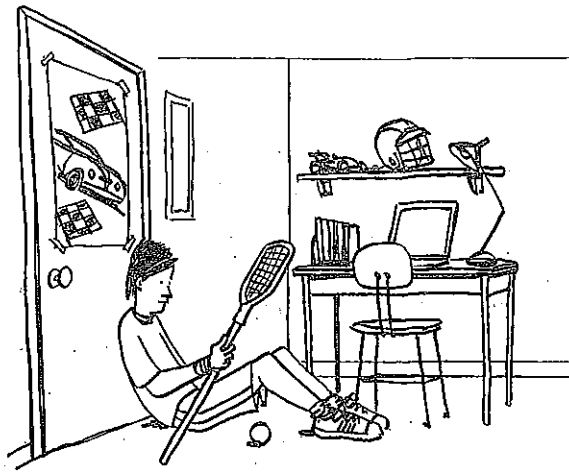
■ It will be easier for your child to get up on time for school if he has had at least nine hours of sleep. Set a reasonable bedtime, and make sure he puts away electronic devices so he isn't tempted to stay awake to read messages or play games. 👍



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 not to be asked to join a team," 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.

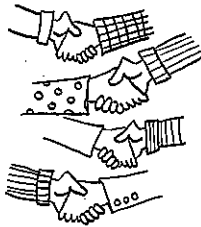
Fitting in. Many middle graders feel self-conscious. Being part of a group of people who share his interests can help your youngster focus on his strengths and feel more confident. Encourage him to participate in at least one activity, perhaps basketball, student government, or STEM club. 👍



Tease your brain

Stretch your middle grader's math skills with brainteasers like these. She'll think they feel more like fun than work!

1. At a party, each person shakes hands with everyone else once. There are 45 handshakes. How many people are at the party?



2. Sam added eight 8s and got the number 1,000. How did he do that?

3. Think about a digital clock. In a 12-hour period of time, what's the shortest break between two times that are palindromes (the numbers read the same forward and backward)?

4. Carol spent $\frac{1}{2}$ of the money in her purse. Then she spent $\frac{1}{3}$ of what was left. She spent \$36 total. How much did she start with?

Turn upside down for the answers. 👍

1 01 1
2. 888 + 88 + 88 + 8 + 8 = 1,000
3. Two minutes, between 9:59 and 10:01
4. \$100



More nonfiction reading

My son, Kevin, reads mostly fiction. But at back-to-school night, his teachers said the students will read lots of nonfiction this year—in addition to fiction. This is to prepare students for high school, college, and careers, where informational text is important.



Kevin's English teacher suggested a few ways to help kids enjoy nonfiction at home. First, she said, we could leave the newspaper out and mention articles about topics that affect them. For instance, I pointed out stories on road construction where he rides his bike and on festivals we might attend.

Also, the teacher said to encourage our middle graders to read nonfiction books about things they're interested in. The next time I went to the library, I brought home books about car racing and a biography of one of Kevin's favorite drivers. I was happy to see him reading one, and he even asked to go to the library to get a book about another driver. When we were there, he checked out a new novel—plus a few books on speed records and breaking the sound barrier. 👍

Bully-proof your child

Q I've heard bullying peaks in middle school. How can I make sure my daughter isn't targeted?

A There is no way to guarantee a child will never be bullied. But there are things you can do to help.

Since people who bully are less likely to pick on someone who has friends, encourage your child to get to know other students. Suggest that she join a club, and have her invite classmates over. Not only is there safety

in numbers, but having friends will build her self-esteem, which in turn can reduce her chances of being targeted.

Also, talk to your daughter about bullying. Tell her that if she is bullied or witnesses bullying, she should seek help immediately from an adult, whether it's you, a teacher, an administrator, or a coach. Let her know that she's not expected to handle this problem alone. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5540