For Middle School Parents

Wheeler Middle School

It's Never Too Late to Get Involved



If you've never taken a very active role in your child's education, you may wonder if you're too late. You're not. It's never too late for you to become more involved with your child's education. According to Anne Henderson, who has spent more than 30 years studying family engagement, "When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life." The middle school years are an important time to become involved because family guidance has a positive effect on academic achievement.

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Family Engagement Produces …

- **Higher grades and test scores.**
- **Better attendance** and more assignments completed.
- **More positive attitudes** toward school.
- **More positive behavior.**
- **Higher graduation rates.**
- **Increased enrollment** in education after high school.



Change Your Definition of 'Volunteer'

You don't think you have time to be a school volunteer. Does that mean you can't be one? Not according to Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University. She says a volunteer is "anybody, anytime, anyplace, who supports school goals or children's learning." That means you can consider yourself a "school volunteer" if you:

- **Read aloud with your child.** Think your child is too old? Try it—you may be surprised. Or listen to audiobooks together.
- **Set aside a regular time** and place for studying and enforce it by having your child put away digital devices.
- **Let your middle schooler know** that effort is essential for learning and succeeding in school.
- **Visit the library together regularly.** It's just as important when your child is in middle school as it was during the toddler years. It's also the least expensive way to promote reading.
- **Keep close track** of how well your child is doing in school. Review graded assignments, check in with teachers and don't hesitate to contact the school with any questions.

Talk About School

As you sit around the dinner table, talk about how important education is. Mention ways you use the things you learned in school on the job. Explain that, just as you do your best at work every day, you expect your child's best effort in school.

How can you avoid those, "What did you do in school today?" "Nothing" conversations? Try asking more specific questions:

What was the most important thing you learned today?

What new assignments did you get?

What do you think your history teacher will ask on the test?

Share information about your own day. Sometimes just hearing about your day will motivate your child to talk about the school day, too.

There's No Such Thing as 'No Work'

"I don't have any assignments tonight." Sound familiar? Many older students say this to their parents in hopes of spending the night watching TV, playing video games or spending time online.

Some parents have made a rule: There's no such thing as a "no work" night. If there truly is no school assignment, make one up. Ask your child to choose an interesting topic and spend study time doing a little research.

Your child can read articles to find out more about a topic that's in the news or interview friends and relatives. When the "assignment" is finished, have your child read it aloud to you.

But don't be surprised—when you show that you mean business, your child may suddenly "remember" that there is studying to do after all!



A Quote to Remember

"One hundred years from now, it will not matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much I had in my bank account, nor what my clothes looked like. But the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a [child]."

—Forest Witcraft



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