For Middle School Families

Parents Are Teachers, *Too!*



From the day children are born until they graduate from high school, they spend just 15 percent of their waking hours in school. The other 85 percent is spent outside school. And most of that time is spent at home.

That means families are their children's most influential teachers. Fortunately, children are naturally curious and love to learn. Here are some ideas you can use at home to make the most of the important educational influence you have.

QuickTips®

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Wheeler Middle School



Encourage Reading

Experts say that encouraging children to read is very important. It may be the most important thing you can do help your child succeed in school. Make it a point to:

- **Get the whole family involved** in reading. Try reading favorite parts of books or news articles aloud to each other.
- **Be a reading role model.** Make sure your child sees you reading. Have lots of reading materials around (newspapers, magazines, books, catalogs).
- **Go to the library with your child.** It's free. And it has a better selection than any bookstore.

When it's fun and interesting and everybody's doing it, you can make reading seem exciting and important—even to your middle school child.

Play Learning Games

Family fun time is also a great time for learning. Try these activities with your middle schooler:

- **Play a thesaurus game.** Choose a word at random in the thesaurus. See who can list the most synonyms. Or, take turns, with each family member adding a synonym that no one has mentioned.

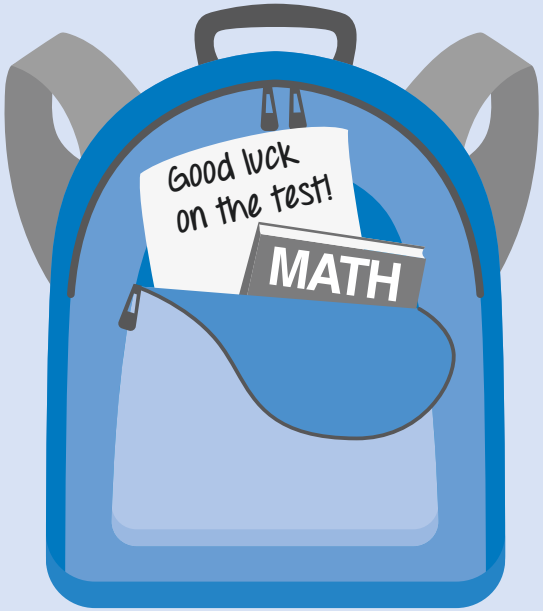


- **See who can make the most accurate estimates.** Have each family member estimate the height of a picture from the floor, the number of jelly beans in a small jar or how wide a room is. See what other estimating contests you can invent.
- **Collect some news articles** and cut off the headlines. Then have your child try to match the headlines with the right stories. Or have your child try writing new headlines. Also have your child highlight facts in blue and opinions in yellow.

Show Your Child That You Care

Though they may not admit it, middle school children need to know that they are loved. They need to know that you are proud of them. They need to know that you are pleased by their accomplishments. You should:

- **Find ways to say** "I love you" every day—no matter what your child's age.
- **Make time to talk** with your child and *really listen*. Being listened to builds a child's confidence and willingness to try.
- **Monitor your middle schooler's schoolwork.** Talk about progress, and express your pride in your child's accomplishments.





Make the Community Your Child's Classroom

You can turn routine family activities into learning opportunities for your child:

- **At the grocery store,** give your child a grocery list and a budget. Then let your child take the lead in shopping and staying within your budget. Take a calculator along to use. Check the list and total the items in your cart before you go through the checkout line.
- **Research careers.** Help your child research interesting jobs. Encourage your child to find out more about the work involved, education requirements, training needed, salary and benefits.
- **Be a reporter for a day.** With your child, decide on an interesting topic to "cover." Send your child into the "field" to take notes, record facts and take pictures. Make sure your child covers the five "W's" and "H"—Who? What? Why? Where? When? and How?



The Possibilities Are Endless

Children love learning, and they are learning all the time. The possibilities for learning at home are endless. You don't have to be a trained teacher to make a difference. With a positive attitude about the fun of learning, and a little imagination, you can make the most of the important time you spend with your child.

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