

# 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 child to share what she's learning in her classes. Be specific: "What kind of math problems did you do today?" or "Tell me about the science experiment you did in lab today."

### Family meals

Eating together gives parents and children a chance to chat about the day's events. It also strengthens family relationships. Whether you have time to cook or are picking up carryout on the way home from work, try to sit around the table and enjoy each other's company while you eat.

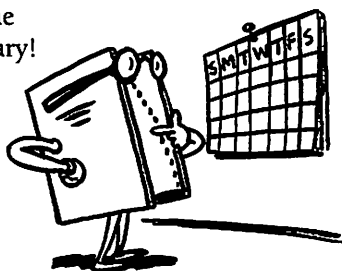
### Worth quoting

"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

Amy 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 child 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 a 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. 👍

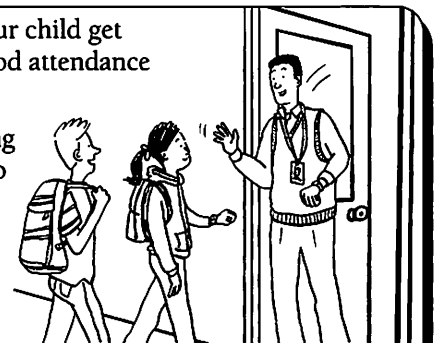
## Be there!

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.

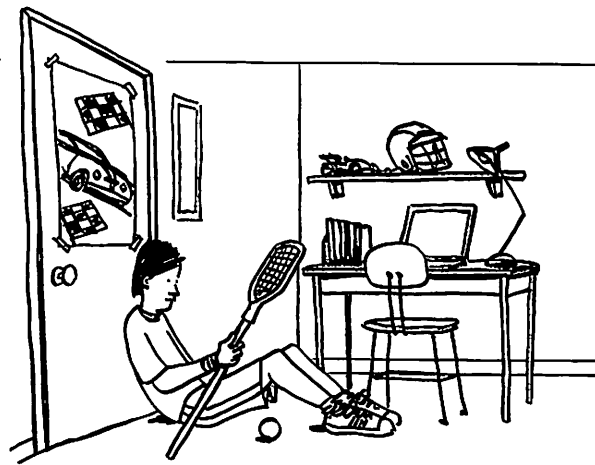
- It will be easier for your child to get up on time for school if he has had at least nine hours of sleep. Set a reasonable bedtime, and make sure he puts away electronic devices so he isn't tempted to stay awake to read messages or play games. 👍



# Emotions in the middle

Moody, private, self-conscious...if this sounds like your middle grader, 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 (basketball team, student government, math club). 👍



## Time to disconnect

Too much technology can prevent your tween from interacting with people in real life. It can also interfere with sleep and physical activity. Consider these suggestions for keeping her tech time in balance:

- Make a ratio rule. For example, you could say for every half hour your child spends on the computer, she should spend an hour doing something else, such as riding bikes or playing the guitar.



- Create digital-free zones. You might say no cell phones or tablets at the dinner table or in restaurants.

- Insist that devices go off at bedtime. Children could stay up for hours playing games or watching videos. They can also be awakened by texts or sleep lightly in anticipation of them. *Idea:* Try setting up a family charging station where everyone must leave their devices. 👍

## Parent to Parent More nonfiction reading

My son, Kevin, reads mostly fiction, but his language arts teacher said the class will read lots of nonfiction this year. The reason, she said, is to prepare students for high school, college, and careers, where "informational text" is important.

The teacher suggested a few ways to help at home. First, she said, we could leave the newspaper out and mention articles about topics that affect him. For example, 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 son to read nonfiction books about things he's 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 rather than watching TV the other night!

He even asked to go to the library to get a book about another driver. And when we were there, he picked up a few books on speed records and breaking the sound barrier. 👍



## Q & A Bully-proof your child

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

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

Since bullies are less likely to pick on someone who has friends, encourage her 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 discourage bullies from targeting her.

Also, talk to your daughter about bullying. Tell her that if she is bullied or sees someone else being bullied, 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.

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