

Middle School Parent Information

Top 10 Things Parents Can Do to Help their Student Succeed in Middle School

1. **Know the rules!** Read school handbook completely to be informed. This goes for all handouts, newsletters, permission slips, etc, that are sent home at the beginning and throughout the school year.
2. **Have the right stuff!** This means know the dress code before you do the back-to-school shopping. Keep the school supply list in a safe place so you can hit the sales during summer. Send your child to school with the right supplies.
3. **Home is a Learning Environment Too!** Have a designated “study area”, supplies on hand, specific, consistent “study time”, Don’t just ask, “Is your homework done?” Ask to see the completed work. Is it complete? Is it quality work? Is it neat? If you can’t read it, chances are, your child’s teacher won’t be able to read it either.
4. **Organize! Organize! Organize!** Such an important skill for middle school and beyond. Have your student organize their bedroom, dresser drawers, closet. Show them how, if they need help. Tackle that junk drawer together. A child isn’t born with this skill. It needs to be taught, and continually modeled over time.
5. **The clock is ticking!** Time management & planning is an essential, life-long skill necessary for success. Be a role model. Use a family calendar. Actively, discuss time management, deadlines. Ask your student what his/her plan is for getting something done. Is the plan realistic? Discuss possible obstacles. Is there a “backup” plan? Remember-we’re on Trimesters this year-which means a longer period of time between report cards. Time management is crucial.
6. **Don’t Overextend!** Plan your student’s activities wisely. An overscheduled child is not a happy child. Make academics a priority. Balance is important, but remember-all other activities are secondary to school. Your child’s job is to be a SUCCESSFUL STUDENT. Be sure your student has some “down time” too!
7. **Don’t take the Summer off!** (Remember this at the end of the school year!) Don’t lose everything your child has worked so hard to gain this year. Find some structured time for academics, even just reading a book can help. The important thing is to be consistent. Keeping a reading journal & having a parent read it is a great way to keep the writing skills sharp. The more your student struggles academically-the more important it is to keep skills up over the summer.
8. **Encourage Responsibility!** Responsibility at home carries over to school. Give your student household responsibilities so they can be an active contributing member of the family. They will be expected to contribute to their classroom & school community as well. Don’t allow them to blame others or make excuses. Teach them self-sufficiency.
9. **Be a communicator!** Be proactive in communicating with teachers & school personnel. Most middle school teachers have 186 students to keep track of every day! Parent-initiated communication is best. This is especially important if you know your child struggles in school. Ask for help when needed or if you need clarification about something. Email is the preferred method for contacting teachers, but the phone call works, too. Have your current email and phone number on file so teachers can contact you as needed.
10. **Be patient!** Don’t Expect Perfection-it’s a process of growth. Middle school is challenging! Your child has to cope with changes academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. Be encouraging, be supportive, but resist the impulsive to constantly rescue your child. Remember-we learn from our successes as well as our failures.

External Assets

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| Support | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive family communication—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s). 3. Other adult relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s). 4. Caring neighborhood—Child experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring school climate—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school. |
| Empowerment | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community values youth—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community. 8. Children as resources—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community. 9. Service to others—Child has opportunities to help others in the community. 10. Safety—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood. |
| Boundaries & Expectations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts. 12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior. 14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior. 16. High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities. |
| Constructive Use of Time | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Creative activities—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week. 18. Child programs—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.. 19. Religious community—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week. 20. Time at home—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games. |

Internal Assets

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| Commitment to Learning | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Achievement Motivation—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school. 22. Learning Engagement—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school. 23. Homework—Child usually hands in homework on time. 24. Bonding to school—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school. 25. Reading for Pleasure—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week. |
| Positive Values | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Caring—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people. 27. Equality and social justice—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people. 28. Integrity—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs. 29. Honesty—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth. 30. Responsibility—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior. 31. Healthy Lifestyle—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality. |
| Social Competencies | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Planning and decision making—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions. 33. Interpersonal Competence—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself. 34. Cultural Competence—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity. 35. Resistance skills—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things. 36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently. |
| Positive Identity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life. 38. Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is. 39. Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life. 40. Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future. |