

Middle Years

Working together for school success



Short Stops

Tolerant of others

Try to raise a child who respects cultures that are different from her own. You might correct stereotypes that you hear her or others mention, and let her know that you won't tolerate unkind jokes. Also, explain that it's respectful to use proper terms for customs and people ("She's wearing a hijab").

What's the point?

Help your middle schooler get his point across during class discussions. Suggest that he ask himself, "If I could say just one sentence, what would it be?" This will help him learn to summarize his thinking. He should take a moment to plan what he'll say so he can avoid extra words like "um," "you know," and "like."

Sharing technology

Staying in touch with your child's electronic entertainment can help you monitor what she's doing and keep you close. Watch YouTube videos with her, or have her show you how to use a new game or app. If she likes a particular TV series, make it a habit to watch together.

Worth quoting

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Just for fun

Q: What was the highest mountain before Mt. Everest was discovered?

A: Mt. Everest.



Warm up to learning

This summer, your child can use what he learned in school to try exciting new things. Here are some ways for him to practice writing, math, and more in real-life situations.

At the scene

If your middle schooler enjoys writing or photography, encourage him to pretend he is a reporter. He might keep an eye out for events like parades and fireworks displays, or take photos of newsworthy sights such as a shopping center under construction or a flooded creek. Suggest that he email his work to out-of-town friends and relatives or send it to a news website that accepts readers' reports. He'll get to work on his writing and maybe even see it posted online.

In the office

Ask your supervisor if your tween can come to work with you for a day, or find a relative or neighbor whose employer might be willing. Beforehand, have your child list questions to ask workers. *Examples:* "How did you get started in this field?" "What is your favorite part of the job?" He can take a tour and see products that your company makes or



sells, or perhaps even pretend to be an employee himself. For example, he could look at advertisements or press releases and then design or write his own. He'll practice a variety of skills and learn what a workplace is like.

On a budget

Put your child in charge of planning back-to-school shopping. He could look at store advertisements and try to find the lowest prices on clothes (jeans, T-shirts) and supplies (notebooks, pencils). Then, he can add up the prices of everything he needs and estimate the total cost. He'll keep math skills fresh and learn about managing money—and probably spend less! 👍

An end-of-year checklist

As the academic year winds down, your child will need to tie up loose ends. Share this checklist to help:

- Turn in textbooks, and return library books. Pay fines or charges for any overdue or lost items.
- Remind family members about events like banquets or award ceremonies.
- Gather information about summer activities, such as the dates and times of practices and any equipment needed.
- Clean out your locker. Take a few shopping bags to school for carrying stuff home.
- Thank teachers, advisers, coaches, and other staff members. Put cards on their desks, or stop by to say thank you in person. 👍



Summer socializing

When school is in session, your youngster sees her friends a lot. But during summer, maintaining those friendships and building new ones can be more of a challenge. Share these ideas for making your middle schooler's summer a social one.

Be active. It's more fun to exercise with a friend. Your tween can invite a classmate to swim at the local pool, bowl on student discount days, or work out to a yoga or Zumba DVD from the library. And joining a pickup game of basketball or beach volleyball is a great way to meet new people.

Find classes or events. Your child and a pal could sign up for a weekly art class at a recreation center or try out for a



community theater production (or work behind the scenes). They'll have fun spending time together, and they'll find new friends, too.

Take up a hobby.

Your youngster and her friend might ask an adult to show them how to knit or crochet. They can chat while work-

ing on scarves or hats. Or they could learn how to cook. Encourage them to get some cookbooks and try fun recipes like mini pizzas or Southwest roll-ups. Then, they can ask several classmates to join them for an end-of-summer potluck. 👍



Q & A Ready for high school

Q My son starts high school this fall. How can I help him prepare?

A Learning what to expect can put both your minds at ease. Encourage your child to talk to older kids in the neighborhood or to his friends' siblings. He might ask about the homework load or their favorite activities, for example. Meanwhile, you can talk to other parents to get their overall impressions and tips.



Also, suggest that your son sign up for an extracurricular activity. Summer practice for wrestling or band can be a great way for him to meet future classmates and ease nerves.

Finally, have your child compare his high school schedule with those of his friends from middle school. He can find out who is in his lunch period so he's sure to see familiar faces on the first day. 👍

To tell you the truth ...

Wanting to fit in is normal for middle graders—but it can also tempt them to stretch the truth. Here are some suggestions for what to do if you find your child being less than honest:

- You overhear your middle schooler tell friends that his uncle played football in college. (In reality, he played in high school.) Tweens may exaggerate or make things up to look cool. Let your youngster know what you heard. You might point out that even minor lies can easily turn into bigger ones and that friends won't trust him if fibbing becomes a habit.
- You find out your child attended a party when he said he was at a friend's house. Tell him you're upset that he went to the party, but it's an even bigger deal that he was dishonest. You might say something like, "If you had asked, we could have discussed it." Then, follow through with consequences, such as having to miss the next party or being grounded for a weekend. 👍



Parent to Parent Dealing with disappointment

My daughter Sidney was hoping to be chosen as a school ambassador next year. Ambassadors welcome guests and new students to the school, lead tours, and work with administrators. Sidney gets good grades and has strong relationships with her teachers, so she was confused when she wasn't picked.

I suggested that she ask the group's adviser how she might improve her odds if she applies again next year or for something similar in

high school. The adviser explained that the chosen applicants had more experience with activities that teach communication and leadership. He encouraged Sidney to build her resume by joining the school speech team or participating in student government.

Although Sidney is disappointed not to be an ambassador now, she's glad she found out why. And she has decided to join the speech team so she'll have a better shot next year. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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