

# Middle Years

Working together for school success

## Short Stops



### Road trip rescue kit

Taking a long trip this summer with your family? Pack a "trip kit" for each child. Include a snack, pens and word puzzles, a favorite magazine, and small hobby items. Save the kits until midway, and pass them out as boredom busters.

### Interesting inventions

What's an "ornithopter"? Help your middle grader find out by visiting "What in the World Is That?" at [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlp/edu/features/science/learn\\_more.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlp/edu/features/science/learn_more.html). The site is full of fun information about inventions, from submarines to carpet cleaners.

### Blues clues

Depression in children can be caused by a variety of factors, including stress, substance abuse, or chronic illnesses such as hypothyroidism. If you suspect that your middle grader is depressed, schedule a checkup with his pediatrician. Discovering the cause is the first step toward a solution.

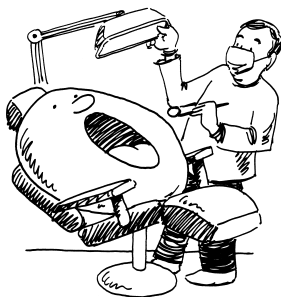
### Worth quoting

"Laughter is the closest distance between two people." *Victor Borge*

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the donut go to the dentist?

**A:** It needed a chocolate filling!



## Excited to learn

During the school week, children often complain of being tired or bored. But once the weekend arrives, their complaints vanish at the thought of free time and plans with friends.

How can you help your middle grader be as enthusiastic about learning? Consider the following suggestions.

### Be the student

Sometimes the best way to learn is by teaching others. Ask your middle grader to explain something she learned during the day. Most kids will enjoy playing the role of teacher for a change. You'll give learning a new appeal for your child, plus her "lesson" will help you gauge how she's doing in class.

### Show interest

Increase your middle grader's excitement by noticing his work. Ask about new assignments or how a project is progressing. When he gets a good grade, hang the paper where everyone can see it. Or send pictures of his science project to relatives. Applauding your youngster's work is likely to encourage a stronger effort.

### Share knowledge

Talk about your child's studies. You might mention something interesting that you know about a topic she's studying. *Example:* "Did you know that NASA uses math computations to design the space shuttle?" Sharing facts and connecting your middle grader's knowledge to the real world can make learning more intriguing. 🍷



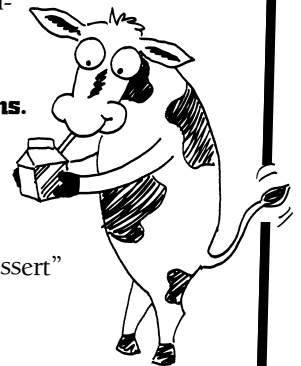
## Memory magic

Does your youngster have trouble remembering facts for tests? Share these memory techniques with him.

■ **Create sentences.** To recall the names of the four oceans, think, "**I am a person.**" The first letter of each word represents the first letter of the major oceans (Indian, Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific). A funny statement like "**Lucky cows drink milk**" can remind you of the ascending order of roman numerals (LCDM).

■ **Recite rhymes.** "Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November," can help you remember which months have 30 days.

■ **Make associations.** As a clue that "desert" is spelled with one "s" and "dessert" with two, the double "s" in "dessert" could represent "so sweet." 🍷

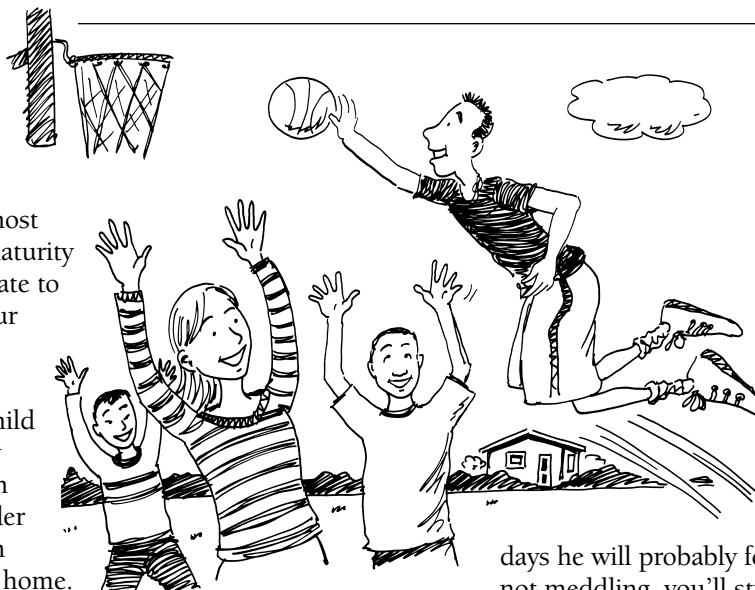


# Managing the middle years

A middle grader's world changes almost daily. His mind, body, and emotional maturity are developing quickly, and he's desperate to flex his independence. You can help your youngster through these trying times. Here's how:

▲ Provide plenty of chances for your child to be with his friends. Suggest that they play basketball at the park, or take them to see a movie. Giving your middle grader opportunities to be independent—with limits—can cut down on frustration at home.

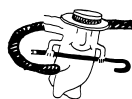
▲ If your youngster confides in you, treat her action as a sign of trust, and keep what she tells you



private. She just might continue confiding in you—an important key to success during the middle years.

▲ Offer advice if your child asks for it, but avoid fixing every problem. A snub by a classmate may seem like a major event, but in a couple of

days he will probably forget all about it. By not meddling, you'll strengthen your middle grader's sense of independence. 👍

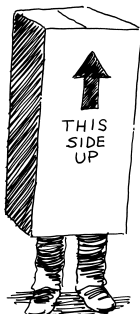


## Help for shyness

Shyness in young children is normal and often thought of as cute. But shyness in older kids can keep them from doing things they want or need to do.

Here are some tips to encourage shy middle graders:

● Is your youngster worried that someone will make fun of him or that he'll make a mistake? Shyness in children can result from fear or anxiety. Spend time talking with your middle grader about his feelings.



● Let your child know that it might take her a little longer to get used to new situations. Reassure her that once she does, she'll probably feel more comfortable interacting with others.

● Shyness can affect a child's self-confidence. Challenge your middle grader to tell you one positive thing about himself each day. *Example:* "I'm really good at skateboarding." 👍

### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
3035 Valley Avenue, Suite 103, Winchester, VA 22601  
(540) 723-0322 • rfeustomer@aspenpubl.com  
ISSN 1540-5540

## Q & A Count on consequences

**Q** My middle grader either oversleeps or dawdles almost every morning before school. How can I make him understand that getting up and out the door on time is important?

**A** Letting your child face the consequences of his actions is often the most effective way to change his behavior. That's because consequences are based in reality.

Rather than nagging your child to get ready, let him experience the results. If he misses the bus and arrives late at school, he will receive a tardy. Several tardies could result in an unexcused absence or detention, and he will have to make up missed class work. Remind your son that his late arrival also disrupts the entire classroom, impacting his fellow students' learning time.

Your middle grader will soon learn that getting up on time is his responsibility, not yours, and that his choices have results. 👍



## Parent to Parent Peer-pressure pointers

Last week a neighbor called and said my daughter Jen and some of her friends were throwing eggs at cars. When Jen got home, I asked her what happened. She said she hid in the bushes on a dare and threw some eggs. "We didn't hit anybody," she added.

I explained that she could have caused an accident and hurt someone. I asked her how she would feel if someone egged her while she was riding her bike to school. Jen hung her head. "Sorry, Dad," she

muttered. Then, she admitted that she had felt pressured when her friends dared her to do it.

I told my daughter that it's not cool to go along with her friends when they ask her to do something wrong—it's foolish. We talked about ways she could have stood up to them. Jen promised to use her head and think twice before going along with the crowd next time. 👍

