

Middle Years

Working together for school success

Short Stops



Spring-fever fighter

Everybody gets spring fever. If your child fidgets while doing homework or finds excuses not to do it, suggest that he schedule regular breaks. Taking five minutes to stretch or get a drink of water may refresh his mind and keep him on track.

Image isn't everything

Middle graders often feel awkward about their appearance. How can you help? Try complimenting your youngster on her character. *Example:* "You're very considerate of others." A positive comment will prompt her to focus on her inner beauty.

Time for a time-out

"Before you shout, call a time-out." The middle years are a tough time for parents, too. Before responding to a heated situation, take a moment to cool down and collect your thoughts. If you react calmly, chances are your child will follow your lead.

Worth quoting

"A book is like a garden carried in the pocket." *Chinese proverb*

Just for fun



"It's time to clean up your room!"

Summer smarts

Middle graders benefit from activities that help them continue learning during the summer. Camps, sports, volunteering, and part-time jobs all keep them thinking, learning, and safe. Here are other ways parents have encouraged their children to have a learning-filled summer.

Reading away the days

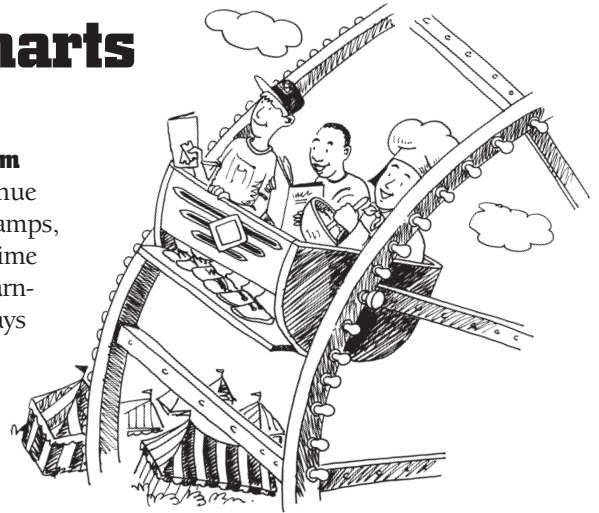
"During the summer, I take my children to the library a couple afternoons each week. They read books, browse magazines, check out videos and books-on-tape, and go online to get e-mail. My oldest son keeps an eye on his younger brother. I'm glad to know they're spending part of their summer learning."

Calculated cooking

"My daughter likes to cook, so I take advantage of our less busy schedule to let her practice. On weekends, we tape cooking shows and comb magazines for recipes. Then, we plan meals, make a budget, and head to the supermarket. When I get home from work, she has the ingredients ready. She's keeping her organization, math, and reading skills sharp."

Hometown fun

"Summertime is all about fairs and festivals for my kids. Each spring, they write to the chamber of commerce to learn about upcoming events. They have quite a collection of ticket stubs, programs, and photographs. The fair is their favorite because of all the animals. And festivals give us a chance to enjoy the foods, music, and art of many cultures." 🍷



Sibling success

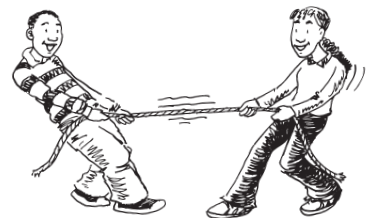
All brothers and sisters get under each other's skin sometimes. Use these tips to help your kids D-I-A-L into better behavior:

Don't compare your children. Instead, point out the successes and talents of each.

Insist on behavior limits. For example, arguing is inevitable from time to time, but fighting is not allowed. Discuss consequences for breaking the rules.

Avoid "it's not fair" arguments. Explain that children of different ages usually have different needs and can't always do the same things.

Listen when each child complains. Decide if the concerns are valid or if something else is happening. Then, take action. 🍷



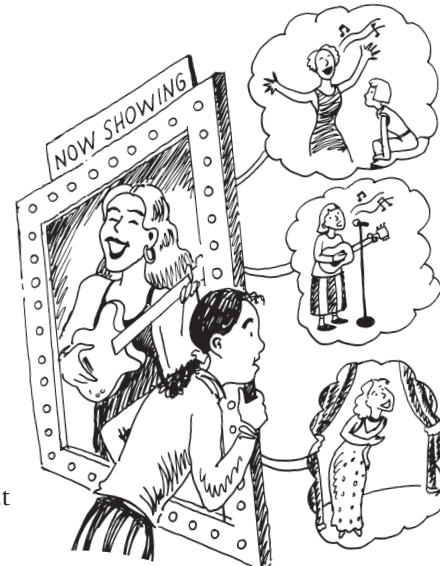
Q & A Turning dreams into reality

Q My middle grader often talks about what she wants to be when she “grows up.” How can I help her turn her dreams into workable goals?

A Many kids dream of what their lives will be like when they’re adults. Dreams are what goals are made of, but children often don’t understand that success is hard work. For example, when they see sports players or entertainers in the spotlight, they don’t see the years of training and dedication behind their achievements.

Offer encouragement when your child talks about her dreams. Ask her why she chose her goal and what she knows about making it happen. For example, what kind of special skills or training will she need? Suggest that she research the lives of people who do what she wants to do. She’s likely to gain valuable insight into how hard they worked to succeed.

Don’t worry if your middle grader’s aspirations seem somewhat unrealistic at times. As kids mature, they become more practical about what they want to accomplish. 👍



The finish line



This time of year often brings exams and standardized tests for middle graders—which means there’s still some studying left to do. Try these study hints to help your child sail across the finish line:

- Quiz her on study material in short sessions.
- Keep week-end schedules open for final projects or scanning class notes.
- Have supplies on hand (printer ink cartridge, paper, pens, folders) so projects aren’t delayed.
- Remind your child to study early and often.
- Request a copy of the school’s exam schedule to help him plan his study routine.
- Consider inviting over a study partner for your middle grader. 👍



Sound sleeping

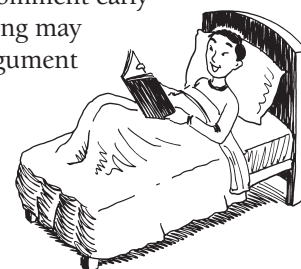
Along with good nutrition and exercise, sleep is critical to ensuring that your child is up to the challenge of school. But as the end of the year nears, hectic schedules can disturb middle graders’ sleep patterns.

Help your youngster get a good night’s sleep with these ideas:

- Maintain a reasonable bedtime during the week (between 9 and 10 p.m. is usually best). Consider a later bedtime on weekends if your middle grader can sleep late the next morning.

■ Suggest quiet time before bed. Think about trading a later bedtime for 30 minutes of reading. Your child’s mind and body will be prepared for rest.

■ Give reminders as bedtime gets closer. *Example:* “I want you in bed by 10.” A comment early in the evening may avoid an argument just before bed. 👍

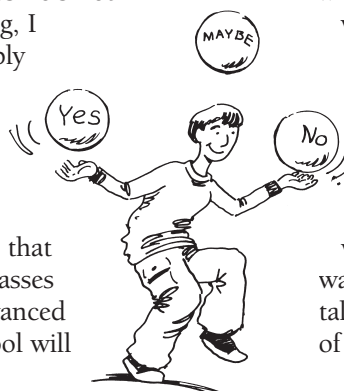


Parent to Parent College—yes or no?

My son can’t make up his mind about college. I hear him tell his friends that he definitely wants to go. But whenever I bring it up, he says he’s not certain. Because he’s so young, I think his indecision is probably okay. Just to be sure, I decided to speak to his guidance counselor.

It turns out that middle graders who are considering college should choose classes that prepare them for advanced classes in high school. Then, the advanced classes they take in high school will get them ready for college.

I told my son what I’d discovered. I explained that he didn’t have to go to college—there are people with meaningful careers who don’t go. But if he thinks he might want to, we should probably rethink next year’s schedule. In the meantime, he has an appointment with the counselor to watch career videos and talk about future courses of study. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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