

# Moving Right Along

## Middle-school survival book list

If you're like most parents, you probably wish the middle-school years came with a map. Dealing with a new school, new teachers and a new child (well, a new version of your child, anyway) can drive anyone crazy. The trick to surviving is this: Remember you are not alone! Call the school if you have any questions or concerns about your new middle schooler—the teachers and staff have seen and heard it *all* before. Or check out some of these books.

### For parents:

- ***Parents' Guide to the Middle School Years*** by Joe Bruzzese (Ten Speed Press).
- ***Help! My Child is Starting Middle School! A Survival Handbook for Parents*** by Jerry L. Parks (iUniverse Inc.).
- ***Too Old for This, Too Young for That! Your Survival Guide for the Middle-School Years*** by Harriet S. Mosatche and Karen Unger (Free Spirit Publishing).
- ***Middle School and the Age of Adjustment: A Guide for Parents*** by Eileen Bernstein (ed.) (Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.).
- ***Managing Middle School Madness: Helping Parents and Teachers Understand the Wonder Years*** by Glen Gilderma (Rowman & Littlefield Education).
- ***Making the Most of Middle School: A Field Guide for Parents and Others*** by Anthony W. Jackson (Teacher's College Press).
- ***The Roller-Coaster Years: Raising Your Child Through the Maddening Yet Magical Middle School Years*** by Charlene C. Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese (Broadway Books).



- ***The Everything Tween Book: A Parent's Guide to Surviving the Turbulent Pre-Teen Years*** by Linda Sonna (Adams Media).
- ***How to Hug a Porcupine: Negotiating the Prickly Points of the Tween Years*** by Julie Ross (McGraw-Hill).
- ***Not Much Just Chillin': The Hidden Lives of Middle Schoolers*** by Linda Perlstein (Ballantine Books).
- ***Our Last Best Shot: Guiding Our Children Through Early Adolescence*** by Laura Sessions Stepp (Riverhead Trade).
- ***My Life as a Middle School Mom: My Kids May Be Deductible, but They're Still Taxing*** by Angela Elwell Hunt (Vine Books).
- ***The Middle School Years: Achieving the Best Education for Your Child, Grades 5–8*** by Michele A. Hernández (Grand Central Publishing).

### For middle schoolers:

- ***Middle School: How to Deal*** by Sara Borden and others (Chronicle Books).
- ***Help! I'm in Middle School ... How Will I Survive?*** by Merry L. Gumm (NSR Publications).

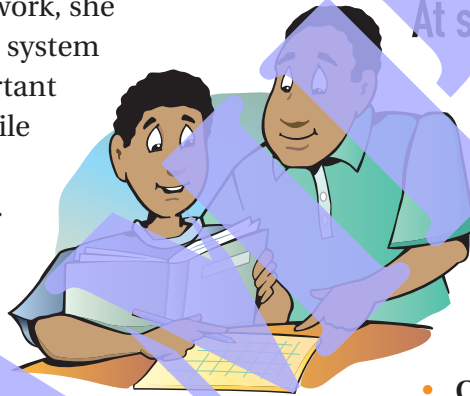
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## Help your child build strong study skills

Homework gets tougher and requires stronger study skills in the middle grades. If your child doesn't have effective study skills already, now is the time to help her develop them. You can lay the groundwork for your child's academic success by sharing the following tips.

### At home

- **Have your child study in the same spot** every day. Be sure it's quiet, well lit and stocked with all of the supplies he needs.
- **Limit distractions** while your child is studying. Keep the TV off. Try not to interrupt your child's study time unless it's absolutely necessary.
- **Help your child stay organized.** If your child can't find her homework, she can't complete it. Create a system for keeping track of important assignments. It might be file folders, a color-coded binder or a large calendar. Whichever she chooses, help your child figure out the best way to organize her papers.
- **Boost self-awareness.** Ask your middle schooler to figure out when he's at her best. Then encourage your child to do most of his studying during those times. If your child needs to let off some steam after school, he may want to take a jog or a brisk walk before sitting down to study.
- **Remind her to break down large projects.** Don't let your middle schooler get rattled by huge assignments. Instead, show her how to break big projects into smaller, more manageable parts.



- **Encourage him to read ahead.** By skimming over the next day's lesson or chapter ahead of time, he'll be better prepared for class. This may help him ask better questions or participate more.
- **Have your child review her notes.** Even if she doesn't have homework in a certain class, she should still look over the day's notes at night. It's a quick, easy way to remind her of what's being taught.

### At school

Here are things that will help your child do his best:

- **Show up for class** unless there is a valid excuse. Children can't learn the day's lesson if they aren't in class.
- **Come to class prepared** with the right books and other tools—like notebooks, pens, pencils and any special items, like a calculator for math.
- **Pay attention in class.** Save social time for between classes and before or after school.
- **Take good notes.** Whatever a teacher writes on the board while talking is probably something your child should write down, too.
- **Write down all assignments.** Your child shouldn't rely on just her memory.

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## Understanding your changing child

Your child is growing up—and you're doing your best to keep up. One day your child is respectful and loving; the next day (or hour), you're not even sure that's your child! As you and your child face the challenges of adolescence, here are some behaviors to expect.

Your adolescent will:

- **Have big bursts of energy—physical and emotional.** This may contrast with periods of physical and emotional idleness. You might let your child sleep an extra hour or two on the weekends. And when you talk to your child, use a matter-of-fact tone to communicate the importance of your words. Avoid emotional outbursts.
- **Take risks, love danger and adventure.** As your child moves into the larger community of the middle grades, he may test the limits by questioning authority, choosing different friends, clothing—and even risky behaviors. While your child may act fearless and think he's immortal, keep in mind that he can also be emotionally fragile. Get to know his friends and their parents.
- **Have an increasing need to “belong.”** During the middle school years the pressure to look, act and dress like everyone else becomes most intense. Your child wants to be just like, and to be liked by, everyone. It's important that you help her develop the confidence and values she needs to deal with any *negative* peer pressure.
- **Crave independence.** Your child is anxious to fit in, but at the same time, he is eager to become independent.

While it's important to keep him safe and discourage dangerous behavior, you can also give your child opportunities to start developing independence. You might let him rearrange his room, take on a new responsibility or choose a new hairstyle. But don't bend important family rules. And be there to support him as he makes choices and faces consequences.

- **Expect more privileges.** Explain to your child that privileges and responsibility go hand in hand. When your child demonstrates responsibility, she earns your trust. Explain that giving privileges is a way to express that trust.
- **Can become depressed or overly anxious.** With every thing that's going on in your child's life, some emotional highs and lows are perfectly normal. If you notice signs of extreme depression or anxiety in your child, seek help.
- **Need you to be involved.** Continue to connect with your child. Yes, your child is growing into his own person and his friends are very important to him. But you are, too. Your child still needs (and wants) your love, care and respect. Show you value his newfound maturity by asking his opinion. Remember to listen—*really* listen. Learn about your child's changing identity.

