

January 2008

Middle Years

Working together for school success

Short Stops



Knock, knock

Your middle grader wants her privacy, but you want to stay in touch. If she shuts herself in her room after school or in the evening, give her a little while. Then, knock to see what she's up to. Let her know you're available if she wants to talk.

Be on time

Help your child do his best by making sure he gets to school for first period. Try to see that he's up early enough to get ready and eat breakfast. Arriving before the first bell will let him start the day calmly and stay focused on learning.

DID YOU KNOW? According to a recent survey, 34 percent of eighth-graders have consumed alcohol within the last year. Discuss with your middle grader the serious risks of underage drinking—including trouble in school, problems with friends, arrest, addiction, and brain damage.

Worth quoting

"The time is always right to do what is right."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Just for fun



Q: Which direction are the Rockies?

A: Up!

Test prep

When should your child start studying for a test? The day the test is announced! After all, the sooner she starts preparing, the better her chances are of doing well.

Use these ideas to help your middle grader succeed at test time.

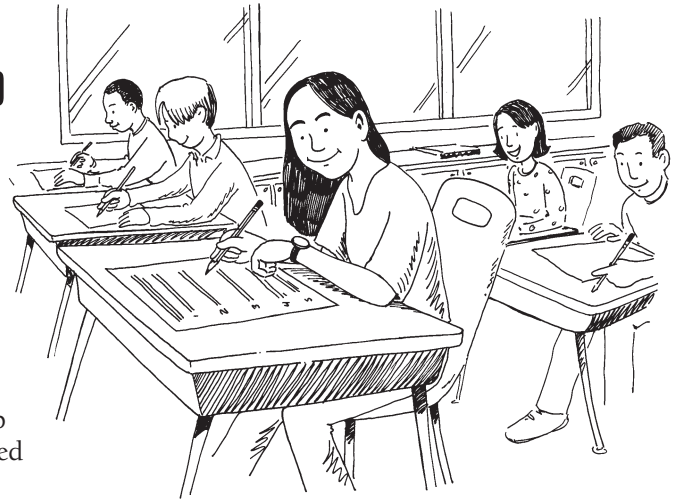
Know what's ahead

Advise your youngster to find out as much as possible about the test. She should know which terms, formulas, or chapters will be covered. Also, she can ask the teacher what type of format to expect. For multiple-choice, she'll want to brush up on facts, dates, and definitions. For essay and short-answer questions, she'll need to be able to explain ideas and concepts.

Tip: If the teacher holds a review session, be sure your child attends.

Study daily

Suggest that your middle grader study a set amount (say, 30 minutes) each day. She can go over class notes and fill in details she didn't have time to write down during class. Another idea is for her to reread textbook sections and make charts or lists (history timeline, chemical symbols). Consistent reviewing will help your youngster remember the facts.



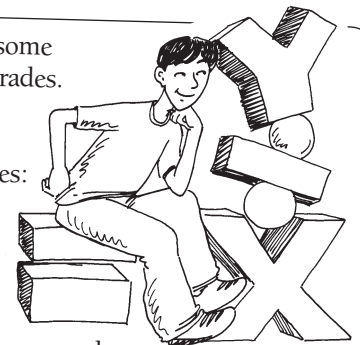
Plot test strategy

When the test is handed out, your child should read the instructions carefully. She might want to answer easier questions first and then dive into more challenging sections. Encourage her to watch the clock to make sure she leaves enough time for each part, as well as time to review and proofread her answers. 👍

Go math!

Math gets harder for some students in the middle grades. Here are ways you can support your child as he takes more difficult classes:

- Hang a poster board or large piece of paper on the wall so he can solve problems on it while standing or walking around. A break from the desk-and-chair routine can be motivating.
- Encourage your middle grader to do the practice tests in each chapter of his math book. Suggest that he check his answers in the back of the book and rework the ones he missed until he gets them right.
- Be your middle grader's cheerleader. Applaud completed homework, good quiz scores, and improved grades. 👍



Setting goals

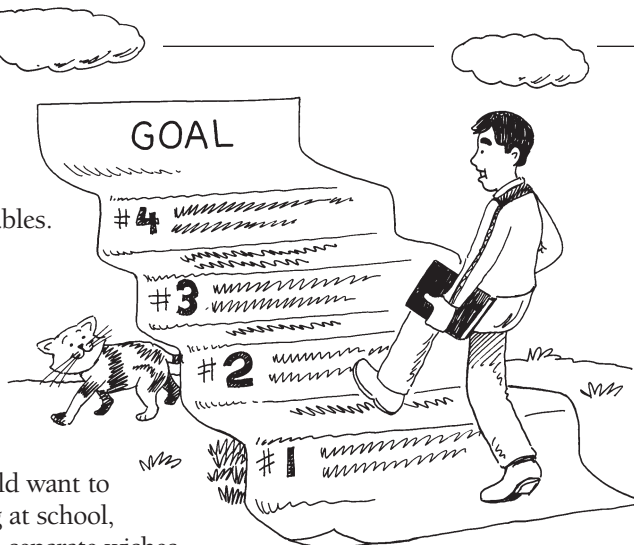
Goal #1: Write better essays.

Goal #2: Eat more fruits and vegetables.

Goal #3: Save for a fishing pole.

Setting goals gives kids something specific to work toward and a sense of satisfaction when they succeed. Encourage your middle grader to achieve his goals with these steps.

1. Identify targets. What does your child want to do better? Discuss how things are going at school, with friends, and in activities. Help him separate wishes from goals—goals are things he can make happen!

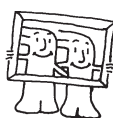


Tip: For a goal to work, it has to be something that's important to him.

2. Write them down. Have your middle grader write himself a letter outlining his plans and put it in an envelope marked "Goals." He can read the letter each week to stay inspired. Or suggest that he post his goals on a bulletin board as a regular reminder.

3. Check progress.

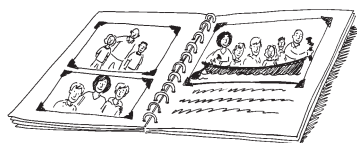
Encourage your child to try something different if his actions aren't moving him closer to his goal. Changing his strategy can keep him on track—and prevent him from giving up. 👍



Family activities

To keep your family strong, start new traditions that will bring you closer and create lasting memories. Try these simple ideas for family togetherness:

- Keep a jigsaw puzzle on a card table, and sit down regularly to work on it together.
- Choose a family home improvement project for each season (paint a room, build bookshelves).
- Hold regular craft nights (scrapbooking, beading).



- Attend an evening concert at the high school or community center.
- Watch a game show on television every week. Have friendly competitions to see who can get the most answers right.
- Take an overnight camping trip in the spring, summer, or fall.
- Plan zany parties. For example, if your team makes it to the Orange Bowl, serve orange snacks and wear orange clothes. 👍

OUR PURPOSE

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

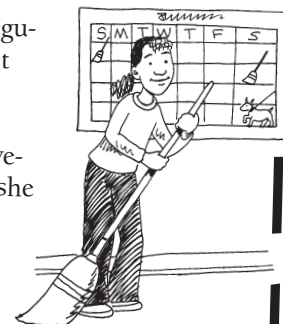
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Parent to Parent Chore solution

When our daughter was younger, she did her chores regularly. This year, however, Chandra began "forgetting" to set the table or empty the trash.

One afternoon when I came home from work, I saw Chandra raking leaves. She seemed to enjoy it. But that evening she still resisted doing her other chores. She told us she understood chores had to be done, but she was tired of doing the same ones every week. "Why can't we switch?" she asked.

We decided to try it out. We made a list of the daily and weekly chores and then took turns choosing the ones we would each do. Happily, our new system is working. Chandra still doesn't like all the chores, but at least she knows she'll have different ones each day. 👍



Q & A Cyberbullying

Q I'm worried about cyberbullying. How can I protect my middle grader from this new kind of bullying?

A Cyberbullying occurs when someone sends hurtful messages online or by cell phone. It can take many forms, from writing rude comments to spreading rumors in chatrooms or posting embarrassing pictures.

Your child can discourage cyberbullying by giving personal information (name, e-mail address, cell

phone number) only to friends. If he receives nasty e-mails or text messages, he should not respond. Explain that replying just gives the person the satisfaction of having upset him. A good thing to do is simply to log off the computer or turn off the cell phone.

Let your youngster know he should tell an adult if he experiences cyberbullying. You can report problems to your Internet provider, school authorities, or even the police. 👍

