

PARENTING THROUGH MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Shelly D. Mahon, M.S.
& Sue Blaney

Middle School Preparation Plan

Talk Together

- Get your student excited about the new opportunities in middle school. Encourage them to take part in the new opportunities to get involved in extracurricular activities and school clubs during middle school.
- Prepare your teen for making new friends. Talk to your student about making new friends, keeping old friends, and being a good friend.
- Discuss where your teen can get help if issues arise at school. School nurses, counselors, and administrators all play a part in guiding your student through school.
- Establish rules and expectations around the use of cell phones, computers, social networking sites, and other forms of technology. Your middle school student needs a schedule that allows time for fun, while setting them up for success.
- Discuss your house rules for other media devices such as television, computers, and video games. Allow them to have input into rules governing the use of these devices.
- Share your expectations for school performance. Be reasonable and supportive. Encourage your teen to set some personal goals.

Prepare and Plan

- Get a map of the school. If possible, use the map and take a tour of the school before the first day of school. If a tour is not offered through their elementary school, personally contact the middle school and schedule a tour during the spring or summer months.
- Help your teen get organized. Your middle school student should have a plan for organizing class work, assignments, and organized activities. Encourage your teen to use a calendar.
- Establish when and where your student will complete homework. Having a specific time and place teaches consistency and provides structure around their studies.

- Learn the school's dress code and plan accordingly.
- Plan transportation to and from school. If your teen is taking the bus, help them learn bus numbers, routes, and pick up/drop off times.

Take Action!

- Go shopping - get a backpack, clothes, school supplies (ex: notebooks, paper, book covers), locker supplies (ex: mirrors, magnets, and pen holders), and clothes.
- Have your teen plan what to wear for the first week of school.
- Help your child practice using a lock like the one offered by the school. Sometimes students get their lock and locker assignment at summer orientation.
- Send your student to school with a map of the school and a schedule of their classes. They will feel more confident if they know how to get to their classes.
- Plan family meals for the first week of school. Make dinners of comfort food that soothe what may be an over-stimulated teen.
- Fill out all required paperwork promptly and efficiently. Some of the new-school-year paperwork is for parents to complete, not kids.
- Attend any orientations offered.
- If possible, clear your calendar so you can be available and supportive when your teen arrives home from school.
- Listen, listen, listen! If your teen isn't very talkative, ask open-ended questions: "What do you like best about middle school so far?" "What will you be studying in history?"

Parenting Through Middle School is a short, easy-to-use tool kit for parents with middle school aged children. We use helpful video clips, audio interviews, focused articles and downloadable tools so you, as parents, can learn what to expect, what you need to know, and how you can best support your changing child.

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