

Tips for Parents

Middle school is a time of change. Most middle school students go through several stages and lots of ups and downs. Your child needs your support and guidance during these years.

The tips below will help you guide and advise your child as he/she goes through middle school.

1. Make school a top priority. Nothing is more important to your child's future than his/her education.
 - Make sure that your child understands that he/she is expected to be in school, on time, every day.
 - Work together with the school. Teachers, counselors, and principals are there to help your child get the best education possible.
 - Attend all open houses and parent conferences.
2. At the beginning of each grading period, sit down with your son/daughter, and together set realistic academic goals for each class.
 - Realize that it is your child's responsibility to get homework done, to prepare for tests, and to follow the rules.
 - Write down the dates that interim/midterm reports and report cards come out, and expect your child to bring them home. If you don't see one, call the school and request a copy.
3. At the beginning of middle school, explain to your child that he/she will have limited freedoms, and that you will be checking on where he/she is going and with whom. If your son or daughter knows that you are checking, your child will be less likely to do something that you would disapprove of. Set Limits.
 - Monitor your child's Internet activity.
 - Make sure that you child is not spending too much time on the phone, playing computer games, or watching TV.
4. When appropriate, encourage your child to take care of things on his/her own. By doing this, your child will learn independence and gain confidence.
5. Encourage your child to be involved in extracurricular activities, and show your support by attending performances, games, etc.
6. One of the biggest challenges for middle school students is being organized. Make sure that your child has a system for recording assignments, taking notes, keeping his/her backpack organized, etc.
7. Look for opportunities to praise good grades and extra effort.
8. Talk to your child about what's happening in school, and be a good listener. If your son or daughter says something about school that concerns you, please remember that what you are hearing is from your child's perspective. If you have a question or concern, don't hesitate to call the school.
9. If you suspect that your child is drinking or using drugs, talk to your son or daughter immediately. If you need help or advice, talk to your child's counselor or to your family doctor.
10. If you are trying to change a behavior, first make sure that your child knows exactly what your expectations are. By working together, you can then offer rewards if your expectations are met, or consequences if they're not.