

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Be There for Your Child in the Formative Years

Transitioning

- ✓ Help your child transition from elementary to middle school.
- ✓ Discuss the concerns he or she may have before starting middle school, such as learning from many teachers, getting to class on time, finding his or her locker, getting on the right bus, knowing where the cafeteria is, navigating crowded hallways and doing more homework.
- ✓ Talk to your child about the physical and social changes and the social pressures that often occur in the middle school years.

Parental involvement

- ✓ Communicate often with your child, the teachers, and the principal, vice principal or both.
- ✓ Visit the school. Be knowledgeable about the place where your child learns.

The middle school years are a time of transition: emotional, physical, social and academic. Your support and involvement are essential at this stage of your child's growth. Research shows that pre-teens do better in school when their parents are involved in their lives.



You may want to ask the following questions of your child's teachers:

- ✓ Is there a transition program for students leaving elementary school and entering middle or junior high school?
- ✓ Are counselors available who can help your child transition to middle school?
- ✓ Are teachers and principals accessible to parents?
- ✓ When are the parents' nights, sports and art events, and other times when parents are invited to visit the school?
- ✓ When can parents volunteer at the school?

- ✓ Help your child organize a schedule.
- ✓ Help your child set goals with a time limit for completing particular tasks.
- ✓ Listen to what your child tells you and is really saying between the lines. Be sensitive to any fears your child might have. Sometimes it is helpful to reserve comments and actions until you have facts about a situation and know how your child thinks and feels about it.
- ✓ Discuss peer pressure.
- ✓ Communication is the key to being helpful to your child in the pre-teen years.
- ✓ Welcome and get to know your child's friends.
- ✓ Become aware of physical and emotional changes in your child.

Reading in the middle school years

Reading is an important part of the middle school years. Many of the subjects your child studies in middle school involve much more reading than in elementary school. Check with your child's school counselor to see what your child's reading level is. If your child reads below grade level, check with the school to see what additional reading programs are available to help improve your child's skills.



Looking to the future

Help your child focus on preparing academically for high school and college. Encourage your child to take challenging classes. You may want to ask your child's teachers these questions:

- ✓ Will the classes your child takes help him or her be competitive in college and the work world?
- ✓ Is your child having trouble in any classes?
- ✓ What tutoring programs are available?

- ✓ Does your child have good study habits? Does he or she read what is necessary to complete an assignment? hand in assignments on time? prepare ahead of time for assignments and tests instead of cramming at the last minute?
- ✓ Does your child have the supplies needed to complete assignments?

Preparing financially for college

The U.S. Department of Education has a resource to help you determine the financial commitments you will need to make for your child's education beyond high school. The FAFSA4Caster, at www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov, can help you calculate college costs before your child applies to college. And, when your child is ready to apply for financial aid, we make it easier for you to learn how much financial support is available to your family and how to apply for aid.

