

# Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



## Short Stops

### Wait a minute

Tweens are used to getting things quickly, from online information to fast food. Learning patience will help your child cope with stress and frustration when things *don't* happen fast. For example, if his computer crashes and won't reboot, he could take a deep breath or drink a glass of water before tackling the problem.

### Eyes up front

How and where your middle grader sits in class may affect how well she pays attention. Suggest that she sit up straight and look at the teacher when he speaks. Also, encourage her to ask for a seat near the front if she finds herself distracted by other students.

### DID YOU KNOW?

When your tween wears earbuds to listen to music, he should be able to hear what's going on around him. If he can't, or if his ears ring afterward, he may be damaging his hearing. Share the 60/60 rule: Keep the volume at less than 60 percent, and listen for no longer than 60 minutes at a time.

### Worth quoting

"It isn't where you came from; it's where you're going that counts."  
Ella Fitzgerald

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the kid wear one boot?

**A:** Because there was a 50 percent chance of snow!



## Everyday math

What does shopping have in common with achieving fitness goals? Your tween can use math to do both more effectively! Here are situations where math is sure to come in handy.

### Find the bargain

Doing math may save your child money on craft supplies, snacks, and clothing. Have her calculate the best deals when you shop together. Say she has a coupon for 20 percent off if she buys more than one pack of colored duct tape. Should she buy one 6-pack for \$15.99 or two 3-packs for \$8.99 each?

### Make more space

Interior designers measure carefully and use spatial reasoning. Maybe your middle grader wants to rearrange her bedroom to make space for a desk she found at a thrift shop. She'll need to measure the walls and furniture to make everything fit. Is her bookcase narrow enough to go in



her closet? Will her bed fit against the wall?

### Finish the race

Your tween can do math to reach her workout goals, such as completing a 5K race (3.1 miles) in less than 30 minutes. First, she should figure out what her average pace must be ( $30 \text{ minutes} \div 3.1 \text{ miles} = 9.67$ , or about 9:40 minutes per mile). Now she can consider her current pace and how many weeks she has to train. Finally, she could plan practice runs so she shaves off enough time each week. 👍

## Lessons in assertiveness

Assertive people know how to stand up for themselves firmly yet respectfully. Use these ideas to help your middle grader be assertive:

- Explain to your child that he can be nice to others and speak up for himself at the same time. For instance, if someone cuts in front of him in line, he might politely point out where the line starts.

- Have your middle grader practice saying no when necessary. Tell him that it helps to remember the 3 Cs: Show **c**onfidence by looking the other person in the eye, speak **c**learly, and stay **c**alm. ("The party sounds fun, but I have a big project due Monday.") 👍



# Protect your privacy online

Even the most tech-savvy child can share sensitive information online without realizing it. Share these ways to help your tween keep personal details safe.

- **Only interact online with people you know in real life.** Your child shouldn't accept chat invitations or friend requests from strangers. He'll need to use privacy settings on websites and apps to control who sees his posts.
- **Guard accounts.** Tell your tween to set a different password for each device and account. When he uses a shared computer



Also have him opt out of location sharing so strangers don't know where he is. 👍

(say, at the library, in school, or at a friend's house), he shouldn't store passwords, and he should log out of websites and apps after he's finished.

- **Avoid posting identifying information.** This includes your middle grader's full name, school, phone number, home address, and email address.



## Family meals with tweens

Did you know that eating together can boost your tween's self-esteem and make her less likely to try risky behaviors? Consider these suggestions for making family dinners pleasant on busy days.

### Plan ahead

Have meals ready to go so you're able to focus on each other rather than on what to cook. On weekends, you and your child could make double portions of casseroles or soups. Freeze them to pull out and reheat on weeknights.

### Keep conversations light

While you eat, share an upbeat news story you heard or mention something funny your cat did that day. Save conversations about your tween's low test grade or missed curfew for another time. She'll look forward to coming to the table and chatting with you.

*Tip:* Put electronics in another room and silence them so you're not tempted to check messages or answer calls. 👍



## Parent to Parent Motivated to learn

My younger daughter, Ava, seemed to care more about her social life than about learning and grades. I mentioned this to my older daughter, Erin. She thought a glimpse of college life might motivate her little sister in school, so on a recent Saturday, I took Ava to visit Erin on campus.

The girls had a great time. And Erin made sure to mention how much time she spends attending classes and studying so she can land a teaching job after graduation. Ava came home talking about how she wants to study business one day and open her own "doggy day care."



I'm happy Ava is thinking about the future. When she shows me her assignments, we talk about how what she learns will come in handy one day when she's running her own business! 👍

## Managing ADHD in middle school

**Q** My son started middle school this year. Now that he has had time to settle in, I want him to take more responsibility for managing his ADHD. What should I do?

**A** At this age, children start moving into the driver's seat when it comes to learning—and tweens with ADHD are no exception. Suggest that your son make a list of the accommodations included in his IEP (Individualized Education Program) or 504 plan, such as having extra time to complete tests. He could hang the list inside his locker or tape it inside the front cover of his

binder to remind himself to take advantage of them.

Also, discuss strategies he can use at home to help himself. For instance, he might call a friend to double-check on assignments each evening or take a homework break every 20 minutes. Have him experiment with ideas and see what works best for him.

Finally, organization is important for all middle graders. Your child should use a daily planner or to-do list, and sort through his backpack and locker on a weekly basis. 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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