

Now That WE'RE In Middle School

What is the importance of middle school anyway?

Middle school means one thing – Change. It's a transition period, plain and simple.

It's a change from a one classroom environment to multiple classrooms. He must adjust from being 'at home' in one room all day to different rooms, different teachers, and different atmospheres.

It's a change from one person setting time constraints, to learning Time Management. Up until now, he was told when to get specific books, and when to put them away. When to go to the restroom, and when it was snack time. In middle school he is given a schedule – of his classes. He must decide when he should go to his locker, which books to get, which ones to put away, and when he should go to the restroom.

It's a change from keeping all personal items in one or two places, to remembering to take them with you every time you leave a class. As the parent, it may be habitual for you to remind your child to get his things – rest assure he's counting on you to do it for him. As a teacher with multiple classes, giving out reminders 100 times a day is unrealistic.

It's a change from one teacher with one set of classroom instructions, to several teachers with several different classroom instructions. Teachers are people too. So they have different personalities and different expectations. Your child must learn to adjust to each one of them.

It can be an overwhelming experience if the child has not had opportunities to develop good habits, routines and regular 'check-ups' by the parent.

What do I do now that my child is in middle school?

If you've been closely involved in your child's education experience up to this point of his life, KEEP DOING IT. If you haven't, it's not too late to start.

This is the time when he truly wants to learn to be independent in Time Management, Study Skills, and Self Discipline. But he needs your help more than ever to be successful in these things. Don't ask him if he needs help – ask him how can you help him.

You are his first teacher, and his most consistent. Good habits or bad, he learns them first through you. If you are running late to everything, chances are he will be late to classes. If you put tasks off to the last minute, chances are, he'll put off assignments until the day before it's due. If you have a consistent time and place where you manage your bills, chances are he will develop good study habits.

If you show true concern for his work and progress, he'll want to do his best and take pride in his work.

What is the educators' responsibility in my child's learning process?

The task of the educator is to Teach. Sometimes it may be a simple lesson, but sometimes it may be a hard one.

Each teacher has a specific subject that is being taught to your child; however, it doesn't end there. Social and Life skills are also being taught, whether directly or indirectly.

For example, a child not coming to class with his textbook or notebook may seem like a small thing, and sometimes it is. But a middle school child will lose focus quickly if he's unprepared, trickling over to the other students. To keep the others on task, the teacher may decide as much as removing the child from class – now he's one to two days behind. This to the parent may seem like a hard lesson, but it teaches the importance of preparation as well as respect for everyone in the class.

What is my child's responsibility in his own learning?

The number one job of the student is to LEARN.

An adult earns money for his work – a child earns knowledge [& grades] for his. Once you leave your place of employment, your workday isn't over – there are bills and housework waiting at home. It's the same for him – it's called homework.

To do his job effectively, at school:

He needs to come on time, to every class. He needs to come prepared with all required materials. He needs to be ready to learn –proper rest, good breakfast, and reading the material before class helps him to be more involved.

To do his job effectively, at home:

He needs a set place to sit up and study, not lying across the bed. If he doesn't have a desk, the kitchen table works great. [It has the perfect amount of lighting.] He needs a set timeframe to study, and he needs minimized distractions.

Is now a good time to have 'The Talk' with my child? [Health & Hygiene]

Now is the perfect time to start sharing with your child. You may not have noticed him, but his classmates and teachers have.

His body is constantly changing at this age. His body and clothes' odor can become a self-conscious issue for him [and friends] if not handled properly.

He's really beginning to notice the opposite gender, as well as them noticing him. If he's not comfortable in his appearance, his mind will never truly make it to his studies.

So how do we make this a successful year?

With a 3-stranded cord – If all 3 parties are in regular communication, issues are addressed before they even start. Time spent becomes proactive; and he may even learn that middle school isn't bad after all.