

The Transition to Middle School

Students entering middle school are experiencing a tremendous amount of change. Just a few months ago, they had only one or two teachers. Now they may have seven or eight. Their bodies are growing and developing every day. Added to the equation are the hormones and emotions that accompany the physical changes. This all can create the perfect storm for unrest at home and at school. Although they are beginning to look like adults, middle school students still need parental and adult guidance and assistance. Here are a few tips for parents and caregivers as they navigate the middle school years.

Require an Assignment Notebook

Many schools give students an assignment notebook or planner at the beginning of the school year. Parents can require their student to record all homework assignments in the planner and then check it. If the school does not provide one, create your own.

Read Course Syllabi

Parents should read each course syllabus. This will provide you with information about classroom policies and expectations and will provide a timeline for major projects and assignments.

Check Homework

Parents should check to see that homework assignments are being completed in a timely fashion. If students would spend a little time every day on each class, that will save a great deal of stress and time the night before an assignment is due.

Designate a Study Time and Place

Work with your student to pick a time and place where school work should be completed each day. If students do not have a homework assignment, they should read. Study areas should be as free from distractions as possible and should have available a study survival kit.

Create a Study Survival Kit

This kit should contain pens, pencils, paper scissors, and any other supplies necessary for completing assignments. Having all of these materials in one place will keep students from wasting time looking for them.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Communicate with your student's teachers by phone or e-mail. Introduce yourself to them at back to school nights and PTA meetings. Let them know to contact you if ever they have a question or concern. Also communicate with your middle school student. Although they are growing up and peer relationships take a higher priority than family relationships, it is important the students know that you are available to talk to them and listen when they need it.

Adapted from Anna R. Brussel, 2003 – Hayfield Secondary School