

Parent Tips for Staying Involved in Your Child's Middle School Years

The middle school years can be an exciting, yet confusing time for students, as well as for families. Children are seeking increased independence, and you may find that your child is no longer inviting you to school activities. Parents may be searching for a “place to fit” reminiscent of the intimate and familiar environment of an elementary school. Parent involvement will certainly look different in the middle school years, but parents are needed at this critical juncture more than ever.

Below are some suggestions:

- Encourage homework and reading. Help your children choose a good time and place to do their assignments and special projects. Provide the necessary materials and provide support.
- Provide support and structure, while instilling responsibility; *i.e. posting daily schedule and calendar on the refrigerator or other area will help keep you BOTH organized*
- Communicate expectations, discuss ideas and feelings about school, homework, and interests
- Ensure your child attends school regularly and gets sufficient rest
- Review your child's school records each year. It is your right, and you should know what information is in the file.
- Know what classes your child is taking and what is being learned
- Help your child identify their goals and explore dreams, connecting them with academic requirements and high school education and training
- Monitor student progress; using all resources such as progress reports, report cards, on-line grade updates, personal communication with teachers by email, phone calls, conferences
- Be aware of indicators that may signal potential or serious academic problems. Some typical changes that may be cause for concern are: falling grades and negative changes in attitude and behavior. These warning signs should be discussed with the teacher and/or counselor
- Communicate frequently with your child's teachers and/or counselor for enrichment or remediation academic services
- Get or stay involved with the PTA/PTO or other parent organization
- Get to know your child's teachers, counselor, principal, and office staff
- Serve on school committees or volunteer in school events
- Frequently visit school's website, read newsletters, and all other forms of communication from the school
- Regularly attend and support school programs and activities
- Be familiar with state educational mandates & testing
- If you need help navigating the school systems, procedures, or understanding requirements or “school lingo,” ask for help

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