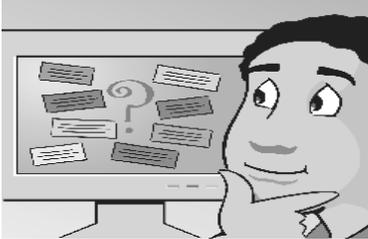


# Parents Still Make the Difference!



## Know where to find websites for your middle schooler

The Internet is now a necessary part of your child's academic life. Students go online daily at school. Most go online each afternoon or evening for homework, too. But it's a challenge to figure out which sites are appropriate for 12- to 14-year-olds. It helps when someone has done the research for you.

You can suggest your child visit the Virtual Middle School Library ([www.sldirectory.com/virtual.html](http://www.sldirectory.com/virtual.html)). This site was founded by a retired school librarian in Philadelphia. She maintains the site and checks links often to make sure they work.

The website features include:

- The Reading Room--a collection of sites and suggestions for good books on any topic.
- Educational sites for students on every subject. This includes links to sites on writing research papers and doing science fairs.
- Resources for parents. This includes information on learning English as a second language.
- Information on how to design a website.

### Middle school students often need a refresher course in respect

A child with a sense of fairness, kindness and responsibility is a child who respects others. However, these qualities don't always come naturally. And even when they do, a child may have to recommit to them in middle school, where negative peer pressure sometimes makes it hard to do the right thing. To reinforce respect in your home:

- Emphasize empathy. Middle school students are going through many changes. As a result, they are pretty wrapped up in themselves. So remind your child that his actions can affect others, too. Example: "You walked right past Grandma and Grandpa without even saying hello. How do you think that made them feel?"
- Work on solving problems. Not everyone is going to agree with your child. Teach that the first response should be: "Okay, how can we cooperate?" This is a tough one. Middle school students like to have their way. But keep at it.
- Make clear you don't approve of media and games that seem to glamorize disrespectful speech or behavior. You can't police your child every moment. But you can label such media offensive and not allow them in your home.
- Don't tolerate disrespect. Your child should have consequences for disrespectful talk and behavior. Letting it go sends the wrong message--your child will interpret it as not being a big deal. But remember that discipline must be done respectfully too. Do not insult or use physical punishment. That can undo in an instant all the good lessons you have been trying to teach for months.

### Are you ready for the next stage of parenting?

Now that your child is in middle school, you are entering a new stage of parenting as you foster your child toward an independent adulthood. Answer yes or no to the questions below to see if you are ready:

- \_\_\_1. Do you allow your child to do as much as appropriately possible for herself, such as schoolwork, chores and making some decisions?
- \_\_\_2. Do you realize that your child needs to make mistakes to learn, and do you allow her to do so?
- \_\_\_3. Do you try to control your emotions when dealing with your child? Remember it is her job to begin to separate from you.
- \_\_\_4. Do you work with your child on setting the rules and boundaries she still needs?
- \_\_\_5. Do you feel comfortable with your changing role as a parent?

#### How well are you doing?

Mostly yes answers mean you are ready for the exciting world of parenting a teen. For no answers, try those ideas in the quiz.