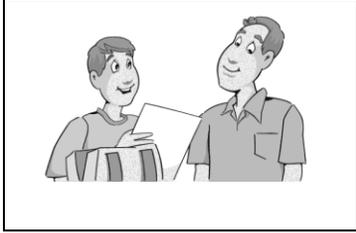


Parents Make the Difference!



Middle school parents who stay involved boost success

Many parents wonder if their involvement really makes a difference once their kids reach middle school. The answer is yes! Study after study shows that parents have an enormous effect on their kids' ultimate success in school--even during the middle school years.

Years of research have proven that students whose parents are continuously involved in their education have:

- Better grades and test scores.
- Higher graduation rates.
- Lower levels of drug or alcohol abuse.
- Stronger self-esteem.

What does this all mean? It means that staying involved in your child's schooling won't just help him today--it'll help him tomorrow, the next day and for the rest of his life.

To play an active role in your middle schooler's schooling:

- Show an interest in what he's learning. Ask your child what he did in class today and make sure you really listen to his answer.
- Set high expectations. Your child is more likely to believe in himself if he knows you believe in him. So set the bar high and cheer him on as he strives to reach it.
- Be a role model. Inspire your child to work hard by demonstrating perseverance yourself.

Don't let your middle schooler be a bystander!

Did you know that the bully and the student being bullied are not the only ones involved when bullying happens? Those students who witness incidents of bullying and do nothing are also contributing to bullying. They are bystanders and they aren't meeting their responsibilities to their fellow students and the school.

During an incident of bullying, your child has a responsibility to act. He should:

- Let the bully know that he disapproves of mean behavior. Your child can speak up for the victim. Say, "Stop yelling at him!" or "That's not cool!"
- Put his arm on the victim's shoulder. This simple gesture will show the bully that your child is on the victim's side. It will also help the victim feel safe.
- Walk away. Most bullies enjoy having an audience, so your child shouldn't provide one. If your child doesn't feel safe confronting the bully, he should walk away and tell an adult.
- Refrain from using violence against the bully.
- Refrain from laughing or giggling. That kind of reaction will encourage the bully to continue.
- Persuade the victim to tell an adult. Or offer to tell an adult for the victim.
- Seek out the victim later to offer support and friendship.

Let your child be responsible for creating homework routines

What's the critical thing to remember about your child's homework? That it's his homework. So help him become more responsible for it by having him develop and follow a regular homework routine!

To develop an effective one, remind your child to:

- Determine when he's at his best. Is he freshest the moment he gets off the school bus? Or does he need an hour to unwind? Have him consider this before deciding when to work each day.
- Avoid distractions. Does he have trouble concentrating? Then he shouldn't study in the same room where someone is watching television. Suggest he find a quiet, private spot for hitting the books.