Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama Middle School
Ms. Pua Kaai, Principal

Middle Years

Working together for school success

Short Stops

Listening and learning

At the library, choose a book on tape or DVD to listen to with your middle grader. Then, when you're in the car together (going to practice, picking up dinner), pop in the next installment. Talking about what you've heard will build your child's listening and conversation skills—and you'll enjoy the time together.

Recognize respect

When your child shows respect, let her know you appreciate it. For example, if she speaks politely to you even though she disagrees with what you say, you might tell her, "Thank you for talking to me with respect." You'll encourage more of the same.

Smoking stinks

Does your middle grader want bad breath or yellow teeth? Probably not. Tell him that's what he'll get from smoking, and you'll give him two big reasons for saying no to cigarettes. While parents worry about future health issues, middle graders may be more afraid of what can happen right now.

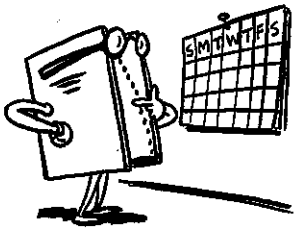
Worth quoting

"The time is always right to do what is right." *Martin Luther King Jr.*

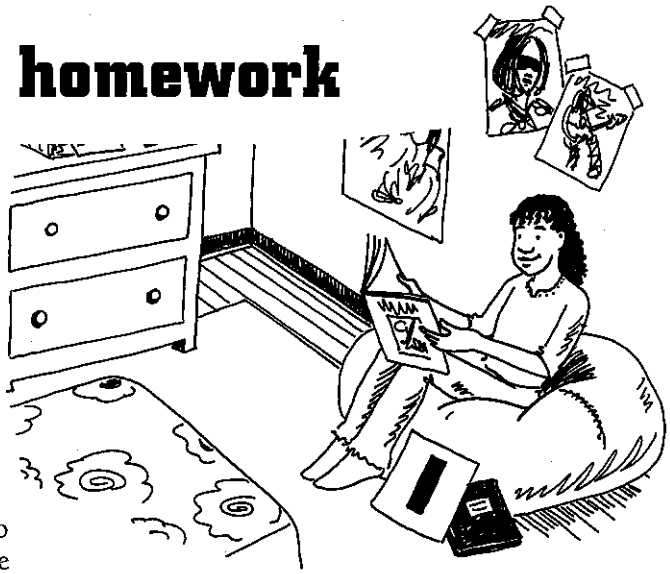
Just for fun

Q: When does Friday come before Thursday?

A: In the dictionary!



Hints for homework



Amy has her evening planned. She'll do her math homework before dinner, then follow up dessert with English and science. Afterward, she can unwind from a busy day.

Sound impossible? It's not. Help your child make homework go like clockwork with these strategies.

Think it through

Before your youngster begins, have her make a to-do list. *Example:* write a poem, read a history chapter, solve 10 math problems.

Then, suggest that she number the tasks, from toughest to easiest, and start with the hard stuff. This "save the easiest for last" strategy will help her finish on a high note, perhaps inspiring her to get in some extra studying.

Think about time

Ask your child to consider different time slots she can use to get work done. For instance, maybe she could set aside a weekend morning or Sunday night.

Also, many middle graders have time during study period or after lunch to tackle homework. Encourage your child to complete one assignment at school each day. The more she does then, the more time she'll have for fun later.

Think positive

Help your middle grader see homework as a chance to prove her independence by getting her work done on time and by herself. Boost her confidence by telling her, "Homework gives you a chance to show all that you know." And give her a thumbs-up when she does just that.

Keys to success

You can set your middle grader up for success this school year with some basic pointers. Suggest that he try to follow this checklist, and you'll help him get off on the right foot:

- ☐ I attend school every day unless I'm sick, and I get there on time.
- ☐ I get 8–10 hours of sleep each night.
- ☐ I eat a healthy breakfast in the morning.
- ☐ I pay attention in class.
- ☐ I write down my assignments for each subject.
- ☐ I start my projects when I get them.
- ☐ I complete my homework on time.
- ☐ I read for pleasure each day.

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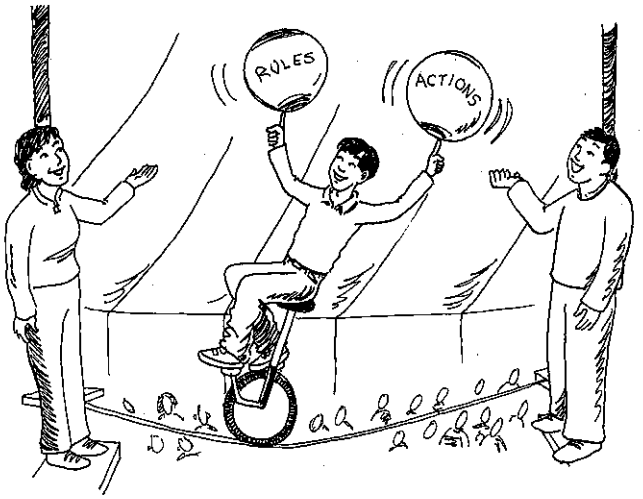
Deciding on discipline

Disciplining middle graders can be difficult. Try these strategies to set rules that work—and help your child learn right from wrong.



● **Be clear.** Explain the rules and the consequences for breaking them in advance. *Example:* "Your curfew is at 10:00. If you come in late, it will be 9:00 for a month." This system lets your middle grader know that he's in charge of his behavior.

● **Be fair.** Link the consequence to the action. For instance, if your child abuses his time on the family computer, he loses his privileges for a day. This makes more sense to your middle grader than, say, taking away his allowance.

● **Be direct.** Limit your comments to the situation at hand. Try not to bring up things your child did last week or to use negative labels ("lazy," "forgetful"). Staying focused will keep arguments from flaring. Plus, being calm and direct sends the message that you still love him, no matter what.

Stay involved

Your child may act like she wishes you would disappear sometimes. But when it comes to school success, middle graders still need their parents around.

Why?

When parents get involved in learning, student achievement soars. Middle graders score higher on tests, turn in better projects, and participate more in class if they know their parents care.

When?

You can be involved in your child's learning at any time of day. Talk about homework while you're making dinner. Watch a documentary together at night. Visit a museum on the weekend. You'll show your child that you think learning is important.

Where?

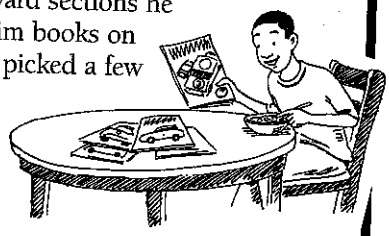
Teachers will welcome your commitment, whether you help in the classroom, volunteer at evening events, or simply support your own child at home. Call or e-mail your middle grader's teachers to see what you can do—in or out of school—to help.

Parent to Parent: A reading habit

The older my son Jonathan got, the less he read. I was concerned, so I asked the school librarian for ideas.

First, Mrs. Cruz said we should leave lots of reading material—books, magazines, newspapers, even comic books—all around the house. "If they're lying there, he'll pick them up," she advised.

Second, she suggested that I stop at the library to return books when we're out together. Once inside, she said, steer him toward sections he might like. Since Jonathan loves cars, I showed him books on NASCAR races and drivers. I was happy when he picked a few to check out.



Finally, Mrs. Cruz told me to discuss the books I'm reading with Jonathan. That will give him a chance to talk about what he has read that day—and give us a reading habit to share!

Q & A: Cyberbullying

Q *I'm worried about cyberbullying. How can I protect my middle grader from this kind of bullying?*

A Cyberbullying occurs when someone sends hurtful messages online or by cell phone. It can take many forms, such as writing rude comments, spreading rumors, and posting embarrassing pictures.

Your child can discourage cyberbullying by giving personal information (name, e-mail address, cell phone number) only to friends. If she receives nasty e-mails or text messages, she should not respond. Explain that replying just gives the person the satisfaction of having upset her. A good thing to do is simply to log off the computer or turn off the cell phone.

Let your youngster know she should tell an adult if she experiences cyberbullying. You can report problems to your Internet provider, school authorities, or even the police.

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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