

Report to **PARENTS**

Managing the Ups and Downs of Middle School

The changes children experience as they transition from elementary school to middle school are seismic—and it takes continued support from both school and home to help them succeed. Parents are the most influential people in their kids' lives. These strategies can help families better understand the unique mind and emotions of the middle school student to help them stay excited about learning and excel in the classroom and outside of it.

Stay Involved and Informed

Do your own homework and review with your child the information that schools and districts provide, including schedules, courses, and the school handbook. Also, play an active role as a partner to your child and contact counselors, administrators, and teachers periodically to be in the know about what your child should be learning and how they are progressing.

Set Joint Expectations

Kids in middle school naturally start to pull away from their parents and become more private. Instead of presuming that behind closed doors your kid is up to no good, be open about expectations and the importance of family time. Keeping tabs on your student's social media interactions—and time spent on social media—is also crucial, as the consequences of using social media can be difficult to navigate.

Be Patient

Middle school gossip centers on “who likes whom,” and even tweens who aren't



interested in romance can get caught up in drama. Use this as an opportunity to talk about how your tween wants to be treated and should treat others. Middle schoolers' brains react to emotional input more intensely than the brains of children or adults. Validate your child's emotions and work together to find positive coping strategies.

Address Problem Behaviors

Middle school can be challenging, so it is important to look out for common and challenging behaviors such as:

- Increased screen time, especially on social media;
- [Vaping](#) and other controlled substances;
- Lateness or disregard for deadlines;
- Cheating; and
- Sniping remarks.

Show Love and Respect

Remember that your pre-teen needs your love and respect, and middle school is a place to become more adventurous, responsible, and self-sufficient. This is also the time where kids want to be independent from their parents, but they still need to feel protected, seen, and loved.