

Middle Years

Working together for school success

Short Stops



Spring studying

Staying focused on schoolwork is especially hard once spring fever strikes. Suggest that your child study outside. She'll enjoy the change and get some fresh air. *Note:* Make sure she picks a quiet place where other kids are not playing.

Choosing classes

Many parents wonder if their middle graders are ready for more challenging classes, such as algebra or a foreign language. Ask your child's current teachers for advice. They can help you explore your middle grader's strengths and weaknesses.

Sleep solution

It's natural for your child to stay up later on weekends. But staying up too late could have him sleeping the day away—and that makes the transition back to school much harder. Consider establishing and sticking to a reasonable bedtime on his days off.

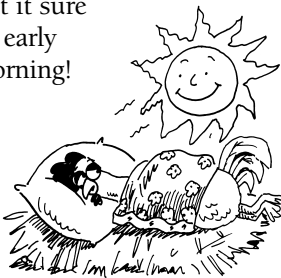
Worth quoting

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."
Albert Einstein

Just for fun

Teacher: How fast does light travel?

Student: I don't know, but it sure gets here early in the morning!



Summer brain boosters

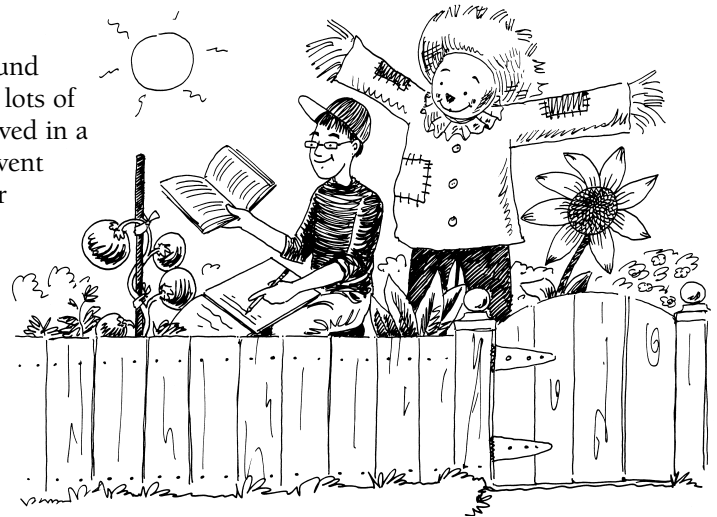
Summer is right around the corner, and with it, lots of free time. Getting involved in a "brain" project can prevent boredom *and* keep your middle grader learning all year long. Try one of these ideas.

Writing

Middle graders tend to be focused on their own lives. You can channel this interest into writing practice by suggesting that your child write her autobiography. Start by having her list the events she wants to include in her book. *Examples:* places she has lived, favorite birthday celebration, hobbies. Then, encourage her to write a chapter each week.

Science

A science project is a great way to keep your youngster's mind growing. For example, if he enjoys doing yard work or eating fresh vegetables, let him plant his own summer garden. Is he



into electronics? Suggest that he visit the library to learn how to build a simple radio.

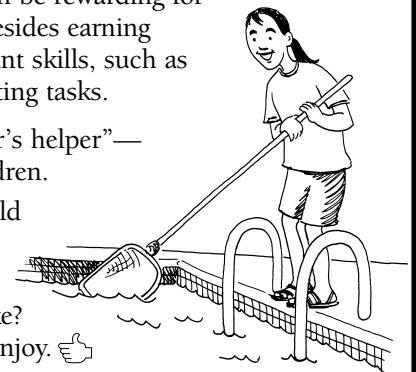
Reading

Encourage reading by asking your family to choose a book to enjoy together. Take turns reading aloud, or read privately and discuss the book over dinner. You could also each choose a different book to share. For more fun, challenge your child to act out her favorite parts of the story. 👍

Learning on the job

Having a part-time job over the summer can be rewarding for your middle grader in more ways than one. Besides earning spending money, your child can learn important skills, such as punctuality, working with others, and completing tasks.

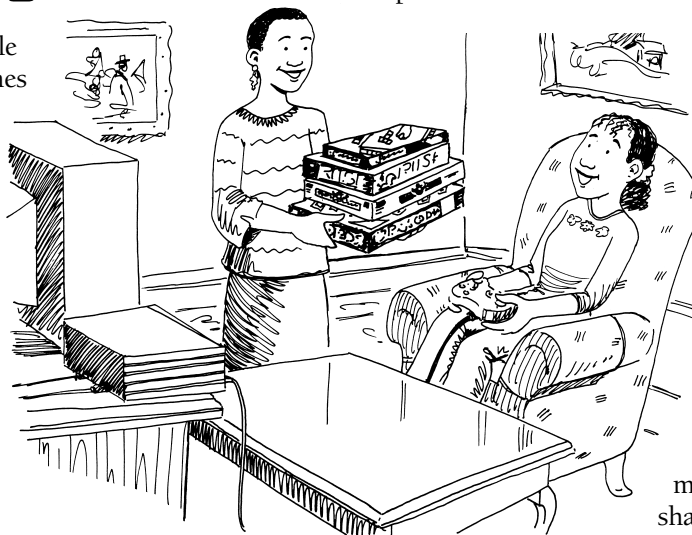
- Your youngster might make a great "mother's helper"—someone who helps a parent care for her children.
- If your child prefers outdoor work, she could look for a job like maintaining a neighbor's swimming pool.
- Does your middle grader like riding her bike? A paper route might be just what she would enjoy. 👍



Media management

Does it seem like your middle grader spends marathon stretches in front of the TV or computer? Use these suggestions to manage her media time.

Get involved. Ask your youngster about her favorite TV shows or electronic games. Make sure she knows you don't approve of violence or rude behavior. Keep in mind that it's easier to monitor your child's activity if the TV and computer remain in the family room, not her bedroom.



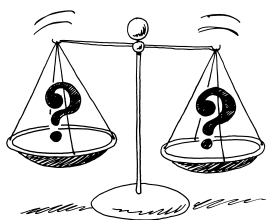
Set rules. Most experts recommend that middle graders spend no more than two hours a day on electronic entertainment.

Suggest games, books, and magazines as alternatives, as well as outdoor activities like playing catch, and spending time with family and friends. You might make it a rule that watching TV and surfing the Net wait until after homework and chores are completed.

Spread the word. Be up front with other parents about your media rules. Ask them to respect your guidelines when your child visits their homes. You may be surprised to learn that they share your concerns. 👍



Making decisions



Every child, from pre-schooler to high schooler, has to make decisions. While there's no single formula for success, these steps may help improve your middle grader's ability to make good choices.

▲ **Ask it.** Thinking about how his actions will affect other people can help your child learn to consider those around him when he has a decision to make. *Example:* Will my decision hurt or upset anyone?

▲ **Ponder it.** Are there options your middle grader hasn't considered? Encourage her to evaluate new possibilities that might be better than her original choices. Looking at a problem from all sides offers better solutions.

▲ **Evaluate it.** Did things work out? Reflecting on results—good and bad—can help your youngster make better choices in the future. 👍

Parent to Parent Differences of opinion

I've always taught my children to respect the opinions of others. So when I overheard my son Manuel calling another kid stupid, I stepped in.

First, I made him come inside. Then, I repeated what I heard and asked him why he said it. "Because he doesn't like skateboards!" Manuel exclaimed.

I explained that what he said was rude and probably hurt the other boy's feelings. I told my son that people are entitled to their opinions, even if they're different from his. Then, I asked Manuel if he'd like to be called stupid. He quickly said no.

Manuel agreed to apologize. I can't say the situation has made them friends, but the boy thanked my son for seeking him out. And Manuel knows that if he calls someone a name again, he will lose his skateboard for a week. 👍

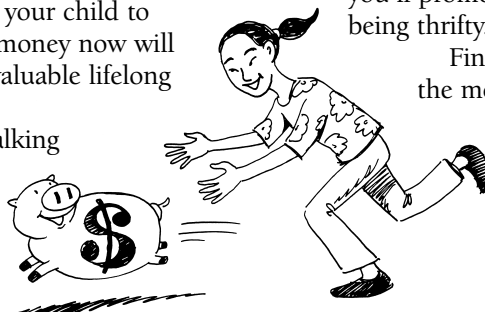


Q & A Money tips

Q My child wants a new camera. I told her she'll need to buy it with her allowance. How can I teach her to save up for it?

A Good money habits start young. Encouraging your child to manage her money now will teach her a valuable lifelong skill.

Start by talking about how much your youngster will save each week.



Have her figure out how long it will take her to buy the camera based on her weekly savings amount. Challenge her to shop around for the best deal—you'll promote the importance of being thrifty.

Finally, resist the urge to put the money away for her. Your child needs opportunities to manage her own money. Hand it to her each week, and let her choose to either save or spend it. 👍

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
3035 Valley Avenue, Suite 103, Winchester, VA 22601
(540) 723-0322 • rfcustomer@aspenpubl.com
ISSN 1540-5540