

# Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



## Short Stops

### A+ feedback

When your middle grader gives a classmate feedback (say, on a presentation or a rough draft of a report), encourage him to be positive *and* honest. First, he could tell what he liked (“Your opening really grabbed my attention”). Then, he should offer suggestions for improvement (“Try adding transition words”). Giving constructive criticism may help your child accept feedback on his work, too.

### Just you and me

Carve out one-on-one time with your tween while you tackle your to-do list this holiday season. Write down everything that needs to be done, and let her choose some tasks to work on with you. You might, for example, make table centerpieces and napkin rings or address greeting cards together.

### Spatial reasoning

The ability to visualize shapes, sizes, and positions of objects is an important thinking skill. Give your middle schooler practice by having him load the dishwasher, bag groceries at the self-checkout, or pack items in boxes. He'll have to picture what could go where and how everything will fit.

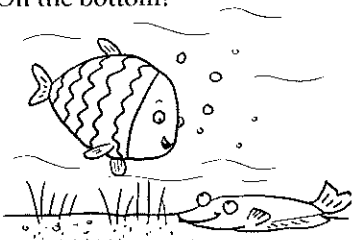
### Worth quoting

“Don't count the days, make the days count.” *Muhammad Ali*

### Just for fun

**Q:** Where is the ocean the deepest?

**A:** On the bottom!



## Study smart

Good study skills let your tween accomplish more each time she studies—and they prepare her for high school and college. Suggest that she try these different ways to study and stick with the ones that work best.

### Rewrite material

After your child reviews notes or completes assigned reading, writing the information in a different format will help her learn and remember it. She might be creative and make up a song about the parts of the nervous system or write a poem using vocabulary terms. Or she could teach the information to a peer by writing key information on a small whiteboard or chalkboard.

### Picture it

Suggest that your middle grader think of a way to turn information into something visual. That can help her make sense of it. She may draw a picture with arrows to show steps in the water cycle, a bar graph to display income statistics



for an economics project, or a chart to compare two novels by the same author.

### Make your own tests

Testing herself on what she learns will show your student what she knows and what she needs to review. Encourage her to create a test using old worksheets or quizzes and her textbook. She can check her answers and grade herself. Or she could think of and answer essay questions. *Idea:* Suggest that she team up with a friend and make up tests for each other to do. 👍

## Conferences are worth attending

Now that your child is in middle school, parent-teacher conferences may be different from what you're used to. Here's what to expect:

- You'll get an overview of how your tween is doing in each subject. If you meet with one teacher who shares notes from a team, ask about scheduling a follow-up conference with a particular teacher if you'd like more information or have concerns.

- You may discover interests or talents you didn't know your youngster has, and the teacher might recommend electives for next year that let him use and develop these strengths.

- Find out how your child interacts with teachers and peers. For example, you could ask about how he works with classmates. 👍

