



youth service bureau

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## Helpful Hints for Parent-Child Success in Middle School

*By: Chuck Ochocki, Former Stillwater Junior High Principal*

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### Academic Hints

- Provide school supplies and a place to study
- Help set academic goals
- Insist on daily attendance
- Attend all programs – both school and parent
- Use rewards and consequences
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle
- Help improve organizational skills
- Help with time-management
- Make homework be your child's responsibility
- Encourage their involvement in school activities
- Encourage independent problem-solving. Guide/help your child find answers to their questions.
- Provide academic support (promote critical reading strategies)
- Work with the school
- Try to understand your child

### Understanding Your Child

- Physical changes
- Emotional changes – moody
- Intellectual changes – you can now talk about serious topics with them
- Social changes – friends are very important

### Your middle-schooler will be tempted to try new things...

- At all times, know where your child is going
- Meet their friends and their friends' families
- Know what your kids are listening to, watching, what sites they are visiting online, and monitor their social media
- If you have not yet started talking about alcohol, drugs, smoking, vaping, and sexual activity – then start talking and let them know where you stand
- If you feel your child is involved in activity that is wrong or harmful, listen to your instincts, talk to them, and take appropriate action

## **Communicating with your middle-schooler – it can be a real challenge!**

- Ask open-ended questions! Do not ask “How was your day?”, say, “Tell me about your day.”
- Timing is important. Listen when your student is ready to talk (in the car, arriving home from school, etc.
- They need you to be direct and positive:
  - Instead of, “Don't leave your backpack on the floor,” say, “Please put your backpack in your room.”
  - Instead of, “Be home after school,” say, “Please be home at 3:00.”
- They will say stuff for shock value, so respond to them with a question. “So, can you tell me how come you want to dye your hair green?”
- When asking to complete something, your middle-schooler's tone/voice may be less than pleasant, *but did they do what you asked?* Demanding or expecting a positive attitude is sometimes too much to ask
- They listen to what you are saying and recognize the importance of nonverbal communication.

## **Unwritten rule: *Do not embarrass your child***

- Do not say too much!
- Do not show affection (unless your student makes the first move)!
- Do not correct them in front of friends!

***You are very, very, very important in your child's life.  
They absolutely need you at this time in their life!***