

MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENT NEWSLETTER

TIPS, IDEAS, AND ADVICE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

Here are some questions to ask your child this month.

- ▶ Which class are you enjoying the most this year?
- ▶ Is there a class that is especially hard for you, or that you are struggling with?
- ▶ Are you getting along well with the other students in your classes?
- ▶ Do you feel stressed or worried about anything?



MAKING THE MOST OF PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

It's a few months into the school year and most likely time for you to check in with your child's teachers. Here are a few tips for getting the most of parent-teacher conferences.

- ▶ Write down any questions you have before the meeting. Consider starting this list at the beginning of the school year—jot down questions and concerns as you think of them, and keep track of them on your phone or in a notebook.
- ▶ You may only have a short block of time with each teacher, so address the most important questions first.
- ▶ If your child's teachers share assessment results with you, ask for clarification if you're confused about what they mean. If necessary, take notes.
- ▶ The conference may include your student, but if it doesn't, use the questions in the Conversation Prompts section to get your child's perspective on how the year is going so far. Address any of these concerns with each teacher. And don't forget to celebrate your child's successes!

TALK ABOUT IT!

Explain to your child that if they don't understand something or feel that they are falling behind, it's best to ask for help right away than to try to play catch-up later.

STAYING ON TRACK WITH HOMEWORK

This time of year, it's common for many students to start looking ahead to the holidays, and this often means attention in class and to their homework assignments falls by the wayside.

- ▶ If your student uses a planner, they should be checking it daily. Remind them not to rush through homework, and that it should always be completed thoroughly.
- ▶ Check in with your child to make sure all homework gets done properly and on time. All homework (even work assigned around the holidays) is important.

SEL SPOTLIGHT: SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness refers to the ability to understand and process your values, thoughts, and emotions, and to recognize how they influence your actions.

One aspect of self-awareness is developing a growth mindset. Having a growth mindset will ensure that your child will see problems and challenges not as roadblocks, but as opportunities for growth and discovery. Here are a few tips for helping your student develop a growth mindset.

- ▶ Teach your student the power of "yet." For example, instead of saying, "I can't do this," encourage them to say, "I can't do this...yet." Effort is a major key to success.
- ▶ Ensure that your child is not afraid to fail. Everyone fails sometimes—what matters is the response. Teach your child to respond to failure by identifying what went wrong, and recognizing how they can do better next time.
- ▶ Help your student see that what makes them different is what makes them special! Help your child build confidence by embracing their differences, and those of others.

CAREER CORNER

Use your child's favorite subject as a starting point for a conversation about careers. Have them go online to find a list of jobs related to that subject. Then have your child pick one or two to find out more about together.

FAMILY FUN: MAKE A GRATITUDE JAR

Talk to your student about what you're both thankful for, and encourage other family members to do the same. Explain how finding even one thing to be thankful for each day—big or small—can be enough to change a person's outlook for the better.

- ▶ Give each family member a small slip of paper and ask them to write down one thing they are thankful for on that particular day. Fold the pieces of paper and place them in a large, empty jar.
- ▶ For one week, ask everyone to continue this exercise once each day. At the end of the week, remove the slips of paper and read them aloud together.
- ▶ Repeat until the jar becomes full, and then start again. Discuss with your child how practicing gratitude can increase happiness, improve mental health, and help get people through tough times.

