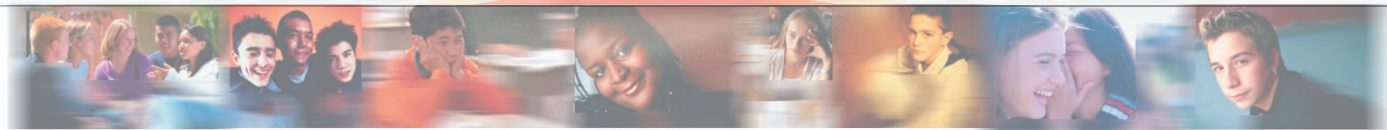


THE RISING STAR



Volume 3 Issue 5

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Feature Article

MOVING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Reviewed by: Chris Cortellessa, MS, NCC Date reviewed: July 2005 ©1995-2006 The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved.

Is it good to be in the middle? Sometimes, no, like when you're in the middle seat on a long car ride. But sometimes, yes, like when you're in the middle of a great movie. What will happen next? Middle school is a little bit like that.

Middle school is called middle school because it's in the middle of your school years. Elementary school is behind you. High school and possibly college still await you. Middle school often includes sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, but you might go to middle school earlier or later, depending on how it's done in your area.

For a kid, going to middle school is often a big change:

- First, it often means moving to a new building, which takes some time to adjust to.
- Second, it may mean taking a different bus, with different students.
- Third, the friends you made in elementary school may end up going to different middle schools.

All that can make you feel a bit scared on the first day of school.

Other things that probably will be different are the teachers and the work. Have you heard rumors that middle school teachers are really mean and the homework is really, really hard? Oh, dear. We've heard those, too, but

they're generally not true. Yes, you'll like some teachers better than others, but middle schools are not special breeding grounds for mean teachers!

Learning New Stuff

Your homework - and the work you do in class - likely will get more challenging, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. You're growing up and you get to build on all that learning you already did in elementary school. You'll also probably be learning some new and different stuff in middle school - like foreign languages, more advanced courses in computer technology, music and art, health, and life skills, such as cooking.

On top of that, middle school will probably offer a variety of new teams, clubs, and activities you can join. Maybe you love lacrosse, ceramics, or jazz music. You might find opportunities to do all three at middle school.

Still worried about middle school? Let's talk about how to make the transition and not get too freaked out!

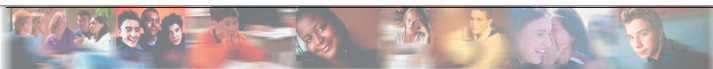
Visit more than once. Most middle schools have orientation day for students who will be attending in the fall. Orientation is a day when you tour the school and get a little information about what it will be like to go there. Another great way to get oriented is to attend a concert or sporting event at your new school. And talk to friends who already

go there. Ask them about any problems they had and ask if they could help you if you need it when you get there. It's cool to have an older kid as a friend at your new school!

It also might help if your mom or dad drove you to the school in the summertime. You might see sports teams practicing outside and just get a flavor of the place. It's also good to get an idea of where it is in your area. Is it over near the mall or on the other side of town?

Prepare for Day 1. Read any materials you get at orientation or that arrive by mail in the summer. Are there books you need to read or supplies you have to buy? You'll also want to figure out what time school starts and what time the bus will pick you up, if you take one. Then you can decide what time you'll need to wake up. You also might want to find out when your lunch is. If it's later than usual, you might want to pack a snack. Also in advance, think about what you'll wear. Choose something that you like and feel comfortable in. If you'll be wearing a uniform, try it on to see that all the pieces fit and that they feel good.

Get to bed on time the night before! Try to get a good night's sleep - even if you're so excited you don't think you can sleep. Before bed, lay out all your



Resources

LEARNING STYLES

article taken from:
www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/succeed/04-learningstyles.html

Learning is reflected in the way we respond to environmental, social, emotional and physical stimuli, to understand new information. Learning style is defined as the way that information is processed. It focuses on strengths, not weaknesses. There is no right or wrong learning style. Most children show a preference for one of the following basic learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic/ manipulative. It is not uncommon to combine the primary and secondary learning styles.

Parents also show a preference for one of these learning styles. It is not unusual for parents to prefer a different style of learning than their child. In order to work effectively with your child it is important to understand your own learning style. (Take inventory at this point)

Visual learners learn by watching. They call up images from the past when trying to remember. They picture the way things look in their heads. Forty percent of secondary students fall into this category.

Auditory learners tend to spell phonetically. They can sometimes have trouble reading, because they don't visualize well. These students learn by listening and remember facts when they are presented in the form of a poem, song or melody.

Kinesthetic learners learn best through movement and manipulation. They like to find out how things work and are often successful in the practical in the arts, such as carpentry or design. These students make up 50 percent of secondary students and have difficulty learning in a traditional setting.

Feature Article

MOVING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL [continued from page 1]

stuff so you don't forget anything. Set your alarm, but tell your mom or dad when you need to get up in case you sleep right through it!

On the big day, eat breakfast and be brave. Breakfast might seem skippable if you're in a major hurry, but don't cut it out. You'll feel terrible by mid-morning, just when you need your energy and brain power to navigate your new school.

On your way out the door, take everything you need and try to remember that this is a big adventure. You might get lost in the halls. Oh well, it's your first day! Check in with friends you know and try to be brave and say "hi" to other new kids. Don't know the kid with the locker

locker combination, where your assigned seat is in all your classes, where the bathrooms are, and how to get to the cafeteria. Do you still get lost on the way to gym? If so, find a buddy who goes to gym at the same time and walk together.

Solving Problems Beyond Week 1

If you find you're having trouble with schoolwork or friends, don't panic but do get help. Just like in elementary school, ask the teacher for extra help after class if you don't understand something you're learning. You also might have study halls in middle school - these free periods are great for talking to a teacher or getting a jump on your homework.

"Try joining a club, sport, or activity. It's a great way to get to know kids you don't know yet."

next to yours? Say "hello." You'll be seeing a lot of each other this year! In class, listen to what the teacher says and take notes because it's hard to remember everything. Try to write down the important stuff - like your locker combination and your homeroom number. Then you can look it over when you get home and be prepared for Day 2.

On Day 2, repeat. On the second day, do everything you did on Day 1. Hopefully, things are starting to go a little more smoothly. Keep referring to your notes. It might help to look over your class schedule at home so you start to memorize that math follows English and science follows gym, but only on Tuesdays!

After 1 week, pat yourself on the back. When you've been at your school for a whole week, it's time to give yourself a round of applause. You've probably absorbed a ton of new information - all in a short time. You probably know your

Also talk to your mom or dad if you're having trouble with your classes. It could be that you're just a little rusty after that long summer, but if your problems don't go away, you'll want to talk to the teacher and maybe a school counselor.

When it comes to friends, the switch to a new school can leave you feeling a little dizzy. What if your best friend isn't in any of your classes and you never see him or her? What if none of your friends even goes to your school? Middle school is a good time to make new connections and new friends.

Sometimes, it's easy to make a new friend. You might meet the first day and then hang out all year long. But it can also go more slowly, especially if it seems like a lot of kids are already hanging out together in groups that don't include you. Let someone know how it's going for you. Talk to your mom, dad, or a school counselor if you're feeling lonely and it's not getting any better.



Resources

LEARNING STYLES [cont. from page 2]

Knowing your child's preferred learning style can help you interest a child in new material. With this information you can also learn which style your child needs to strengthen because of the way most information is presented in school. Only 10 percent of secondary students learn best auditorily, but 80 percent of instructional delivery is auditory.

You may have found that you use different learning styles in different situations. Your child does the same. If your child is having difficulty in school you might want to explore the way that information is being presented in school and approach the subject with your child at home using a different learning. It may also be advisable to discuss this with his/her teacher.

Another consideration is the environment in which people learn best. While tradition tells us to have a quiet room, well lit with a straight back chair, some children learn best in a more chaotic environment. Loud music, laying on the bed, and a dimly lit environment may be the best study situation for others.

Trying different methods of learning may prevent the children from feeling frustrated and inadequate when they are not able to work up to their potential. Experimenting with different learning styles and environments may improve the child's accomplishments and feelings of achievement.

Helping Children Succeed in School was developed by Darla Binkley, Extension Educator, Youth Development; Kay Mayberry, Extension Educator, Family Life; Rachel Schwarzendruber, Extension Educator, Family Life; Nancy Schreiber, Extension Educator, Prevention; and Melinda States.

Resources

SIX STEPS TO STUDY

Reviewed by: Chris Cortellessa, M.Ed, NCC – ©1995-2006 The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved

How did you learn how to ride your bike? Someone probably gave you a few lessons and then you practiced a lot. You can learn how to study in much the same way. No one is born knowing how to study. You need to learn a few study skills and then practice them.

Why work on your study skills? It will make it easier for you to learn and do well in class, especially as you move up to middle school and high school.

Here are six steps to smarter studying:

1. Pay attention in class.
2. Take good notes.
3. Plan ahead for tests and projects.
4. Break it down. (If you have a bunch of stuff to learn, break it into smaller chunks.)
5. Ask for help if you get stuck.
6. Get a good night's sleep!

1. Pay Attention: Good Studying Starts in Class

Here's a riddle for you: Did you know that before you even begin studying, you've already started? Huh? Here's what we mean. When you pay attention in class and take good notes, you are starting the process of learning and studying.

Do you have trouble paying attention in class? Are you sitting next to a loud person? Is it hard to see the board? Make sure you're sitting in a good seat that lets you pay attention. Tell your teacher or parents about any problems that are preventing you from paying attention and taking good notes.

2. Good Notes = Easier Studying

Not sure how to take notes? Start by writing down facts that your teacher mentions or writes on the board during class. Try your best to use good handwriting so you can read your notes later. It's also a good idea to keep your notes, quizzes, and papers organized by subject.

3. Plan Ahead and You'll Be Glad You Did

Waiting until Thursday night to study for Friday's test will make for a homework night that's no fun! It also makes it hard to do your best. We're all guilty of putting things off sometimes. One of the best ways to make sure that doesn't happen is to plan ahead.

Ask for a cool calendar (something you like and can keep by your desk or study area) and write down your test and assignment due dates. You can then plan how much to do after school each day, and how much time to spend on each topic. Are lessons or extracurricular activities making it hard to find time to study? Ask your mom or dad how to make a schedule of what to do when.

4. Break It Up!

When there's a lot to study, it can help to break things into chunks. Let's say you have a test on 20 spelling words. Instead of thinking about all of the words at once, try breaking them down into five-word chunks and working on one or two different chunks each night.

Don't worry if you can't remember something on the first try. That's where practice comes in. The more days you spend reviewing something, the more likely it is to stick in your brain. There are also tricks called mnemonic (say: new-mah-nik) devices that can help you remember stuff. When you're trying to memorize a list of things, make up a phrase that uses the first letter of each. For example, are you trying to learn the nine planets and their order from the sun? Think: My Very Earnest Mother Just Served Us Nine Pickles to remember Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Your teacher can give you ideas, too.



SIX STEPS TO STUDY

[continued from page 3]

Another way to break it up is to study regularly instead of just the night before. You can always review your notes and read over the chapters you're working on. Or, if you're studying math or science, do some practice problems.

How much studying should you do each night? Your teacher can help you figure it out. Most brains can only pay attention for about 45 minutes. So if you've been working for a while and find it hard to pay attention, try taking a break for some water or a walk around the house. Just fight the temptation to turn on the TV or stop working!

5. Lose the Confusion — Ask for Help

You can't study effectively if you don't understand the material. Be sure to ask your teacher for help if you're confused about something. You can check yourself by reading through your notes. Does it all make sense? If not, ask your teacher to go over it with you. If you're at home when the confusion occurs, your mom or dad might be able to help.

6. Sleep Tight!

So the test is tomorrow and you've followed your study plan — but suddenly you can't remember anything, not even 2+2! Don't panic. Your brain needs time to digest all the information you've given it. Try to get a good night's sleep and you'll be surprised by what comes back to you in the morning.

Note: All information on KidsHealth is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

MOVING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL [continued from page 2]

You might wonder what you can do to feel less lonely and make friends. Here's something: Try joining a club, sport, or activity. It's a great way to get to know kids you don't know yet. Being in these groups also can help you feel more at home at your school.

A Middle School Slump?

If you have a little trouble adjusting to middle school, you're not alone. Some schools have found that kids' test scores drop when they move to middle school.

In fact, some school districts are closing their middle schools and making elementary school stretch from kindergarten to 8th grade.

But no matter how they do it in your area, you can succeed at school. If you're moving to middle school, you will get adjusted to the new place, the new people, and the new requirements. And by next year, you'll be that cool older kid who's helping out the new kid. If he's lost on the way to the gym, please show him the way

SPEECH

Lauren's Speech

This experience has truly changed my life. I've learned patience, perseverance, and determination. I've made friends I hope to learn even more about, who've made me realize people aren't always what they seem. I've met a teacher who truly gives the word, teacher, a real meaning. Grant, you've taken 12 kids who didn't know what a leader was and molded us into real leaders.

During these 10 weeks learning has become very important to me. One of the most important things I've learned is dealing with people better. I have learned to look at situations open-mindedly and to be more mature when dealing with stressful situations. Also, I have learned to develop better strategies to manage my time, such as writing things down and a set time to do them in. This type of strategy helps me in my home and school life.

Hopefully, in my future, I will use what I've learned in this class to help me in everything I do. But as for now, all I can do is work on and refine the things I've learned in this class to help me in my present endeavors.

*So, to sum up my speech, I'll end with a quote by Grant
"repetition is key"*

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

To Learn More About Rising Stars Please Contact:

Patrick Frazier • Owner/Executive Coach

Five Star Performance, LLC • 51818 Bonanza Dr • Granger, IN 46530

ph. 574.286.1123 • Patrick.S.Frazier@comcast.net