

## **A Parent's Guide to Surviving the Junior High Years**

**You can help your child deal with any concerns and feel excited about new challenges.** Reassure your child that it's normal to have concerns about:

- **The Building-** Your child may wonder about getting around a large, unfamiliar building or finding people to eat with in a large cafeteria.
- **The Schedule-** Learning to move from class to class can be confusing when you're just starting out.
- **The Teachers-** Junior high students work with 7 or more teachers every day- each with a different style and set of expectations.
- **The Other Students-** Your child will encounter many new faces.
- **Academics-** Junior high school often means more homework and more challenging projects, reports and tests.
- **Friendships-** It's common for junior high school students to be concerned about making new friends and being left out if old friends move on to new friends.

**Talk with your child.** This is the first step in easing any concerns.

- **Ask Questions-** What are you most excited about? What are you most worried about? How can I help most?
- **Listen Closely-** Listen for unstated feelings and be ready to talk when your child wants to. Give your full attention whenever you can.
- **Highlight the positives-** Remind your child that starting junior high school means: more independence, more extracurricular activities, and feeling and acting more like an adult.

**Get oriented!** Have your child take part in orientation programs for students heading to middle school. These may include:

- **5<sup>th</sup> grade visit to the junior high school campus**
- **Meet the Teacher Night-** Learn the physical layout- where the classrooms, school offices, cafeteria and other facilities are.
- **Get to know the principal, teachers, counselors, and other school staff.**

**Nurture a love of learning.**

- **Praise your child's successes and efforts.**
- **Make your home a "learning resource"-** Try to keep books, music, magazines, puzzles, and word games around.
- **Use your local library.**
- **Stay active in parent organizations, school council meetings, and volunteer if you can.**

**Help your child be his or her best.** When it comes to academics, you can help your child by:

- **Getting organized-** Most children benefit by using: academic planners, color-coded notebooks for different subjects, three-ring binders with colored dividers. Keep your child supplied with basic materials- paper, pencils, rulers, etc.
- **Setting up a study routine-** Arrange for your child to have a consistent: place to study (one that's quiet and comfortable), time each day for reviewing class work and doing assigned homework. Help your child make a schedule to help balance all his or her activities, including free time.
- **Mastering bigger projects-** Encourage your child to: start early, break larger tasks into smaller chunks, and ask for help when he or she needs it. Check on his or her progress regularly.

**Help your child get in with a good crowd by:**

- **Teaching your child good judgment-** Keep teaching values such as fairness, self-respect and respect for others, and a sense of right and wrong. Be a positive role model!
- **Getting to know your child's friends-** Welcome your child's friends into your home. Get to know the parents, too.
- **Talk with your child about dangerous behaviors-** Let him or her know that these behaviors are unacceptable and encourage positive social activities such as sports or hobbies.

**Peer pressure can be both positive and negative! Children often inspire the best in each other and parents can help it happen more often.**

- **Help your child have a positive self-concept-** Teach your child that it's OK to be different.
- **Practice role-playing-** Your child can practice different ways to say "no", such as with humor, reasoning, and consequences.
- **Be reassuring about physical and emotional changes-** Reassure your child that it's normal for people to develop at very different rates.