

Home & School

CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

February 2018

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic



SHORT NOTES

I love you because...

Family members can share what they love about each other with this writing activity. Have your youngster cut out paper hearts. Write love notes on them and hide for others to find. For example, maybe your child will put one under her sister's placemat that says, "I love you because you make me laugh."

On the road again

Carpooling with other parents is a great way to save time and money—and to get to know your youngster's classmates. When you drive, you'll probably hear them discuss school, sports, and friends. *Note:* Ask parents about booster seats—if a child uses one in his parents' car, he'll need one in yours, too.

Indoor "recess"—at home

When winter weather keeps your family inside, ask your child to show you what she does during indoor recess at school. She could teach you games, crafts, or songs she enjoys. Then, encourage her to come up with new ideas to try at home or in class.

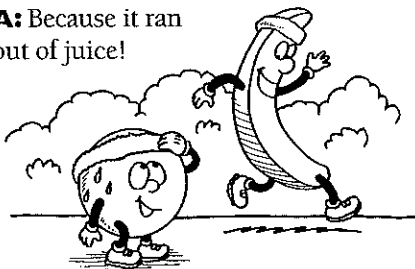
Worth quoting

"Life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale." *Hans Christian Andersen*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why did the orange lose the race?

A: Because it ran out of juice!



Olympic-sized learning

While the 2018 Winter Olympic Games are taking place thousands of miles away, your child can earn a "medal" in learning at home. Turn Olympic magic into educational gold with these suggestions.

Reading

Speed skating, ski jumping, luge...which Winter Olympics sports does your youngster enjoy watching? Head to the library together to pick out books about their history, the rules, and how the athletes train. *Idea:* Hold a "reading Olympics." Let family members count the books they read in February. At the end of the month, everyone can award medals to their three favorites.

Math

Your child will practice gathering, recording, and calculating data to find out which of his favorite countries wins the most medals. Encourage him to divide poster board into four columns: "Country," "Gold," "Silver," "Bronze." In column one, he can list teams he'd like

to follow. Every day, have him check a newspaper or olympic.org and add tally marks for each country's medals. After the Olympics end, he can total them up to see who got the most in each category.

Social studies

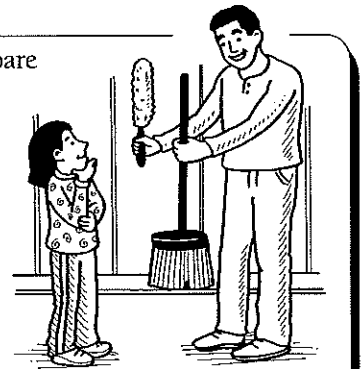
Where in the world do the Olympic athletes come from? To explore geography, help your youngster use a map to find countries represented in the Olympics. He might put star stickers on the countries on a wall map. Or let him print out a world map and make a dot on each competing country.♥



Decisions, decisions

Learning to make smaller decisions now will prepare your youngster to make bigger ones later. Here are ways to build her decision-making skills:

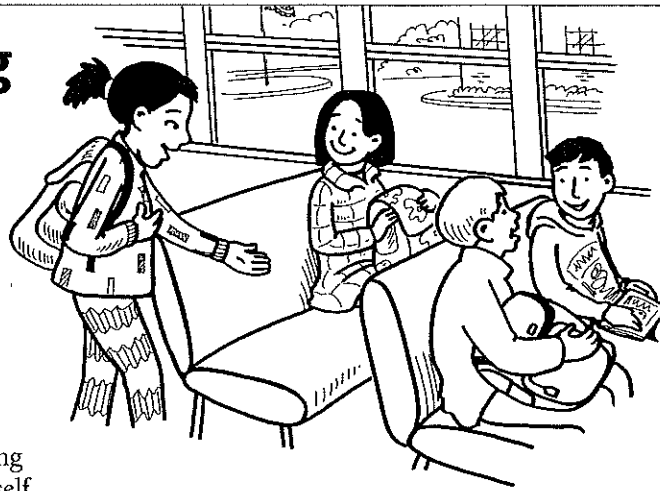
- Hearing you think through your choices gives your child an example to follow. You might say, "I'd like to visit Aunt Sue tonight, but then I might not finish this proposal for work. I'll go Saturday instead."
- When possible, give your youngster two to three specific options. That way, she can make a decision without feeling overwhelmed. *Example:* "Do you want to sweep or dust?" rather than "Which chore would you prefer to do?"♥



An anti-bullying attitude

Having a positive attitude toward others can help to keep your youngster from participating in bullying. With these ideas, she'll be more apt to be kind to others and want them to feel included.

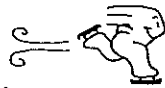
1. Watch your words. Let your youngster know you expect her to speak kindly. Before she says something she's unsure about, she could ask herself if she would want you to hear it. If she overhears another



student calling a classmate names or gossiping, she could counter the unkind words with nice ones. ("I hear you're really good at gymnastics.")

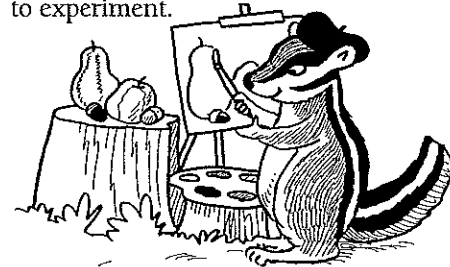
2. Accept everyone. Leaving people out on purpose is a form of bullying. Suggest that your child look for chances to make others feel that they belong. For example, she might ask to

join someone who normally sits alone on the bus. Or she could invite a new student to her birthday party. She'll see how good it feels to make someone's day—and perhaps she'll even gain a friend!♥



ACTIVITY CORNER Inspired by art

Art unleashes your child's imagination and lets him practice fine-motor skills. Try these tips to encourage him to experiment.



Use natural supplies

Challenge your youngster to find free art materials right in your backyard! For instance, he might use sticks or feathers as paintbrushes. Or he could draw on rocks with colored chalk.

Try new formats

Suggest that your child arrange objects (toys, fruits) on a table and sketch a still life. Or go outdoors where he can paint a landscape of natural scenery like trees or a pond. If he wants to draw a portrait, he could ask a family member to pose—or look in a mirror and create a self-portrait.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Safe to make mistakes

My third grader, Mark, gets discouraged when he can't do something correctly right away. While he was practicing his typing skills, he said, "Forget it, I'm no good at this," and walked away from the computer.

I told Mark that mistakes are part of learning. I admitted that when I was his age, I wanted to quit the violin because I couldn't get the notes right on my favorite piece. Luckily, the school music teacher encouraged me to continue, and Mark knows that I enjoy playing the violin to this day.

To show Mark his mistakes were "stepping-stones," I drew circles across a sheet of paper. Each time he made a mistake while typing, I suggested he cross out a stepping-stone and start the sentence again. I knew that if he kept trying, he'd type an error-free sentence before he got to the last stone—and I was right.

Now Mark has a way to track his progress with typing and other things that require persistence.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated
 128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
 800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
 www.rfeonline.com
 ISSN 1540-5621

Q & A Study with a pencil in hand

Q: When my daughter studies for a test, she simply reads through her notes or textbook chapter once and announces she's finished. How can I help her study more effectively?

A: Reading is an important part of studying. But writing and drawing can help cement the information in her mind—in fun and interesting ways.

For example, if she's studying a textbook chapter, she could write answers to

the end-of-chapter questions or even design her own quiz. When she studies with a classmate, they might write questions on index cards and play "quiz show."

Sketching pictures is another good study strategy. To prepare for a test on planets, she can draw and label the solar system. Or she could draw pizzas and write fractions on the slices while studying for a math test.♥

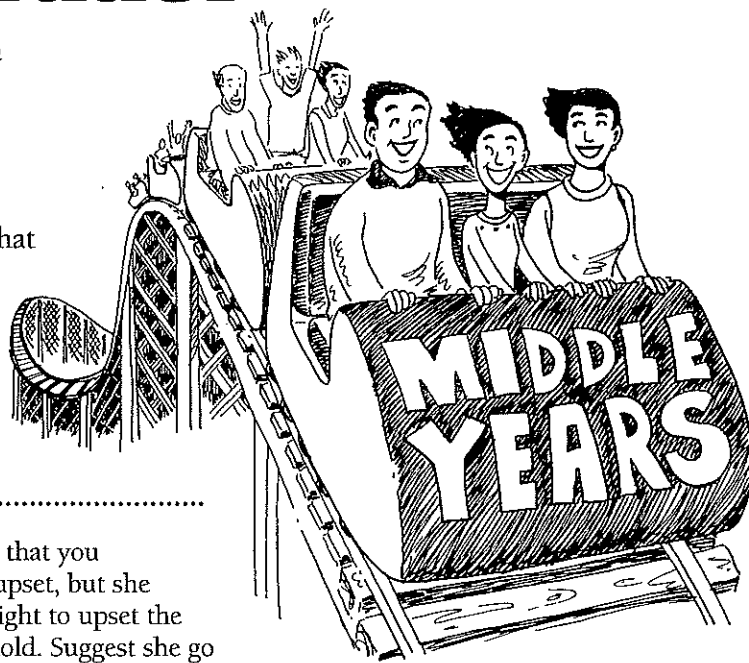


Understanding your middle grader

“What a roller-coaster ride! My middle grader goes from being helpful and considerate to angry and stubborn in the blink of an eye.”

The middle years are full of challenges. As children become teens, they display new attitudes and reactions that appear to come out of nowhere. While it may seem like your middle grader is misbehaving, these qualities are actually a natural part of growing up.

Here are some typical middle grader behaviors and suggestions for ways to handle them.



Moody

One minute your child wants you to help her with her homework. The next minute she wants you to leave her alone.

This behavior may make you wonder what's going on. The answer is simple. Your child is becoming an adolescent. Middle graders tend to be very moody. One minute they're happy, and the next they're angry. These sudden moods can be difficult to predict and even harder to cope with.

Suggestions: The best approach parents can take is to ignore as much of this erratic behavior as possible. Changing hormone levels in your child make it next to impossible for her to control her emotions.

So, what do you do? First, keep in mind that her moods have little to do with you—and try not to take them personally. If you don't comment, chances are they'll disappear as quickly as they arrived. The more attention you give them, the longer they're likely to stick around.

However, this doesn't give your middle grader a license to walk all

over you. Tell her that you understand she's upset, but she doesn't have the right to upset the rest of the household. Suggest she go to another room if she's not feeling sociable. When she comes out, try to forget anything happened. She will probably forget about it, too.

Private

Has a sign that reads, “Keep out. This means you!” suddenly appeared on your child's door?

It's natural for middle graders to want more privacy as they grow older. They're beginning to see themselves as unique individuals who need more space. Also, changes in their bodies during puberty may make them want to stake out an area of the house as their own.



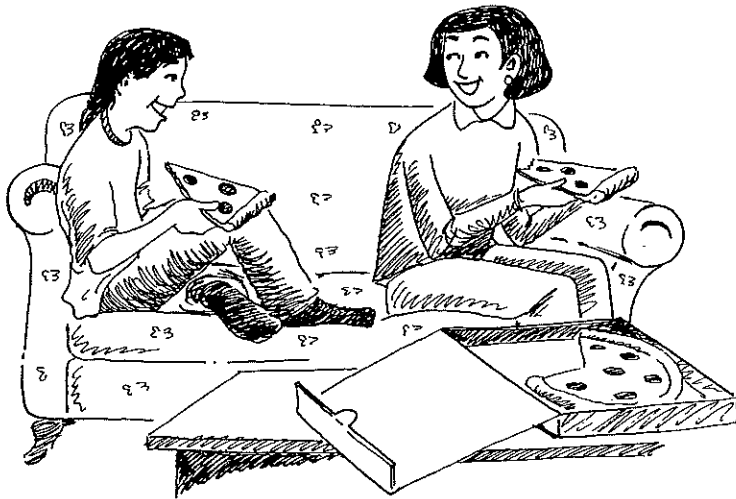
Suggestions: The next time your middle grader shouts, “Just leave me alone” and slams the door, consider taking his advice. He may be trying to say, “This room is my private area.” Having a private place can help him cool off and relax.

If you haven't already established rules such as “Knock before opening a closed door,” consider doing so. Tell your middle grader that you respect his need for privacy and expect the same treatment in return. Chances are he'll understand where you're coming from.

Allowing your child to have privacy doesn't mean he has complete control over the room, however. Let him know your expectations on how the room is kept (dirty clothes in laundry basket, no trash on floor, etc.).

continued

Middle Years



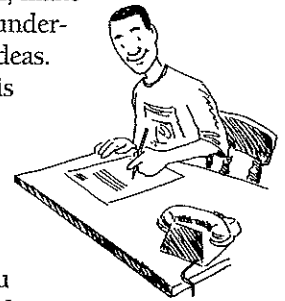
Whenever you want to ask questions about your middle grader's life, try to remain as casual as possible. If your questions are too probing, she's likely to feel attacked, which may make her respond defensively.

Argumentative

"Why do I have to do my homework before I can talk on the phone? I think that's so dumb."

If your middle grader always takes the opposite side of your opinion, don't get too upset. At this age, disagreeing is a way for your child to try out her growing brainpower. Her mind has begun to reason, and understand abstract ideas.

Disagreeing is a great way for her to think out loud. She's trying to separate herself from you and prove that she can do things her own way.



Suggestions: Try to remember that no matter what you say, chances are your middle grader will hold an opinion different from yours. She is learning to defend her argument—a valuable skill she'll need to resist peer pressure. Likewise, she's trying to sort out what she likes and dislikes, from hairstyles to values. It's also a way for her to learn the thinking behind your rules. She's testing you to see why you hold certain beliefs.

However, it's important that your child remain respectful when expressing her views. Explain that just because she disagrees with an idea doesn't mean she has to respond rudely.

Editor's Note: Even though the middle years can be tough, try not to throw your arms up in despair. Research shows that middle graders need their parents' guidance now more than ever.

Sensitive

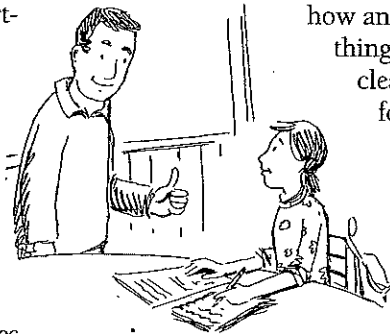
"I don't want anyone at the restaurant to see me. I hate the way I look."

As middle graders mature, their bodies start changing in uncontrollable ways. Examples: acne, growth spurts, facial hair. This often makes them feel awkward about their appearance.

Suggestions: When your child makes negative comments about his appearance, listen to what he says. Try to avoid immediately reassuring him. Instead, make comments that prompt him to describe his feelings. Example: "That must be really tough." This encourages him to open up about his emotions.

Make your comments in a matter-of-fact tone. Middle graders are likely to find joking and teasing hurtful, even if you're just trying to be funny.

Talk about how you felt when you were his age. If he doesn't believe you, pull out old photos. He will quickly see that you're telling the truth. Gently explain that his friends probably feel the same way about their bodies. Let him know that these changes will be less and less noticeable as he gets older.



Independent

Your middle grader seems unhappy, so you ask her what's wrong. "Nothing," she replies. Then, she spends an hour on the phone telling a friend about her troubles.

As a parent, this may feel like rejection. For the first years of her life, your child relied on you to help her fix what was bothering her. Now she turns to friends for help.

Although you may feel like you've done something wrong, middle graders naturally begin to form relationships outside the family. It's part of growing up—depending less on parents to meet all their needs.

Suggestions: The key to this stage of your child's life is to allow her to make more decisions about how and when she does things. But make it clear that her new-found freedom has conditions. For example, so long as her work gets done, you'll try to stay out of her hair. But if she stops meeting her obligations, remind her that you'll step in and take over.

Middle Years