

Improving Middle School Outcomes



Engaging Families & Empowering Students



ParentPowered
creator of **Ready4K**

Throw Back Thursday ...

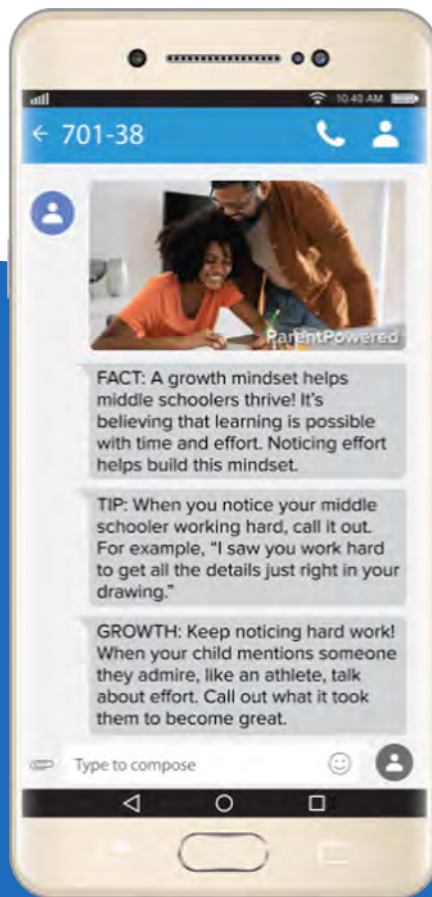
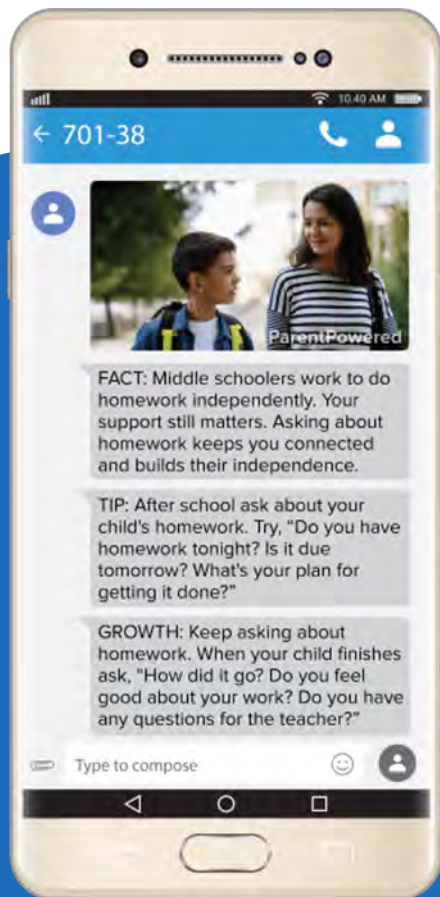


Rebecca Honig
Chief Content
& Curriculum Officer

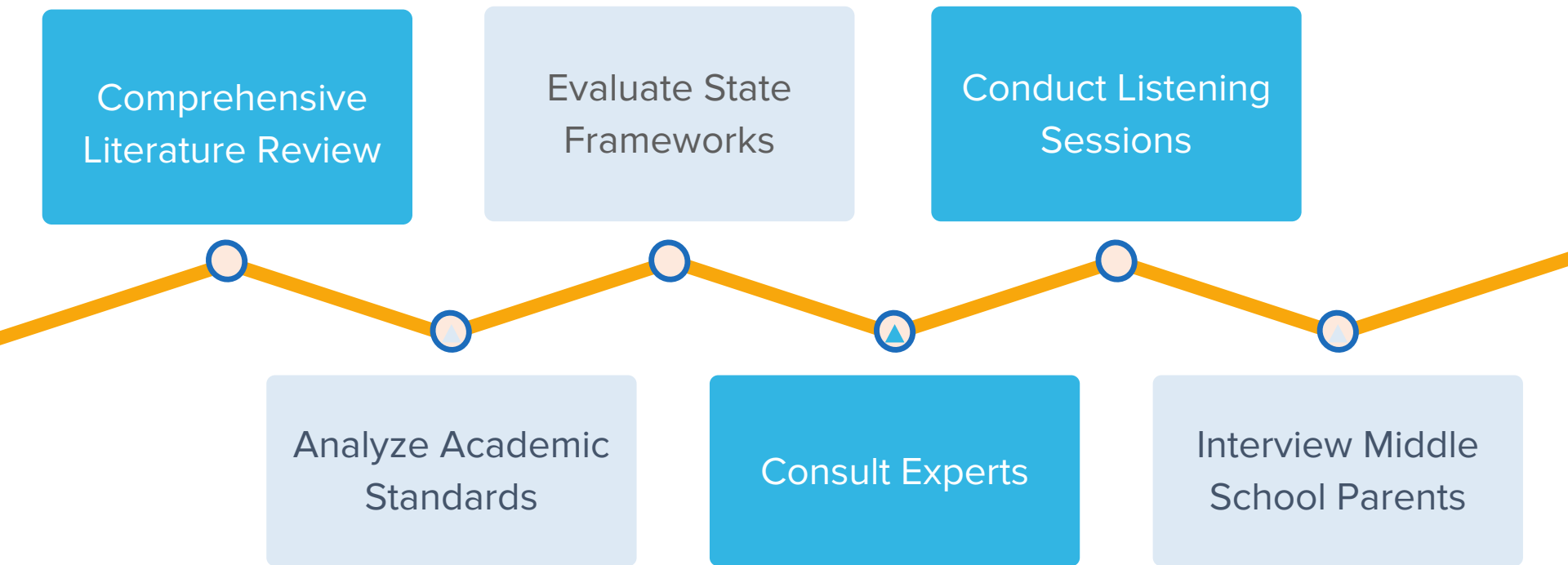


Françoise Lartigue
Content & Curriculum
Specialist

Middle School Family Engagement



A Deep Dive into Middle School





Goals

1. Insights from the research
2. The four domains of middle school family engagement
3. Communication Strategies

The Need

"Middle School is almost where parents need to put more of their energy than they did in elementary school versus less."


Pat Lowthian
*Montana Migrant
Education Program*



The Opportunity

“Adolescents with supportive parents exhibit higher rates of self-reliance, identity formation, school performance, and positive career-planning aspirations, as well as lower rates of depression and delinquency.

Youth who share trusting relationships with their parents—characterized by mutual and sustained bonds and open communication—have higher grade point averages (GPAs) and better physical health and are more likely to disclose information to their parents that will keep them out of trouble.”

A photograph of a teal-colored double door with two vertical panels. Each panel has a silver-colored metal handle and a lock. A circular graphic with an orange border and a light orange center is overlaid on the left panel, containing the text 'Hurdles to Family Engagement'. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a hallway with blue lockers.

Hurdles to Family Engagement

Context



“Middle schools are large and complex, often making it difficult for parents to figure out how to become effectively involved.”

(Hill & Tyson, 2009)

Development



“Adolescents often indicate that they want their parents’ help but do not want their parents to visit the school.”

(Hill & Tyson, 2009)

Content

Analyze the weaknesses of the national government under the Articles of Confederation; and describe the crucial events (e.g., Shays' Rebellion) leading to the Constitutional Convention.

Massachusetts Grade 8 Content Standards, United States and Massachusetts Government and Civic Life, Topic 1

“Many families... have had a negative experience with school themselves, which reduces the likelihood of their initiating engagement... without intentional strategies on the teachers’ side to engage families.”

(Hindman et al., 2012)

The Equation

“The older the child becomes, the more disconnected families feel from the school community and the more unsupported by the school and community.”

(Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020)



The How



97% of American adults under 50 have cell phones

98% of cell phone owners send and receive texts

98% open rate for text messages (vs. 26% for email)

(Pew Research Center, 2021)

The What



Social-
Emotional
Learning



Home-School
Partnerships



Approaches
to
Parenting



Academic
Supports

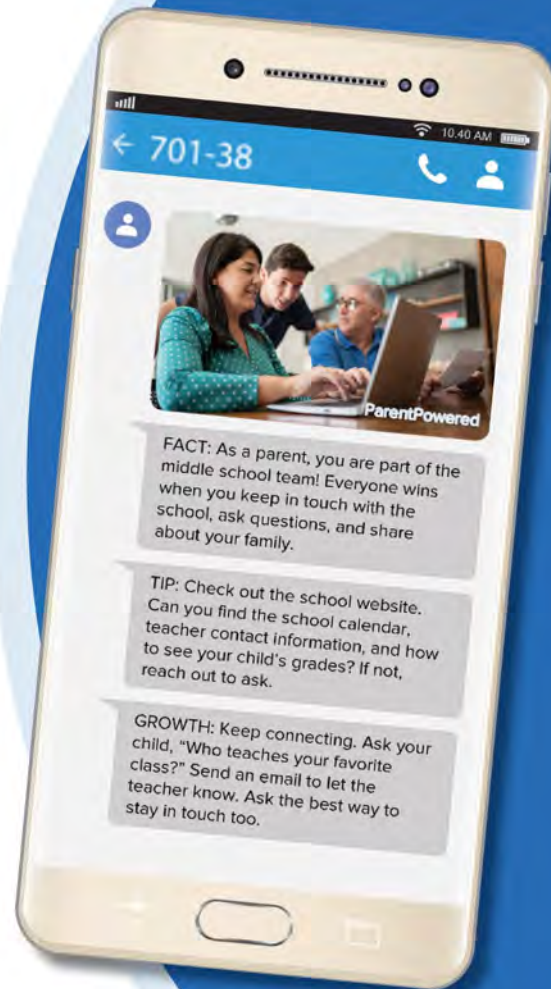
Home-School Partnerships

Reciprocal Communication

Attendance

Transitions

Advocacy & Involvement

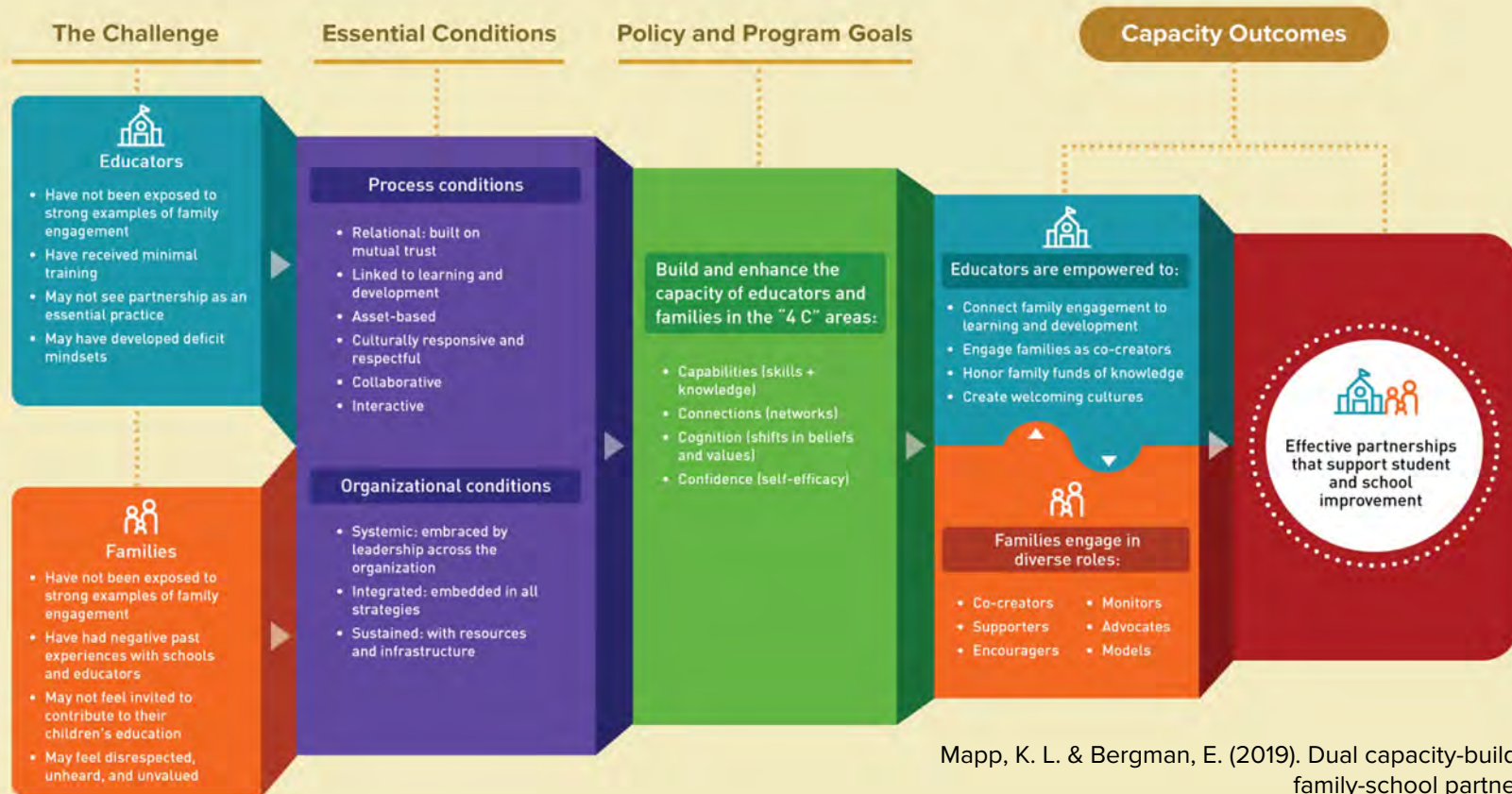


Why Home-School Partnerships?

Engaging Middle School
FAMILIES



The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Version 2)



Mapp, K. L. & Bergman, E. (2019). Dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships (Version 2). Retrieved from: www.dualcapacity.org

How do families...

- Find out what's going on in order to get involved?
- Reach out and seek information?
- Find available supports and services?
- Advocate for their child and share about their family so the school can better address their child's needs?



What You Can Do

1

Share why engagement matters

2

Do a communication audit focused on access

3

Create doable, strength-based points of entry

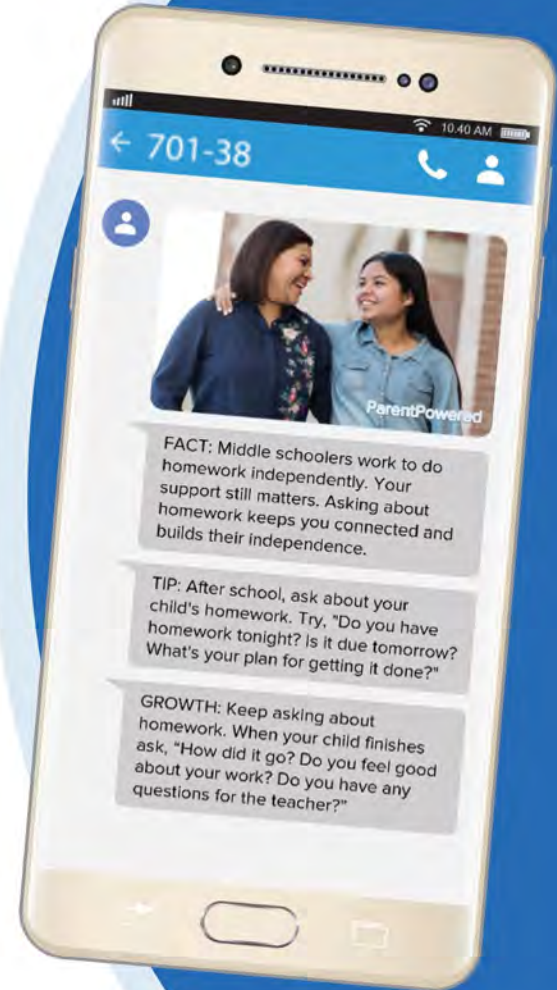
Academic Supports

Growth Mindset

Academic Socialization &
Learning Connections

Effective Study & Learning
Skills

Homework



Let's Take a Poll

Which statement best describes your recollection of caregivers assisting with homework?

- A. I got just the right help for me.
- B. Too much help. It drove me nuts.
- C. I wish I had more help. More support would have been great.
- D. I can't recall.

Why Academic Support?

CINCINNATI COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Report Form

DATE: 3/5/90

STUDENT: REBECCA HONIG

CLASS: 7 ADVISOR: D. CHESNUTT

SUBJECT: PRE ALGEBRA

GRADE C EXAM "D" "B" "D+" ACCUM. C

COMMENTS: Rebecca's test grades of "D", "B", "D+" went in the opposite direction from the class average. She & I need to meet on a regular basis.

TEACHER R. P/ymmer

“Academic socialization includes parents’ communication of their expectations for achievement and value for education, fostering educational and occupational aspirations in their adolescents, discussing learning strategies with children, and making preparations and plans for the future, including linking material discussed in school with students’ interests and goals.”

(N. Hill, D. Tyson, 2009)



How do families help their middle schoolers...

- Navigate homework independently
- Study effectively
- Advocate when they have questions
- Practice a growth mindset
- Make connections between their passions and interests and what they are learning in school



What You Can Do

1

Let them know just right ways to support learning

2

Consider 5 cross functional success strategies

3

Share a story

Social Emotional Learning

Sense of Self

Independence & Executive Function

Relationships

Emotions & Development



Why SEL?

“They are motivated to integrate with peers, take risks and have new experiences, learn using emotion, so-called ‘heartfelt goals’, work out self-identity, and gain autonomy and independence.”

(Hohnen, Gilmour, Murphy 2020)





“Parents need ways to help [kids] with that transition to independence while letting them know ‘I’m here for you.’”

Gladys Herrera-Gurule,
District Family Engagement Coordinator



How do families help their middle schoolers...

- Build the ability to advocate for themselves and their needs
- Develop perspective taking
- Recognize and develop supportive friendships
- Build strategies for coping with intense emotions



What You Can Do

1

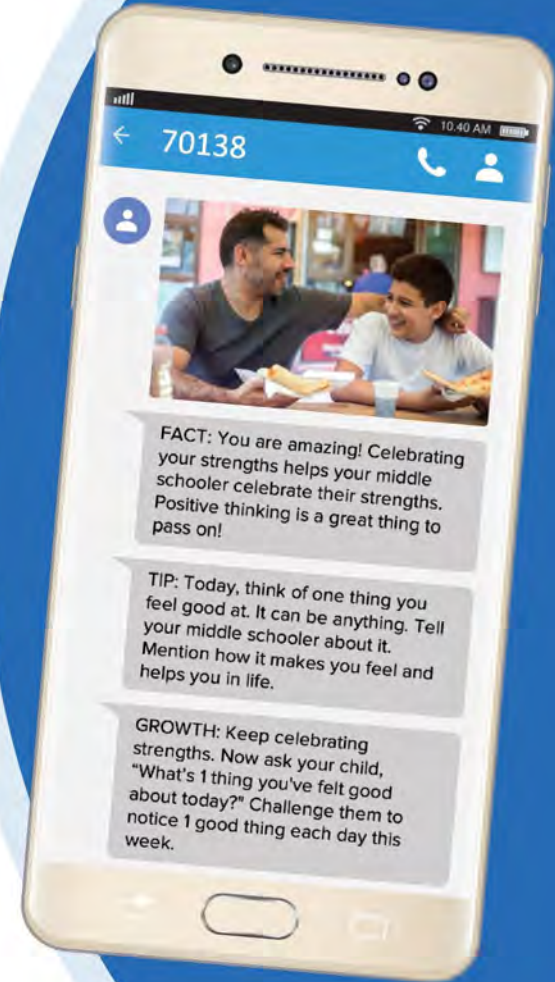
Strengths-based support that leverages families' values and relationships

2

Communication, reflective practices, collaboration

Approaches to Parenting

Knowledge of Adolescent
Growth & Development
Reflective Practice
Mindsets & Modeling
Self-Care



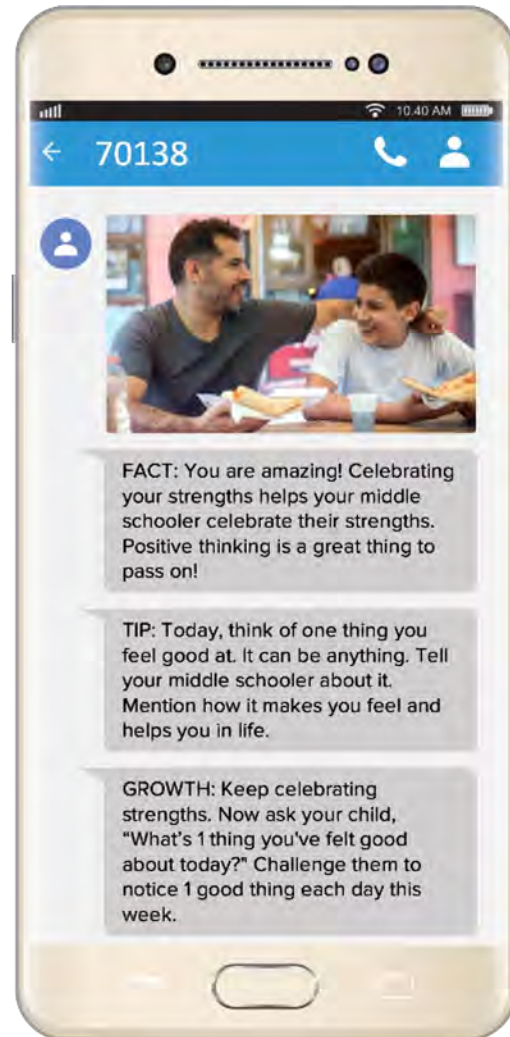
Engaging Middle School
FAMILIES

Why Approaches to Parenting?



How can families...

- Navigate the shift from being “pilot” to “co-pilot”
- Develop strategies for working through challenging behaviors
- Establish and maintaining a positive parental mindset
- Find opportunities to care for themselves and recharge



What You Can Do

1

Give a window into adolescent development

2

Middle school parent meet-ups

3

Parental self-care tips, too

6th–8th Grade Curriculum Framework



Academic Supports

Topics Include:

- Growth Mindset
- Academic Socialization & Learning Connections
- Effective Study & Learning Skills
- Homework

Social-Emotional Learning

Topics Include:

- Sense of Self
- Independence & Executive Function
- Relationships
- Emotions & Development

Home-School Partnerships

Topics Include:

- Reciprocal Communication
- Attendance
- Transitions
- Advocacy & Involvement

Approaches to Parenting

Topics Include:

- Knowledge of Adolescent Growth & Development
- Reflective Practices
- Mindsets & Modeling
- Self-Care



Let's Take a Poll

Which domain are you most excited to share content around?

- A. Academic Supports
- B. Social Emotional Learning
- C. Home & School Partnerships
- D. Approaches to Parenting
- E. All of the above

Let families
know WHY
engagement
matters

Offer strength-
based, easy
ways to
engage

 Academic Supports	 Social- Emotional Learning	 Home- School Partnerships	 Approaches to Parenting	 Spiral
<p>FACT: Middle schoolers work to do homework independently. Your support still matters. Asking about homework keeps you connected and builds their independence.</p>	<p>FACT: In middle school kids feel a strong desire to fit in. This can sometimes make it hard for kids to make their own decisions. Practicing with you can help.</p>	<p>FACT: As a parent, you are part of the middle school team! Everyone wins when you keep in touch with the school, ask questions, and share about your family.</p>	<p>FACT: You are amazing! Celebrating your strengths helps your middle schooler celebrate their strengths. Positive thinking is a great thing to pass on!</p>	<p>FACT: After school can be just the time to connect with your middle schooler. Today, ask about homework. Try, "What's 1 homework assignment that's been interesting lately?"</p>
<p>TIP: After school, ask about your child's homework. Try, "Do you have homework tonight? Is it due tomorrow? What's your plan for getting it done?"</p>	<p>TIP: Ask questions to help your child think about decisions. Try, "What can you do or say if a friend asks you to do something you don't want to do?"</p>	<p>TIP: Check out the school website. Can you find the school calendar, teacher contact information, and how to see your child's grades? If not, reach out to ask.</p>	<p>TIP: Today, think of one thing you feel good at. It can be anything. Tell your middle schooler about it. Mention how it makes you feel and helps you in life.</p>	<p>TIP: Keep connecting after school. Today, check out the school calendar together. Are there any events coming up? Anything to plan for? Jot them down.</p>
<p>GROWTH: Keep asking about homework. When your child finishes ask, "How did it go? Do you feel good about your work? Do you have any questions for the teacher?"</p>	<p>GROWTH: Keep talking about decisions. Brainstorm things your child might say to get out of an uncomfortable situation. For example, "I'm not into that. Thanks."</p>	<p>GROWTH: Keep connecting. Ask your child, "Who teaches your favorite class?" Send an email to let the teacher know. Ask the best way to stay in touch too.</p>	<p>GROWTH: Keep celebrating strengths. Now ask your child, "What's 1 thing you've felt good about today?" Challenge them to notice 1 good thing each day this week.</p>	<p>GROWTH: Keep connecting. Think about strengths you've seen your child working to build. Share what you've noticed with them. You might share it with the teacher too.</p>

A photograph of two young women with dark hair, smiling and laughing together outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue denim shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a dark blue shirt with a colorful floral pattern. They are standing in front of a brick wall. A blue speech bubble with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

What questions
do you have?

Interested in learning more about ParentPowered's evidence-based family engagement program for birth through 8th grade?

Let's Talk!

learn.ready4k.com/middle-school
info@ready4k.com

