


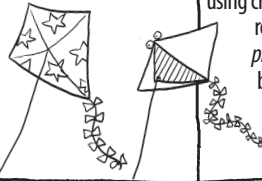

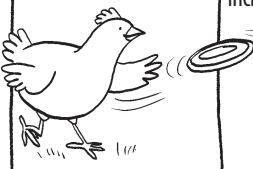

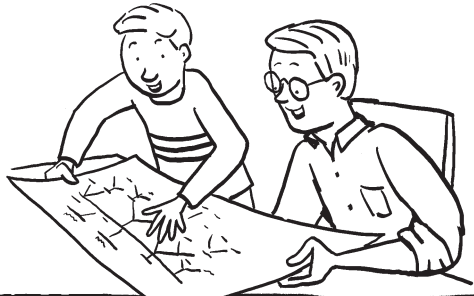


Note: Fill in the month and dates, and post this calendar on your refrigerator. Then, encourage your child to do an activity a day.

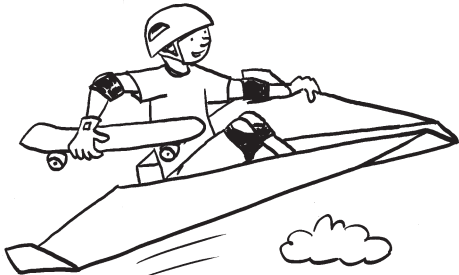




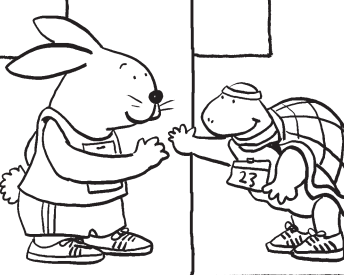


Middle Years Daily Calendar

MONTH						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<p>Make a family quote jar. Everyone can collect quotes from books or websites, write them on slips of paper, and drop them in. Take turns reading and discussing one each day.</p>	<p>Write random numbers on separate sticky notes and stick them on each other's foreheads. Take turns asking yes-or-no questions until you figure out your number.</p>	<p>Encourage optimism by asking family members to put a positive spin on challenges they faced today. ("I couldn't play outside, but I made up a song on my ukulele.")</p>	<p>Write hashtags that sum up a person or an event you studied in school. <i>Example:</i> #rosaparks #courage #stayedseated.</p>	
<p>Explore centripetal force. Thread a bead on a string, and tie the ends of the string together. Swing the loop overhead in fast circles, then stop suddenly. The bead keeps spinning!</p>	<p>Create a "found poem." Select several books with interesting titles, and stack them. Rearrange until you're satisfied with the poem the titles form.</p> 		<p>Play charades—with a twist! Instead of having one person at a time act out a clue for others to guess, appoint one person the guesser. The other players act out the clues as a team.</p>		<p>Research different styles of kites. Then, engineer your own, using craft supplies and recyclables (<i>examples:</i> tape, straws, bread bags). Go outside to test it.</p>	<p>List 3–5 things you want to accomplish next school year. <i>Examples:</i> Audition for a play, submit photos to the school newspaper. How many can you achieve?</p>
<p>Choose one new responsibility to add to your routine. You might start doing your own laundry or making your own breakfast, for instance.</p> 	<p>Send fan mail to a favorite author. Search for contact information online, and write an email or a letter that describes what you like about the author's books.</p>	<p>Use sidewalk chalk to draw a giant tic-tac-toe board. Players try to land a stone in a box and make their mark (X or O). Three in a row wins.</p>	<p>Have family members share reading material at dinner. You might read a newspaper editorial or a magazine advice column, for example.</p>	<p>Hang up a world map. When you read or hear about a place in the news, put a sticky note or thumbtack on it. <i>Idea:</i> Use one color to flag places you want to visit someday.</p>	<p>Being on time shows respect. Keep track of what makes you late, such as misplaced shoes. Then, come up with solutions (always put shoes in the same spot).</p>	<p>Choose a photo from a newspaper or magazine. You get 60 seconds to make up a story about it. Use details like scenery and facial expressions for inspiration.</p>
<p>Engineer a tabletop version of a video game. For "Angry Birds," place plastic animals on block towers. Then, use a rubber band to launch Ping-Pong balls and knock down the towers.</p> 		<p>Play a backyard game with your family. Possibilities include Frisbee, bean bag toss, or badminton.</p>	<p>Start a word journal. Whenever you read or hear a new word, add it along with its definition and an illustration. Then, use your new words when you write.</p> 	<p>Roasting vegetables like brussels sprouts or carrots makes them sweeter and crispier. Search online for recipes, print one out, and cook the dish for your family.</p>	<p>Engineering challenge! Build the tallest possible structure using marshmallows and uncooked spaghetti. You may also use tape, string, and scissors.</p>	<p>Look for errors on signs. You might find misspelled words, missing punctuation, or incorrect capitalization. Can you find any that make you laugh?</p>
<p>How much do credit card purchases really cost? Pretend you owe \$500, have a 20% annual interest rate, and pay \$50 per month. How long will it take you to pay it off? (<i>Note:</i> You pay interest on interest.)</p>	<p>Analogies use similarities to make comparisons. <i>Example:</i> Herd is to cows as swarm is to ___ (bees). Have family members take turns thinking of analogies. Can you figure them out?</p>	<p>Write a letter to a friend. Tell what you appreciate about the person and what positive impact he or she has on your life.</p>	<p>Discover some of your ancestry by researching your family name online. What does it mean? Where did it originate? Share what you learn with relatives.</p>			

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			Look for physical science in your favorite sports. For example, some skateboarding tricks involve gravity, lift, drag, and thrust—the same physics that apply to airplane flight.	Flip through a dictionary and match prefixes, suffixes, and roots to make up new words. Create imaginary definitions for them.	Learn a greeting in a foreign language spoken by a friend or neighbor. Greet the person in that language.	
Create a chore box. Write tasks on separate slips of paper, and put them in an empty tissue box. Family members take turns drawing a slip and completing the chore.	Invent a new card game. Design cards (perhaps on index cards), and write instructions. Then, play the game with your family.	Line up 10 plastic cups and flip 5 upside down. Set a timer for 5 minutes. One player tries to get them all right-side-up while the other works to turn them upside down. Get the most cups your way to win.		Code a family dance party! Choose symbols for dance steps (← = slide left, @ = spin around). Write "programs" for each other on paper, and "perform" them to music.	Call a relative you haven't spoken to in a while. Ask questions about the person's job, hobbies, and pets, and share information about your own life.	Read a magazine article, then put it away. How many details can you remember? What sources were quoted? What interesting adjectives did the writer use?
Number 25 slips of paper, 1–25. Arrange them in a 5 x 5 grid. Can you make all the rows, columns, and diagonals add up to the same number?		Hold a family "read in." Have each person bring a book to read silently, or listen to an audiobook together.	Practice being assertive by clearly expressing a need. If a friend hasn't returned a borrowed item, you could call and say, "I need my charger back by tomorrow morning, please."	Create a science "news flash" on a bulletin board. Family members can post articles about science (renewable energy, medical advances, robotics) and discuss the discoveries.	Explore life before electricity by unplugging from modern conveniences for a night. Grill food outside. Tell stories or play games by candlelight.	Practice leadership skills by planning and leading an activity for younger siblings, cousins, or neighbors. <i>Examples:</i> craft project, outdoor game.
	Think logically to measure exactly 6 oz. of water. The catch? You can use water from the tap—but only a 4-oz. container and a 9-oz. container—and no measuring cup, except to check your work!	Save memories by writing postcards to yourself. You might write about a great novel you read or a rainbow you spotted.	Think of something that seems a bit overwhelming for you, like running a mile or cleaning out your closet. Show perseverance by taking a step each day toward tackling your goal.	Watch a TV broadcast of a sporting event, and point out examples of good sportsmanship. Maybe you'll see fans chanting a positive message or opponents shaking hands.		
Don't have a new book handy? Try using a reading app or an e-reader. You'll be able to check out library e-books and download free e-books from sites like read.gov/books/ .	Ask your parents about their day today. <i>Example:</i> "What was the best song you heard on the radio?" Then, bring it up at bedtime so they know you were listening.		Below-zero temperatures are real-life examples of negative numbers. Go online and compare temperatures around the world. If it's 65 where you live and -65 in Antarctica, what's the difference?	Plan ahead for exams and other tests by creating a schedule. Write dates for the tests and for study sessions, then post the schedule in a visible spot. <i>Idea:</i> Find a study buddy, and pencil in study meetings.		

Middle Years

Supporting Your Middle Grader



The middle school years can be exciting, as your child moves toward adulthood and enjoys new experiences. But they can also bring challenges, like finding ways to keep connected with your tween and helping him handle peer pressure. Here's how to support your child and help him thrive.

Stay in the loop

As your tween becomes more independent, he may not want to spend as much time at home or with you. These ideas can keep the lines of communication open and let him know you care.

- **Reach out.** Ask specific questions, like what he's learning in history class or who won last night's football game. You could also send texts or leave supportive notes for him. ("Good luck on your presentation. I can't wait to hear how it goes!")



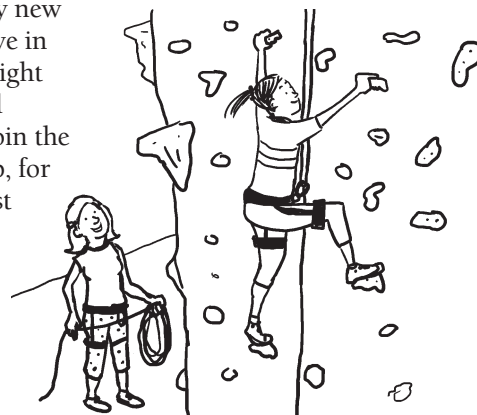
- **Make friends welcome.** Social circles are important at this age. By encouraging your child to invite friends home or on family outings, you'll show that what matters to him matters to you. You may also get to spend more time together.

- **Use car time.** Many parents find the car to be a great place for conversations with their kids. When you drive your middle schooler to piano practice or to get a haircut, make the most of it. If he's quiet, try talking about your day or sharing family news to get the conversation started.

Build self-esteem

Middle graders can feel unsure of themselves from time to time. Help your tween develop a good self-image with strategies like these.

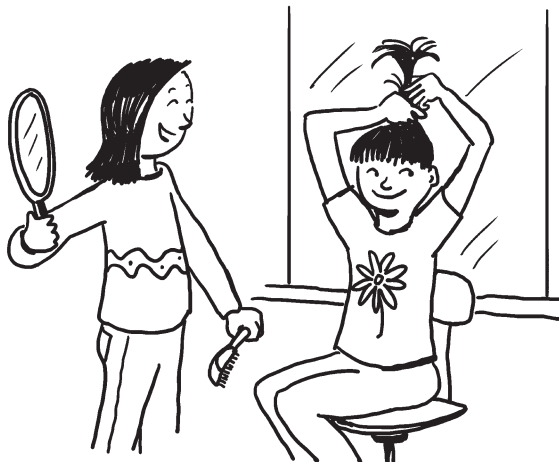
- **Encourage confidence-boosting hobbies.** Noncompetitive activities provide a safe way for your child to try new things and to believe in her abilities. She might work on the school poetry journal or join the environmental club, for instance. Or suggest physical activities such as yoga or rock climbing, which can make her feel good about her body without pressure to compete.



- **Be there.** Make your middle grader feel valued by attending events she cares about. For example, if she's on the sound crew for the school play, go to opening night. If she loves horses, take her to a horse show.

- **Celebrate strengths.** Everyone is better at some things than others. If your youngster puts herself down, challenge her to list at least five of her strong points. *Examples:* "I'm a good babysitter." "I have a great memory." When she wants to improve at something (say, skateboarding), suggest that she set a goal and make a plan for achieving it, such as practicing 30 minutes three times a week.

continued



Be proactive about peer pressure

Tweens care a lot about what their friends think, and this is the age when they're most likely to be introduced to alcohol, cigarettes, vaping, and other drugs. But research shows they're also influenced by their parents' opinions. Help your child manage peer pressure and avoid dangerous behaviors with these tips.

- **Practice specific responses.** It's hard for tweens to think clearly when they're on the spot. Planning ahead can help your child make good choices. Role-play what she could do if friends asked her to drink beer, for instance. She might say, "No, that sounds dangerous." Or she could come up with an alternative. ("Let's go to the park instead.")
- **Encourage safe activities.** Help your child find groups centered around drug-free forms of fun. You might encourage her to sign up for a youth program at a community center, join a bowling league, or attend middle-school events at places of worship. Also, encourage her to think of safe ways to occupy time with friends (experimenting with hairstyles, playing Ping-Pong).
- **Keep talking.** Hearing the same message on different occasions will let it sink in and give your middle schooler plenty of chances to share concerns. You might bring up drugs by mentioning a news report you heard. Or ask what she learned about alcohol in health class. Be clear about where you stand and why, and discuss what could happen if she drinks, smokes, vapes, or does drugs. For example, she could become addicted, get grounded, or even be arrested.

Discuss bullying

Bullying tends to peak in middle school. Consider this advice to help your tween avoid being bullied—or avoid bullying others.

- **Set a standard.** Explain that if he isn't sure whether a comment or an action would hurt someone, he shouldn't say or do it. Suggest that he ask himself, "Would I act like this if my



grandparents or the principal were watching?"

- **Prevent cyberbullying.** Does your child text or post online? Remind him to type kind messages and to communicate only with others who do, too. Explain that if someone sends a hurtful or nasty message, he shouldn't respond, since that can escalate the problem. Instead, he should block the sender and tell you.
- **Take action.** Your middle grader can help stop bullying by speaking up. Let him know it's important that he tell a teacher or another adult if he is bullied or if he witnesses bullying. Also, talk about how he can respond to bullying. For example, he should stay calm, walk away, and get help.

Manage stress

More responsibilities at home and at school can cause your child to feel stressed sometimes. Try these suggestions for supporting her.

- **Stick to routines.** Knowing what to expect can make your youngster's life more predictable and less stressful. Help her set up routines that work for both of you, such as having her do homework right after school or packing her lunch at night. She might need to create new routines as her schedule changes. When swimming season starts, for example, she may have to do homework after dinner.
- **Pay attention to sources of anxiety.** Does your tween have a tendency to put off big projects and then stress about them at the last minute? Remind her of this, and brainstorm ways to prevent it from happening again. For example, she should start work sooner and perhaps buddy up with a classmate to stay on track. Or if she's irritable because she isn't getting enough sleep, set an earlier bedtime.



- **Watch for bigger issues.** Some stress is normal for middle graders. But symptoms that last more than two weeks may indicate a problem. If your child isolates herself from friends and activities, complains of headaches or stomachaches, or is often tired or sad, have her see her doctor. A professional can rule out physical causes and suggest ways to help if she has anxiety or depression.

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