

The Top Ten Steps for Middle School Parenting Success™

#1 Middle School isn't high school. Middle Schoolers still need curfews, bed times, homework monitoring and help waking up in the morning!

#2 Be your child's Facebook friend, but not BFF! Monitor behavior online (Facebook, IM, video chat), but when you talk to your child, do it privately online, or offline—not publicly on Facebook.

#3 Movie and TV ratings still count. Many movies and shows have too much violence or sexual content than is appropriate for middle schoolers.

#4 Teach cell phone safety. DON'T assume your child knows about sexting, that's it's illegal to forward pornography or not to take embarrassing pictures of others. Also, monitor cell phone use past bedtime.

#5 Saying 'NO' makes you a good parent, not a bad one! Middle school marks the beginning of intense peer pressure, so guide him to make the safest, healthiest choices. Be clear and stand firm on NO drinking or drugs!

#6 Get to know your child's friends. Friendships change through middle school, so invite friends over & drive kids around to assure that your child is making and keeping friends of whom you approve.

#7 Support, don't scream back! As hormones surge, your child may become moody, angry or sullen, which is confusing to you and her. Yelling and punishing cause resentment. Gentle, limits and conversation are more effective.

#8 Look for emotional overload. Hormones, plus social and academic pressure put middle schoolers at risk for anxiety and depression. If your child expresses sad or anxious feelings, or you see social or academic changes don't ignore, and if necessary, seek professional help.

#9 Too much independence is scary. Despite fighting it, middle schoolers (even high schoolers) crave limits. Spending, junk food, media time, the mall—all can and should have rules and boundaries.

#10 Don't stop giving hugs and kisses! Middle schoolers still need lots and lots of them—despite how cool they want you to think they are!