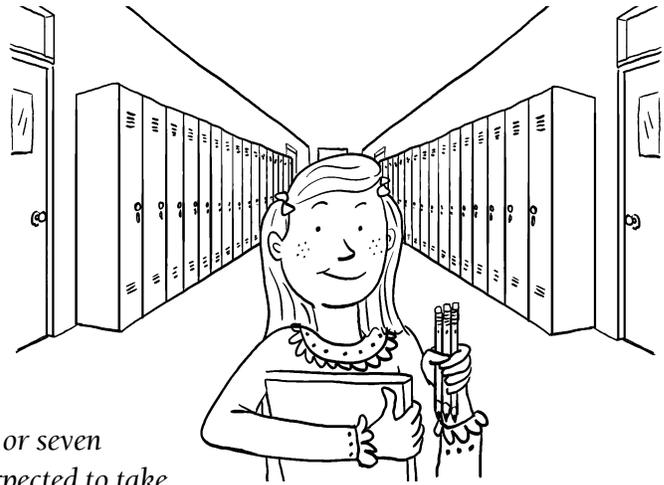


Organized for School Success



Now that your child is in middle school, she may have six or seven desks, classrooms, and teachers—plus a locker! And she's expected to take increasing responsibility for her own learning and success, laying the groundwork for even more responsibility in high school and beyond.

All of that change means organization is more important than ever. Here are ways to help your tween organize her time, study efficiently, and make sure assignments are finished and turned in.

Manage time wisely

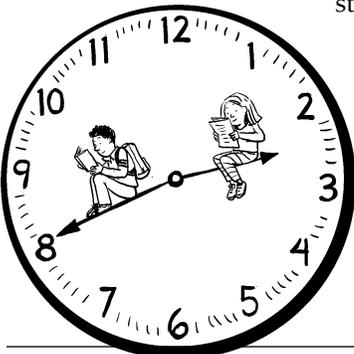
Being a good time manager includes knowing what you *have* to do and what you *want* to do, as well as accurately judging how long each activity will take. Consider these ideas for helping your child learn to manage time well so she can maximize her learning.

Write it down

Encourage your tween to think of her student planner as her sidekick on her journey through middle school. Suggest that she use one color to write required tasks (homework, band practice) and another color for those she'd like to make time for (riding bikes with friends, organizing her photos). Let her know in advance about appointments or family events so she can include those, too. Having all of her commitments written down in one spot will let her see them at a glance so she always knows what's ahead.

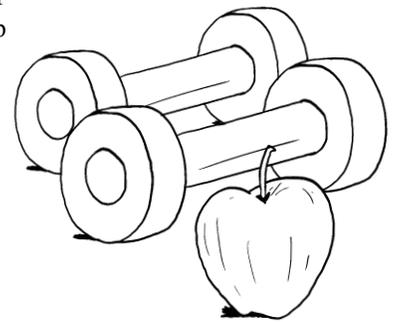
Learn to estimate time

Have your middle grader time himself doing activities like studying or researching. For instance, he may plan to spend 30 minutes on Saturday doing library research for a social studies report, but find out that it actually takes him an hour. By paying attention to his start and stop times, he can estimate more accurately in the future and set aside the time he will need.



Stick to routines

Regular daily routines often lead to better organization and greater school success. Suggest that your tween develop the ones that work best for him. They should include 9–11 hours of sleep, healthy meals and snacks, at least an hour of exercise, and time for family and friends. Help him make adjustments if a routine isn't working. If it's hard for him to get started on homework right after school, perhaps he'll decide to relax for 15 minutes rather than jumping in immediately.



Set mini-deadlines

Your tween can manage time better by breaking tasks into chunks. She could write down deadlines for specific parts of her work. If she starts studying for a history test at 5 p.m., she might plan to read and take notes on one chapter by 5:30 p.m., then quiz herself until 6 p.m. If she has a science project due in two weeks, she could give herself one week to complete the experiment, two days to write up her findings, two days to make a poster, and three days to practice presenting her project.

continued

Arrange homework space

Your child is in charge of doing his own homework, but you can help by making sure he has what he needs. Try these tips for creating a well-stocked homework spot where he can focus on his assignments and do his best work.

Pick a place

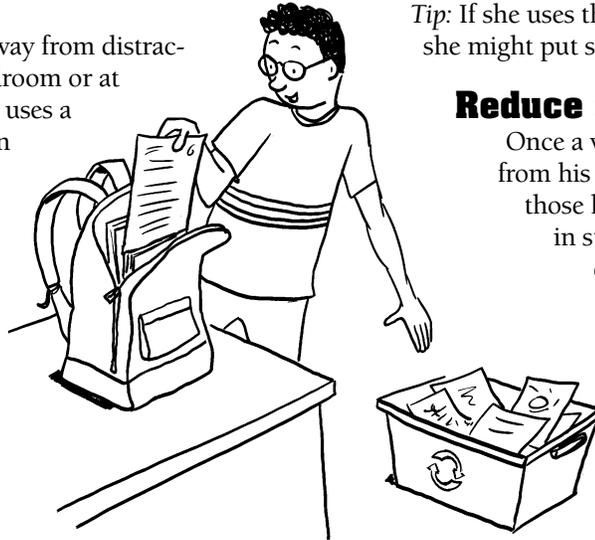
Have him choose a well-lit location away from distractions. He could work at a desk in his bedroom or at the dining room table, for example. If he uses a shared spot like the kitchen, cut down on noise by making homework time “quiet time” for everyone. Younger siblings might read or color, and perhaps you’ll also read or do paperwork.

Stock supplies

Let your middle grader decide how to organize her supplies. She could decorate glass jars for storing scissors, pens, and pencils. Zipper bags might hold paper clips, erasers, and sticky notes. And shoeboxes are ideal for items like

a tape dispenser, a pencil sharpener, a hole punch, a ruler, a stapler, and index cards. Suggest that she keep a dictionary handy and notebook paper and graph paper in a magazine file or a drawer. For work on a laptop or tablet, she should keep her charger close by and monitor the battery level.

Tip: If she uses the kitchen table for homework, she might put supplies on a shelf in a cabinet.



Reduce clutter

Once a week, he could clear old papers from his backpack. He should throw out those he doesn’t need and store the rest in stacked plastic trays for future reference. For example, he might save old quizzes and tests to study for final exams. This will help him find what he needs quickly and make sure important papers don’t get lost.

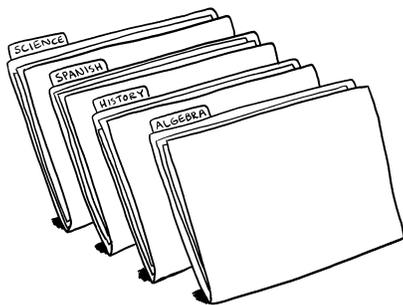
Stay on top of schoolwork

Middle school courses require your tween to juggle a range of assignments, papers, and projects. She’ll need to take materials back and forth—from home to her locker to the right class—and be sure everything gets turned in on time. Here are suggestions for organizing assignments.

Pack wisely

At the end of each school day, she can glance at her assignments in her student planner to see which textbooks and other supplies she has to take home. For example, she may need her trumpet to practice a new song or her English study guide to prepare for a test on a novel.

File assignments immediately



Have your middle grader label a separate folder or binder for each subject and keep his backpack nearby when he does homework. As he finishes each assignment, he can put it in the

correct folder or binder and into his backpack right away. That way, he’ll be sure to take completed work with him rather than leaving assignments on his desk or on the kitchen table in the morning.

Turn it in

Remind your tween that taking homework to school is just part of her job—she won’t get credit if it’s left in her backpack or locker!

She should make a habit of taking out her homework as soon as she arrives in class and putting it in the designated spot to be graded. Then, she can check it off in her planner so she knows she turned it in. *Tip:* If your child is absent, point out that she is responsible for asking her teachers what she missed so she can make it up.



Middle Years