



Get Educated About Your School-Age Child

Learn how to help your child thrive during the school years.



checklists



tips



to-dos

more

Get the Know-How You Need to Help Your Little Know-It-All Grow and Develop.

The ages of 5-14 are filled with wonders and surprises. These are the years when children become progressively more independent and their personalities take shape and shine. As their worlds expand beyond the home environment, they become exposed to an abundance of information and influences. And with all their newfound knowledge and growth, they often test boundaries – and their parents' patience.

You child may think he or she knows it all, but you know better. Fact is, there's a lot to learn – for both of you. To help you guide your child during these formative years, this handy resource compiles important information you should know about your know-it-all.



Gain insight into the changes your child will go through and help prepare him or her for:



- ✓ Kindergarten
- ✓ Elementary School
- ✓ Middle School
- ✓ Homework
- ✓ Bullies
- ✓ Puberty

“The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.”

-Denis Waitley

Who wears the smarty pants in your family? The more you know about the challenges and milestones that lie ahead for your school-age child, the better able you'll be to navigate the twists and turns on the road to maturity. From school achievements to ADHD, social development to social media, you have a lot to look forward to – and look out for.

Get smart about raising a school-age child with help from these pages:

- No Kidding! Getting Your Kid Kindergarten Ready
- It's Elementary: Investigating Ways to Nurture Your Child in Elementary School
- Finding the Middle Ground: Opening the Lines of Communication During the Middle School Years
- Making the Grade as an Involved Middle School Parent
- Fighting Back Against Bullying
- Puberty: Growing, Changing, Surprising, Preparing





No Kidding! Getting Your Kid Kindergarten Ready

Your child's transition from preschool to kindergarten takes some serious prep work. The following checklists will help you determine if he or she is ready and take steps to ease the transition.

What Your Child Should Be Able to Do

- Grip a pencil, crayon, and marker correctly.
- Use scissors, glue, and paint.
- Trace a line or a simple shape.
- Attempt to tie his or her shoes.
- Bounce, kick and catch a ball.
- Share and take turns with others.
- Play independently for 15 minutes.
- Manage bathroom needs.
- Generally follow rules and direction.
- Be comfortable away from you for a few hours trauma.
- Sit still and pay attention for a short period of time.
- Show interest in books and reading.
- Listen quietly to an age-appropriate story.
- Work independently for short periods of time.
- Understand the difference between real and pretend.
- Interact well with other children and adults.
- Recognize letters of the alphabet.
- Sound out some words.
- Write first name with uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Speak in complete sentences.
- Recite full name, address, telephone number, and birthday.
- Count and write the numbers from 1 to 10.
- Classify objects by size, color and shape.
- Draw a circle, square, and triangle.
- Understand the basic concepts of time (morning, afternoon, night time) +.
- Identify missing parts in pictures.



No Kidding! Getting Your Kid Kindergarten Ready



What You Should Do

- Let your child know it's okay to be nervous.
- Express enthusiasm for kindergarten as a new adventure.
- Get to know the teacher in advance and introduce your child to him/her.
- Plan to stay the first day if you can.
- Let your child know you'll miss him or her too.
- Reassure your child that you'll be back at the end of the day.
- Visit your child's new school to familiarize him or her with the surroundings.
- Establish a routine (for example, get up at a certain time each morning to prepare for the day).
- Let your child choose what kind of goodbye feels best.
- Build confidence by leaving your child on play dates, if only for short periods of time.
- Rehearse with dolls or stuffed animals to demonstrate how to make friends.
- Pretend you're the bus driver and your child is riding the bus to school.
- Practice motor skills like walking a straight line and coloring.
- Talk to your child about the importance of following directions from the teacher(s).



Did You Know?

Kindergarten means "children's garden" in German. It was named by 19th-century German educator Friedrich Fröbel who likened the education of children to the tending of a garden.

Sources:

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=kindergarten>

<http://www.kinderiq.com/kindergarten-checklist.pdf>

<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/d7/65/48/d765489d7df339792f5b7324c3058413.jpg>

<http://www.childrenscolorado.org/wellness-safety/parent-resources/seasonal-parent-tips/pre-school-to-elementary-transition-infographic>



It's Elementary:

Investigating Ways to Nurture Your Child in Elementary School

School assumes a central role in your child's life at the age of five or six, drawing attention and energy away from the family unit. The elementary-school years can become a time of enormous satisfaction, excitement, and challenges. Below are some ideas and considerations to bear in mind.



The elementary school years are a time to embrace change.

- Allow and encourage your child to enter the new world of school and friends alone.
- Learn to be a parent at a distance.
- Once children enter school, parents spend less than half as much time with them as they did before.
- You need to be more efficient and vigilant to monitor, guide, and support your child effectively.



During these critical years your youngster may:

- Develop more self-confidence.
- Overcome fears and self-doubts.
- Test the limits of autonomy.
- Find role models.
- Learn and internalize moral and spiritual values.

First Grade: Making or Breaking a Child's Education



First-graders are considered to be at risk of disengaging from school (and potentially becoming fully disengaged and dropping out in the future) if:

- By the third marking period they are absent from school nine or more times and below grade level in reading and/or mathematics.
- They have a calculated grade point average below 1.2 in the third marking period.

Sources: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/14/01/dropping-out-your-first-grader-risk>
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Parenting-School-Age-Children.aspx>

Investigating Ways to Nurture Your Child in Elementary School



As your child learns to read and master other academic skills, he/she may develop:

- A love of learning and a pride in her achievements
- Greater self-esteem due to accomplishments in the classroom and increasing independence from the home environment
- An attachment to a teacher who becomes a source of support and an important role model.



For some children, school may cause frustration and stress due to:

- Learning disabilities, for which many public schools provide support and services
- Weak study habits and/or a lack of motivation
- Poor relationship with their teachers
- Separation anxiety, which can result in high absenteeism



To make your own child's education as positive and productive as possible:

- Closely monitor academic progress and social adjustment.
- Form a close partnership with the teacher.
- Discuss with your child what he/she is learning in the classroom.
- Encourage your child to demonstrate newly learned skills and to practice them with you.
- Supervise your child's homework and help prepare for tests.
- Limit the amount of television watched and encourage reading, writing, and creative self-expression through hobbies and sports.
- Communicate openly with school personnel, and try to figure out how best to help your child overcome difficulties.

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Parenting-School-Age-Children.aspx>

Finding the Middle Ground:

Opening the Lines of Communication During the Middle School Years

Communication is the key to being helpful to your child in the pre-teen years. With encouraging words and supportive actions, you can help unlock your child's potential and smooth the transition from elementary to middle school.

Discuss Your Child's Concerns Before Starting Middle School:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Learning from many teachers |  Boarding the right bus |  Navigating crowded hallways |
|  Finding to class on time |  Knowing where the cafeteria is |  Doing more homework |
|  Finding his or her locker |  Getting lost in a bigger school |  Feeling overwhelmed |

Discuss Physical, Emotional, and Social Transitions:

- PUBERTY
- MAKING NEW FRIENDS
- BULLYING
- HIGHER ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS
- PEER PRESSURE



Get Educated!

- Communicate often with your child, the teachers, and the principal, vice principal or both.
- Visit the school. Be knowledgeable about the place where your child learns.

Questions for your child's teachers:

-  Is there a transition program for students leaving elementary school and entering middle or junior high school?
-  Are counselors available who can help your child transition to middle school?
-  Are teachers and principals accessible to parents?
-  When are the parents' nights, sports and art events, and other times when parents are invited to visit the school?
-  When can parents volunteer at the school?

Making the Grade as an Involved Middle School Parent

As Help your child focus on preparing academically for high school and college. Encourage your child to take challenging classes.



Get Organized and Stay In Step

- Help your child organize a schedule.
- Help set goals with a time limit for completing particular tasks.
- Listen to what your child tells you and is really saying between the lines.
- Be sensitive to any fears your child might have.
- Reserve judgement until you have facts about a situation and know how your child thinks and feels about it.
- Welcome and get to know your child's friends.
- Become aware of physical and emotional changes in your child.



Reading in the Middle School Years

- Reading is an important part of the middle school years.
- Many of the subjects your child studies in middle school involve much more reading than in elementary school.
- Check with your child's school counselor to see what your child's reading level is.
- If your child reads below grade level, check with the school to see what remedial reading programs are available.



Looking to the Future

Ask your child's teachers these questions:

- Will the classes your child takes help him or her to be competitive in college and the work world?
- Is your child having trouble in any classes?
- What tutoring programs are available?
- Does your child have good study habits? (Examples: Reads what is necessary to complete an assignment; hands in assignments on time; prepares ahead of time instead of cramming at the last minute.)
- Does your child have the supplies needed to complete assignments?



Fighting Back Against Bullying

You may know that middle school is a time of change but not understand the full extent of the challenges kids face. Many kids experience confusion over the desire to be accepted, which can be especially strong in middle school and lead to bullying. But bullying is not just "a regular part of growing up"—it's serious. When a child begins bullying at a young age, he or she is demonstrating unacceptable behavior that can continue for a lifetime. Beat bullying to the punch by showing zero tolerance for it from the beginning and throughout your child's school years.

How Do Kids Bully?

- Direct bullying is any form of physical or emotional abuse or violence that harms or frightens other kids.
- Bullying can occur indirectly when one or more kids use threats or intimidation to affect someone else negatively.
- In addition to physical bullying, emotional harassment happens when one or more kids try to hurt someone's feelings.

Cyberbullying

- This type of bullying can happen any time without the need for face-to-face interaction.
- Bullies can spread hurtful messages in online chat rooms and through social networking sites.
- Cell phone cameras and text messaging are often used to harass victims at any time of day or night.

Why Do Kids Bully?

- Some bully because of dysfunction in their family.
- Some kids bully because they crave attention.
- Other children who are insecure like the feeling of power and control.
- Kids who are being bullied may want to pick on someone else.
- Bullies often are impulsive, easily frustrated, have difficulty following rules, and lack empathy.

What If My Child Is Being Bullied?

- Support your child.
- If your child reports feeling bullied, don't laugh, shrug it off, or explain that it's "just the age."
- Notify teachers, coaches, and other adults in charge.
- Ask for a meeting to discuss what is happening.
- Form a united front with parents of other children who have been bullied to consult with school staff members.



Warning Signs of Being Bullied

- ✓ **Acting depressed.**
- ✓ **Withdrawing socially.**
- ✓ **Complaining frequently of illnesses.**
- ✓ **Not wanting to go to school or avoiding certain classes.**
- ✓ **Bringing home damaged possessions.**
- ✓ **Reporting things "lost."**
- ✓ **Feeling picked on or persecuted.**
- ✓ **Displaying mood swings, including frequent crying.**
- ✓ **Talking about running away.**
- ✓ **Attempting to take protection to school, such as a stick, rock, or knife.**

Did You Know?

The Bullied

- Every 7 minutes a child is bullied.
- 1 out of 4 students will be abused by another youth.
- 43% fear harassment in the bathroom at school.

The Bullies

- 1 out of 5 students admits to bullying behavior.
- They're 4x more likely to be convicted of a crime by age 24.
- 60% wind up having at least one criminal conviction.

Source: <http://stopbullyingnowfoundation.org/main/images/stories/bullying-infographic.png>

Puberty:

Growing, Changing, Surprising, Preparing

Blame the brain for puberty! The brain switches on the production of sex hormones, leading to a pattern of physical changes and sexual development that **lasts about 2 to 5 years**. While every child develops at his or her own pace, girls tend to experience puberty earlier than boys at around age 11. On average, puberty kicks in for boys at 12.

FOR GIRLS

Budding Breasts Can Signal Puberty

Breast growth is usually the first sign of puberty in girls, starting with small lumps that form behind the nipples and become sore. One breast may develop more slowly than the other.

Later Stages of Puberty for Girls

About a year after puberty begins, girls have a growth spurt, get taller (reaching full height by their late teens), and start to develop wider hips and fuller breasts.

Menstruation: The Period at the End of Puberty

About 2 to 2 1/2 years after she starts puberty, between 10 and 16 years old, a girl usually gets her first period—a sign that she's physically an adult and is able to get pregnant.

FOR BOTH

Hair Growth in Puberty

After breasts and testicles start growing, body hair will start to grow in and become thicker in the armpits and pubic area around the genitals. Arm and leg hair gets thicker. Boys also may start developing chest and facial hair.

Acne: An Early Sign of Puberty

Puberty's high hormone levels can trigger acne outbreaks, starting in early puberty. As the oil glands become more active and your child sweats more, it becomes especially important to keep the face and body clean to control acne flare ups.

FOR BOYS

Genital Changes

Size matters! The first sign of puberty in boys is an increase in testicle size (however modest). About a year later, as the penis and scrotum grow, semen can be released during an erection when he is awake or when he is asleep.

Growth Spurts

The peak growth spurt for boys occurs around six months after pubic hair development. Shoulders become fuller and broader, height increases (and can keep increasing into the early 20s), and facial features become more adult-like.

Puberty Causes Cracking, Deeper Voices

Toward the end of puberty, your son's voice may start cracking and become deeper due to a release of testosterone that causes the vocal cords to get thicker and longer. As his larynx grows bigger, his "Adam's apple" takes shape.

Sources:

http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/body_stuff/puberty.html

<http://www.webmd.com/children/early-puberty-10/slideshow-puberty-stages>