

**Family Newsletter**

December 2018



December is upon us! The College Day program is planning a college visit for your students. They’ll be touring the Jacobetti Center at Northern Michigan University to learn more about the two-year programs available here, including aviation technology, cosmetology, hospitality management, welding, and other vocation program options. They’ll also hear from Admissions, general information about paying for college, and hear about our Middle College program available to high school juniors. At a later date, we’ll bring them to the main campus.

December can also be a stressful month, with the upcoming holiday season upon us. Often we place unrealistic expectation on our time (or money). Remember that self-care is important at this time of year. Here are 10 tips for reducing some of your stress. Use what works for you.

1. Play with a pet.
2. Listen to music that you like. It doesn’t have to be Christmas carols.
3. Take a short nap.
4. Exercise. Walk the dog. Do some stretches.
5. Practice deep breathing.
6. Eat some dark chocolate.
7. Draw or write in your journal.
8. Meditate.
9. Reduce your caffeine intake.
10. Learn to say “no.”

You can employ these no-cost activities at any time of the year, not just at the holidays!

**Teaching Financial Responsibility**

You’ve probably noticed that your child seems extra sensitive about her pocket money or allowance. Before age 9, they already see money as precious —something “grown up” that adults hand out sparingly— so they love it when they get their hands on it. For children, money represents something even more personal: autonomy. It’s a way to express themselves and to gradually gain power from those in charge.

Children need your help to learn a sense of value, to realize that they can’t get something for nothing, and to experience the responsibility that comes with having money. Providing a set and regular allowance will show respect for your child’s growing maturity while recognizing his need to be autonomous. To help him understand the wider responsibilities that come with money, make the rules surrounding saving, spending, and getting extra money crystal clear:

Should your child get his allowance only if he completes his chores, or should he receive it regardless? Will there be other jobs he can do to earn extra money?

Will you give money for things that should be done as part of his role in the family or household, such as homework or dinner table cleanup?

If he does his chores, but sloppily, will you withhold money, give it once he redoes the job, or give it nonetheless?

What will your tween be expected to buy with the agreed allowance? Will she be free to buy what she wants, even if you disapprove?

Once rules are set, talk with your child about responsible saving and how long it might take him to save for bigger ticket items. Suggest ways he can earn extra money — have a yard sale, help out neighbors, or sell something he no longer needs.

Encourage responsible spending as well. Provide allowance regularly — same place, same time — to show it’s both a right and your gift, not given grudgingly. Raise it gradually. Try to avoid giving the allowance in advance or paying for token chores just to help him when his funds dip.

TIPS:

* Establish a fixed allowance and give it on time to help your child’s plan ahead.
* Assert firm spending and savings guidelines. Be sure to define clearly which chores earn money and which don’t. If arguments start about the job pay rate, stop paying.
* Discuss your child’s spending plans, but generally let him decide.

Information provided by Scholastic.com at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/financial-literacy/allowance-power>

**Eight Tips from Middle School Teachers**

1. **Emulate organization and establish a routine.** When parents are organized, their kids tend to be also. Have your child pack his backpack the night before, make sure homework is finished before it’s too late to make corrections or complete it, and leave enough time in the morning for everyone to get ready and eat breakfast, so that they don’t get to school disheveled.
2. **Be involved.** While it is important to give your child autonomy, part of teaching a tween responsibility is making sure that they know you’re on top of it all as well. To make sure everyone assumes some responsibility, you can:
3. **Talk with them about school.** Review their homework assignment book and their finished work (though, don't do it for them or correct their wrong answers. It's OK to help out, but it's their responsibility to "get it," not yours. Check in on your child’s grades before the end of the semester. Read papers and assignments that require a signature — they require one for a reason!
4. **Don’t go over the teacher’s head if you have an issue**. Rather than going straight to an administrator, first respect your child’s teacher and their ability to problem solve when it comes to your child. Most issues can be resolved with a simple phone call between teacher and parent.
5. **Let your child make mistakes.** Your child will make mistakes throughout middle school. Rather than protect them from the consequences, which might prevent them from making mistakes or even make them fear doing so, embrace the mistakes and teach them that lessons can be learned from every single one.
6. **Test scores are not the only factor in your child's education.** Though it seems like all education is about these days is standardized tests and scores, trust that your child's teachers are doing the best they can for your child, which goes beyond teaching to the test.
7. **Your child is never too old to read with you.** Whether they’re into the idea of actually reading together or would prefer to read separately and discuss the book later, that's up to you guys — but reading shouldn’t stop just because they’re in school full time and no longer require a bedtime story every night.
8. **The middle school years are awkward — don’t make them worse.** Through the middle school years bodies are changing, feelings are happening, and phones are wanted. If you avoid talking about things like puberty or having a phone, you might make things more difficult for your child in school during these awkward years. Lay it all out on the table and try to help them to realize that one day they’ll look back and say, “It was only middle school.”

Information provided by Popsugar.com at <https://www.popsugar.com/moms/What-Your-Child-Kindergarten-Teacher-Wants-You-Know-38028785>

**Understanding Interactive Learning**

Today’s kids have grown up in a technology-rich environment. By the time they reach elementary school, sitting at a desk copying figures from a chalkboard is not playing into their strengths as students. Passive learning definitely still has its place, as kids need to memorize facts and figures just as ever before. But more and more schools have turned to incorporating technology in interactive learning to inspire students and keep the teacher-student relationship vital.

**What is it?**

Interactive learning is a more hands-on, real-world process of relaying information in classrooms. Passive learning relies on listening to teachers lecture or rote memorization of information, figures, or equations. But with interactive learning, students are invited to participate in the conversation, through technology (online reading and math programs, for instance) or through role-playing group exercises in class.

**How does it help?**

In addition to engaging students who are raised in a hyper-stimulated environment, interactive learning sharpens critical thinking skills, which are fundamental to the development of analytic reasoning. A child who can explore an open-ended question with imagination and logic is learning how to make decisions, as opposed to just regurgitating memorized information. Also, interactive learning teaches children how to collaborate and work successfully in groups, an indispensable skill as workplaces become more team-based in structure.

**How can I continue interactive learning at home?**

Talk to your child. Ask open-ended questions about the day at school to get a conversation going. The old “How was your day at school?” standby will most often get a noncommittal “fine” in response. Instead, try some of these conversation-starters to continue learning at home: Tell me about the best part of your day. What was the hardest thing you had to do today? Did any of your classmates do anything funny? Tell me about what you read in class.

You can also explore online learning games and activities with your child that can serve as extensions to what they are learning in their classrooms.

Information provided by Scholastic.com at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/your-child-technology/understanding-interactive-learning>



The Ups and Downs of Middle School Friendships

By the time a child reaches middle school, friendships have become as important to development as family life. Middle school students crave acceptance from their peers and look to friends to help them navigate through adolescence and everything that comes with it. Friendships make everything more fun and can make even bad days much better. But at this point in a child's development, they can also be quite challenging. Below are tips to help you prepare your tween for the ups and downs of friendships in the middle school years.

It's only natural for tweens to make their friends a priority and, at this point in their development, they may prefer the company of their friends over the company of their parents and other family members. This should not be a concern to you, but rather something to enjoy. Children need a strong network of friends at this age to help deal with life and to have fun while growing up.

Strong friendships at this age can have a positive impact on your tween's life. The advantages can include:

* Enjoying time together after school
* Having someone to talk to or confide in
* Getting another point of view when dealing with a problem
* Sharing common interests
* Dealing with school problems (such as a hard teacher or a school bully) together
* Keeping one another out of trouble
* Having someone stick up for you
* Knowing you're not going it all alone

Many middle schoolers find that their friendships may change during the middle school years as friends drift apart or form other friendships. Middle school students may no longer see old friends as they pursue different interests or passions, or if students attend different schools they may no longer have the opportunity to connect with old friends.

Even strong friendships can be put on trial during the middle school years. Friends may lose their tempers, disappoint one another, or hurt one another's feelings. Strong friendships may weaken from time to time, but if an effort is made to work through conflict, these friendships will likely survive.

Talk to your child about the behaviors of real friends:

* Real friends support one another
* Real friends say "I'm sorry"
* Real friends are not jealous
* Real friends can be trusted
* Real friends show respect
* Real friends listen to one another
* Real friends may act like "jerks" some of the time, but they eventually come around

Information provided by VeryWellFamily.com at <https://www.verywellfamily.com/the-ups-and-downs-of-middle-school-friendships-3288397>

**Happy Holidays**

**From**

**Your Friends at**

**College Day**

Some December Holidays and other important dates:

December 1 World Aids Awareness Day

December 2 Hanukkah

December 6 St. Nicholas Day

December 21 Winter Solstice

December 23 Festivus

December 25 Christmas

December 26 Kwanza

December 26 Boxing Day

December 31 New Year’s Eve

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