

WHAT TO EXPECT

Hello and welcome to Linxus. This guide is for parents of middle school children. The transition from elementary to middle school can be one of the most



difficult periods in your child's life. Children entering middle school must quickly adapt to a new environment that often features a larger school, traveling to multiple classrooms, new teachers with varying styles, a locker to store more books, and more demanding projects and assignments—all while trying to understand the physical changes that affect both their emotional and cognitive states. The changes are often overwhelming.

These changes can be categorized into the three areas:

- Academic Challenges
- Physical Development
- Social Adjustments

This guide will help you understand these changes so you can help your child cope with them better.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

As a parent, managing your child's transition to middle school can be tricky. You must provide substantial support and supervision to your child, while also learning to step back and let them make mistakes and advocate for themselves. Here are a few tips based on the latest [research](#) to make the transition successful:

- Attend orientation with your child to familiarize yourselves with [teachers](#) and the school layout.
- Talk to your child about the differences in elementary school and middle school to calm their fears.
- Talk to your child about the academic challenges, physical changes, and social differences he or she will face in middle school.
- Set goals for learning at the beginning of the year.
- Set high expectations and then step back.
- Try to get your child placed in a classroom with a [teacher](#) with a good reputation.
- Talk to your child about their strengths, potential, and goals for what they would like to do when they grow up.
- Try to link what your child is learning in school to goals and interests they have for the future.
- Help your child to be [mindful](#) of their situation to reduce stress and anxiety.
- Foster a [Growth Mindset](#).
- Don't directly help your child with [homework](#). This can have a detrimental [effect](#). Apply [coaching](#) and mentoring strategies [instead](#).
- Don't panic if your child's grades slip at first, research shows this is expected. Follow the guidelines here to ensure it's temporary.
- Tell your child that you want to know of any bullying or social cruelty that occurs.
- Ensure your child is using his or her daily planner effectively and that a plan is in place to keep their backpack and locker tidy.
- Set up a designated a regular time and place to do homework.

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Student Development Software

TRANSITIONING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



CHALLENGES AHEAD

ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

[Studies](#) show that students often experience a drop in both math and reading scores when they transition to middle school. The academic challenges your child will face are the result of a new environment and increased workload.



- Middle schools are often larger, and often impersonal facilities with more students.
- Students have a different teacher for each subject complete with his or her own teaching style and requirements.
- Students have to learn to navigate between different classrooms throughout the course of the day and will have to manage their time in between classes at their lockers.
- Class sessions are often longer compared to elementary school.
- Academically, the emphasis shifts to knowledge and content and less on building skills they are supposed to have already acquired.
- Students must learn to develop their critical thinking and problem solving abilities rather than relying on rote memory and facts.
- Students are required to take on more responsibility and work much more independently.
- Student workload increases compared to elementary school, which includes more diverse assignments and more demanding homework.
- Students must learn to devote more time to homework each night and must also learn to plan for long-range research projects.
- Testing becomes harder and more frequent.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Just as your child is dealing with changes in his or her school environment, your child is also undergoing dramatic changes physically, cognitively, and hormonally. These physical changes often make children anxious, less attentive, forgetful, self-conscious, and emotional.



Here are some reasons why:

- The adolescent brain is still developing rapidly, especially in the frontal lobes. Because the frontal lobes control our *executive functions*, which allow us to plan effectively, track time, multitask, reason, regulate our impulses, relieve anxiety and stress, children often struggle in these areas.
- Adolescents often have ravenous appetites, which leads to increased weight, height, and physical strength.
- Children in middle school tend to be overweight and unhealthy because of poor levels of endurance, strength, and flexibility.
- Bones grow faster than muscles at this age, which results in poor coordination, clumsiness, and bad posture.
- Metabolism imbalances can cause extreme fluctuations between restlessness and listlessness.
- Girls tend to mature physically sooner than boys and experience puberty earlier. The average age of menarche is twelve years of age. Girls often become anxious as a result.
- Adolescents are often experience emotional imbalances because of chemical and hormonal changes.
- Adolescents often start to skimp on sleep which is vital for proper physical development. Nine hours of sleep a night is recommended to deal with the physical changes that they are undergoing.
- Together these changes can lead to low self-esteem.

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS



As children mature and become more independent, they begin to seek less affection from parents and more acceptance from friends at school. This can result in the following:

- Children begin to form incompatible allegiances to peers and family, which can result in unsocial behaviors at home.
- They begin to model the behavior of peers or celebrities and less so of their parents.
- Children begin to challenge authority and test limits of acceptable behavior.
- As they transition to their new environment, children will form new cliques and begin to establish social hierarchies.
- Children begin to experience the five forms of social cruelty: taunting, rumoring, exclusion, bullying, and ganging up.
- Loyalty to peer groups makes middle school more socially aggressive than what children experienced in elementary school.
- The child who is often the most vulnerable to being bullied are those that appear different in some way.