

Helping Students Learn[®]

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School
Fairborn City Schools



May 2026

Renew your child's motivation to concentrate on learning

If your middle schooler is more focused on summer break than schoolwork, offer a reminder: Summer isn't here yet, and the last few weeks of school are just as important as the rest. To end the school year strong, your child will have to stay focused.

To support and motivate your student:

- **Show interest** in what your child is learning. By this point, you may be familiar with what goes on in your child's classes. But don't stop asking about what your middle schooler is reading, discussing and doing at school. Focus conversations on learning, not just test scores and grades.
- **Discuss expectations.** Make it clear that you expect your child's best effort in school through the last day. Review the consequences for failing to complete assignments or study for tests.
- **Maintain routines.** With more daylight, your child may be tempted to put off schoolwork until later at night. But school starts at the same time in the morning, and students need enough sleep to focus in class.
- **Review time management strategies.** Help your child make every remaining day count by putting deadlines on a calendar and scheduling time to do the work to meet them.



Expand word knowledge

Understanding the meaning of reading material is easier when students are familiar with the words. To help your child build a strong vocabulary now and over the summer:



- **Maintain a daily** reading time. Encourage your child to read about a broad range of topics and create a log of new words and meanings.
- **Introduce new words** in conversations with your child. "Let's *collaborate* on this. We do well when we work together."
- **Encourage practice.** Challenge your child to use a new word or two every day.

Support setback recovery

The ability to recover after disappointments and setbacks is essential for learning. When something at school has gone wrong, help your child express feelings in words, and offer sympathy. Then, make it clear that your child has the power to change things for the better. Ask questions like, *What else could you do now?* and *What could you do differently next time?*

Suggest fun things to write

To foster an interest in writing, help your child discover two things about it: Writing has a purpose, and it can be a lot of fun! Have your child try writing:



- **Product reviews.** Would your child recommend a product to others? Why or why not?
- **Letters to officials** about issues that interest your middle schooler.
- **Fan fiction.** Your child can choose favorite media characters and write a new story to share with other fans.



Help your child sharpen study skills

Students who don't know how to study effectively sometimes spend more time than they need to on schoolwork. Some get so frustrated that they stop studying completely. Encourage your child to put these strategies to use:

- **Remove distractions.** Loud music and digital devices not needed for schoolwork should be turned off. Have your child take care of hunger and thirst before sitting down to study.
- **Take careful class notes,** and include details the teacher emphasizes. Reviewing and clarifying notes each evening will make the material easier to remember.
- **Study material** in several short sessions, rather than one long one. During a session, alternate types of material. For example, between studying math and science formulas, your child can study English or history.
- **Avoid getting sidetracked.** Your child can jot down random thoughts on a pad to look at later, then return quickly to studying.



How can I ease my child's high school jitters?

Q: My eighth grader is happy in middle school, but is nervous about starting high school next year. How can I make this move seem less overwhelming?

A: Feeling a bit anxious before a move up to a new school is natural. Preparing and practicing skills in the months to come will help your child feel capable of handling this change.

To support your rising ninth grader:

- **Listen and ask questions** to help identify the specific things that are worrying your child, so you can address the right things. You might learn that your child is more concerned about making new friends and joining activities than handling more schoolwork, for example.
- **Develop familiarity** with the high school. Check out the school's website and social media posts together. Learn about school policies and procedures your child will be expected to follow. Arrange a visit, if possible, and find out what types of activities welcome ninth graders.
- **Reinforce school skills.** High school *does* mean a bigger workload and more commitments. This summer, have your child keep track of activities and responsibilities on a calendar and get in the habit of making daily to-do lists. Encourage your child to rework some of this year's assignments.



Are you planning for summer safety?

When school is out, students aren't always within sight of an adult. Summer fun can turn risky. Are you taking steps to make sure your child stays healthy and safe over the summer? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you search** for supervised activities that will keep your child busy and active?
2. **Do you think** about your child's maturity level and abilities before assigning chores such as mowing the lawn with a ride-on mower?
3. **Do you provide** sunscreen and insect protection and insist that your child use them outdoors?
4. **Do you remind** your child to drink plenty of water when playing, working or exercising outdoors in the heat?

5. **Do you require** your child to wear a helmet when riding a bike, scooter or skateboard?

How well are you doing?

More yes answers mean you are helping your child have a safe summer. For each no, try that idea.

"Safety is a choice you make every day."
—Unknown

Explore options for service

Community service helps middle schoolers consider the needs and viewpoints of people around them. At the same time, they gain skills and learn that they can make a difference. Over the summer, your child may be able to volunteer to:

- **Tutor** a younger child in math or reading.
- **Organize** a collection of toiletries to donate to a shelter.
- **Participate** in a neighborhood clean-up.
- **Help** a local family by offering babysitting or dog-walking services.
- **Visit** a retirement home and spend time talking with the residents.

How to be an influencer

Positive family influence supports student success. Here are a few simple but vital ways to influence your middle schooler:

- **Get to know** what makes your child tick and find ways to support interests.
- **Look for opportunities** to offer your child genuine, specific praise.
- **Take your child seriously.** Listen to and consider opinions and concerns.



Summertime is family time

Make the most of your child's time at home this summer to strengthen family ties. To add quality to your time together:

- **Use warm, light evenings** to exercise outdoors. Or just take a walk, and enjoy each other's company and conversation.
- **Ask your child to plan** free or low-cost weekend activities to do as a family.
- **Have family members** take photos to record your summer. Spend time together writing captions and making a slide show.

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P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
1-800-756-5525 • www.parent-institute.com