

PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION TO MIDDLE/ SENIOR HIGH

Your child is entering middle or high school. This is a transition for both you and your child. You can look at it as a joint venture.

1. Get all the information you can. Meet the teachers, principal and vice principal. Visit the school and locate classrooms, lunch room, gym, auditorium, and office. Sometimes teens are reluctant to have family members tag along on a school visit. Approach it as if your child is giving you a guided tour, so he or she is in control. If your child doesn't know the way around, you'll both learn.
2. Keep daily life the same. Keep routines around meal times, study time, and recreation. This gives your child a solid base and sense of security. It can also be helpful for your son or daughter in a new situation to bring something familiar such as a favorite pen or picture.
3. Identify positive aspects of moving to middle or high school. It might be making new friends, being in a new school, or the varied classes.
4. Discuss in advance possible situations, involving peers, classroom behavior, or school work, where you would be concerned. Ask your child how he or she would deal with these situations. Tell your child your expectations of him or her given the situation.
5. If possible, pair up with another parent to talk over the changes. The support of others going through a similar situation often helps relieve anxiety.
6. Celebrate the transition. Plan an event or special treat to mark the change. This might be a special meal, favorite video, or a card with a note.
7. Above all, talk with your child. What do you think it will be like? How do you think the students will act? Who do you think will be in your classes? Once your child starts asking about the highs and lows of the day.

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