

Family Fundamentals

News from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Stay involved to help children with school

Our oldest child started middle school last fall. She was struggling early in the year but didn't want help, and we hoped she would get used to the new schedule and classes. She still seems unorganized and isn't doing as well as she did in grade school. What can we do to help her over this bump?

As children grow, it can be difficult to gauge how to balance providing support while also fostering their independence. While it's important to take cues from your daughter, it's also important to remain involved in her life and help her out when you see the need.

It can be hard to figure out how best to do that during different stages of development. But one resource you may find helpful is the "Helping Your Child Series" on the U.S. Department of Education's parents page at education.gov/parents. You might find the booklet "Helping Your Child Through Early Adolescence" on that website just what you need. It includes information on how to help children ages 10 through 14 not only with academic success, but in many other ways, as well.

Here are some suggestions about parental involvement from that booklet:

- You can help your daughter get organized in several ways. Talk with her about her assignments. Make sure she has a calendar to keep track of when things are due and homework folders for her to keep completed assignments to turn in. Also, set a regular time for homework and hold her to it. These things will help her learn good study habits.
- It's important not to do your daughter's homework for her, but you can step in and help her get started when she has a big assignment.



photo: Fuse

She may need to get to the library or some help in researching topics on the Internet.

- Be sure you're involved with your daughter's school and understand the classes it offers, the classes that are required, and how the school measures progress. Attend school events. Volunteer there, if you have time. Research shows that adolescents do better academically when their parents are involved in their lives and with the school.
- It's not unusual for children this age to lose motivation for schoolwork and learning. You can help offset that by being a good role model and demonstrating that you value learning and hard work. It can also help if you identify the things your daughter does best and help her build on those strengths.
- Take a look at your daughter's schedule for both school and extracurricular activities and review it with her to make sure she isn't trying to do too much. Now is the time to help her learn how to appropriately manage multiple activities and set priorities to make sure she focuses on what's most important.

The Department of Education's parents page also has information on early childhood education, special education, reading resources and paying for college. Learn more at education.gov/parents.

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Dear Subscriber: This column was reviewed by Christine Kendle, Ohio State University Extension educator in Family and Consumer Sciences, and Karen Gallagher, retired school counselor and parenting instructor for OSU Extension in Tuscarawas County.

Family Fundamentals is a monthly column on family issues. It is a service of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Family Fundamentals, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.

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