

Short Stops

A New Language

If your middle grader is studying a foreign language, consider learning it along with her. Watch foreign films together, listen to language CDs in the car, and ask her to teach you greetings and other vocabulary. She'll enjoy having conversations with you, and she'll probably pick up the language faster.

Texting Manners

Good texting habits can help your tween get along with friends and develop communication skills. Have him reread texts to make sure they sound polite, don't contain autocorrect errors, and are being sent to the right person. **Note: Remind your child to put his phone away and not text in school.**

Handling Nerves

Your youngster may feel anxious about new teachers and classes. If so, reassure her that it's normal — and that she's not alone. As she adjusts, suggest ways to cope with her feelings. She might get more exercise, write in a journal, or talk to you or another trusted adult.

Just for Fun

Teacher: Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?

Student: At the bottom!

The Counselor's Corner

LAFAYETTE COUNTY C-1 SCHOOL DISTRICT
MIDDLE SCHOOL

AUGUST 2014

A Note from the Counselor

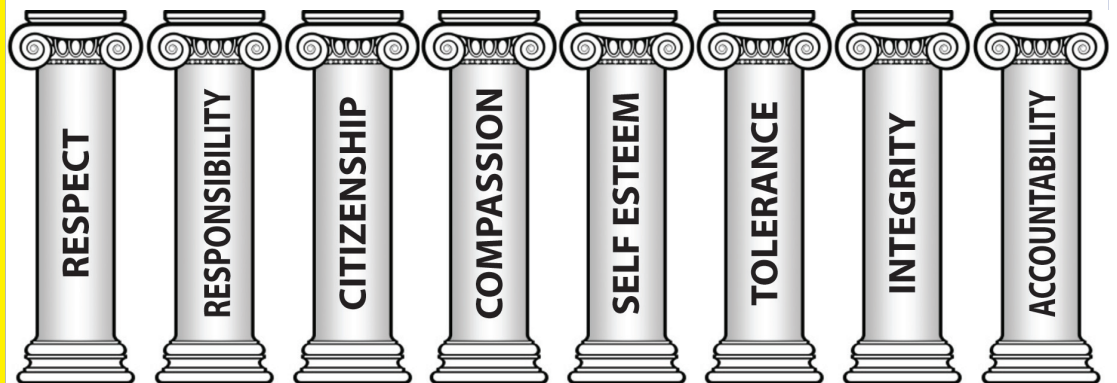
My name is Heatherlee Ryals and I am going to be the new middle school guidance counselor. Because I am new to the school district, I would like to share a little bit about my background and formally express my excitement for the upcoming school year.

I was raised and grew up in northern Mo, in a town called Unionville. Once I graduated high school, I moved to Columbia, Mo, where I attended Stephens College. I graduated Stephens College with an undergraduate degree in Psychology and I received my masters degree in School Counseling from Stephens College as well.

Once I completed my masters degree in 2012, I signed a contract with Slater School District in Slater, Missouri as the preK-8th grade school counselor. I worked at Slater School District as their counselor for two years. In June of 2013, my husband Jeff and I got married and in February 2014, our son, Holden surprised us three weeks early by being born.

After my son was born, my husband and I decided that it would be best to move closer to his work because we were both commuting quite a distance to our jobs. After careful consideration and a lot of looking, we bought a house and moved to Odessa, Missouri this summer.

The last few years have been very busy to say the least but I am ready to start a new beginning in a new town and at a new school district!



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Strategies for Success

With a simple plan to get off on the right foot, your middle-grader can have a great year. Share these ideas for making this year one he can be proud of.

Give your all.

What is your child looking forward to learning this year? Maybe he will study an interesting period in history or do more science experiments. Have him name ways he can learn more and do well. For instance, he might promise himself that he'll review notes every day, start long-term assignments right away, or earn extra credit when it's available. He could write down these commitments where he'll see them — inside his binder or on sticky notes by his desk at home.



Find resources.

To navigate middle school, your tween needs to know where he can get information and support. Let him bookmark school and class websites on your family's laptop and add teachers' email addresses to his contacts. He might also explore ways to get extra help, like joining an after-school study group or making an appointment with a teacher or counselor.

Stay on top of grades.

Tell your child he should pay attention to how grades are determined. You could explain that homework, tests, and projects may count for different percentages in each class. He can check his grades online or make his own spreadsheet for tracking them.

**The mind is everything.
What you think, you become. ~ Buddha**

Setting High Expectations

Your middle grader wants to know you care about her and believe in her abilities. Having high expectations can show her that you do. Here's how to set expectations that work.

Talk about it

Be clear about what your expectations are. If you expect your child to take certain classes (say, algebra in eighth grade) or to behave well in class, communicate those points to her. Then, weave your expectations into regular conversations. ("Good job on your math test—doing well this year will mean you'll be recommended for algebra next year.")

Stay realistic

Make sure what you expect is realistic so your tween can achieve it without becoming discouraged. If she's in a spelling bee, you might expect her to study her words and try to make it through as many rounds as possible, but avoid pressuring her to win first place.

Celebrate accomplishments

Your middle schooler needs to see herself as capable of meeting expectations. Watch for opportunities to point out times that she reached high. For instance, you might say, "You got frustrated learning the songs for your strings concert, but you kept practicing. Look how much you've improved!"

Questions to Ask After School

When you hear "parent involvement," you may think of volunteering in school. But talking to your tween about school counts as parent involvement, too! Here are 10 questions to ask your child — you could choose one or two each day.

1. What's the most interesting thing you learned today?
2. What was the best part of your day?
3. What was on your math quiz?
4. Who did you sit with at lunch?
5. What book are you reading in English?
6. What made you laugh today?
7. What have you done so far for your science project?
8. What are you learning about in history this month?
9. Is this school year what you expected so far? Why or why not?
10. What was your least favorite part of the day, and what would you change about it?

Tip: Encourage your middle grader to ask questions about your day, too.