

## Setting Expectations

# Setting clear expectations for your middle schooler is key

Don't make your middle schooler guess what you expect from him. Spell it out! When it comes to setting expectations for your middle schooler:

- Be precise. "Clean the basement" might mean totally different things to you and your middle schooler, so make your instructions clear. "Please put your video games away, bring your dirty plate upstairs and vacuum the rug."
- Give a time frame. Attach a very specific time frame to chores. "I need you to empty the dishwasher within the next 15 minutes." It may help avoid foot-dragging on your middle schooler's part.
- Get his input. Your preteen isn't a little kid anymore, so don't treat him like one. Whenever possible, let him put in his two cents when it comes to the house rules. For instance, has he been insisting that he's old enough for a later bedtime? He may be right.
- Trust him. Respect your middle schooler by assuming he'll do what he's told. (In other words, don't hover as he works.) If he falls short again and again, you may need to supervise more closely. But if he does well? Honor him with some breathing room.
- Offer praise. Is your middle schooler doing a great job following the rules and pitching in? Let him know!

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