

FIRST ANNUAL

hio Family Engagement — LEADERSHIP SUMMIT —



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT



Ohio Statewide
Family
Engagement
Center
at The Ohio State University



Welcome!

This event will start shortly.
In the meantime, visit us at
OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu

MIDDLE GROUND

Family engagement for
success in the middle grades



Ohio Statewide

Family Engagement Center

at The Ohio State University



• About us

Middle Ground is a translational research project from the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center at the Center on Education and Training for Employment at The Ohio State University. Our work is a collaborative effort of Dr. Eric M. Anderman, professor in the field of Educational Psychology at The Ohio State University, Dr. Brett Zyromski, assistant professor in the field of School Counseling at The Ohio State University, and Dr. Barbara Boone and Hadley Bachman at the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center. Our goal is to contribute new research and build professional training for school leaders, teachers, families, and community partners to build their capacity for family engagement at the middle school level.

Intros

In the Chat, respond to the following:

- Name and School/Organization
- When you think of middle school, you think...



Targets

From today's session, you will be able to...

- ✓ Describe what makes middle school a unique developmental stage
- ✓ Explain effective family engagement strategies for the middle school age
- ✓ Identify how your school or district can support families in effective engagement during the middle school years



What makes **Middle Schoolers** **unique?**

Respond in the chat!

- ✓ Developing a sense of individual identity
- ✓ Becoming more complex and independent thinkers
- ✓ Gradually shifting their focus from parents & caregivers to peers
- ✓ Want to belong—to have a seat at the table of family decision-making



Why do we need to tailor family engagement practices for the transition to middle school?

Early adolescents are exploring their independence and sense of who they are.

“Hands on” family engagement practices that worked in elementary school may feel stifling to early adolescents who want to carve out their own identity.

When family engagement is tailored to fit the unique needs of early adolescents, their sense of self-confidence is bolstered.



Strategy #1:

Promote awareness of the changing developmental needs of early adolescents.



Adolescents are exploring their autonomy, they need to understand how their actions are connected to results, and they need to believe they have the skills necessary for success.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:
Share ideas in accessible ways and in ordinary language on topics related to early adolescent development such as motivation, conflict management, and developmentally appropriate structure and routines.



Strategy #2:

Provide families with information about how to navigate the middle school context.



Parents can help students to successfully navigate this transition by developing a shared understanding about the value of academic achievement, by communicating their expectations about academic performance, and by ensuring that their children are utilizing appropriate study skills.

In elementary school...

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:

Communicate learning topics with families and explicitly link what is being learned in the classroom with future careers so that families can continue these conversations at home.



Strategy #3:

Emphasize a growth mindset in the classroom, and provide families with ideas for how to encourage a growth mindset at home.



Early adolescents who hold a growth mindset believe that with enough effort, they have the potential to learn just about anything. They are more likely to engage in complex thinking, to stretch themselves academically, and to try out new strategies.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:

Collaborate with families to encourage early adolescents to solve problems on their own and to use different strategies when they get stuck.



Strategy #4:

Provide actionable and specific improvement messages to help families support their early adolescent.



An improvement message equips families with specific information about what an early adolescent can do better and an affirmation that they can improve. These support families in providing wraparound care for the academic and behavioral progress of early adolescents.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:
Focus messages to families on concrete, actionable topics such as missed assignments and study needs. When behavior concerns are addressed, be clear about what action step the early adolescent can do to get back on the right path.



Strategy #5: Encourage families to approach homework with positivity.



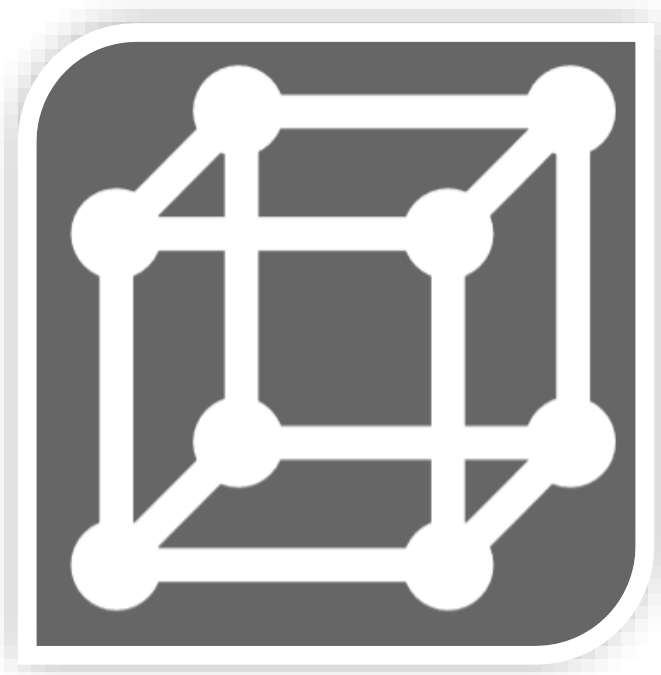
When families can maintain a positive mood and outlook on homework time, even if there are occasional lapses into frustration, early adolescents may develop more of a growth mindset, less helplessness, an increased sense of autonomy, and greater control over their emotions.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:
Invite feedback from families about how the homework process is going at home. Is it a manageable amount? How often do early adolescents feel frustrated during homework time? How often do early adolescents feel confident in their abilities to successfully complete their homework in a reasonable time?



Strategy #6:

Partner with families to provide age-appropriate and supportive routines and structures.



Early adolescents crave independence at a time when they are still developing self-control and the ability to predict the long-term consequences of their actions. Therefore, it is a delicate balance for families and schools to work together to provide age-appropriate and supportive routines and structures. Effective and supportive monitoring means being aware without being intrusive and encouraging openness and honesty.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:

Provide families with information about current social media platforms early adolescents are using and ways families can work with their children to provide structure and monitor their early adolescents' online behavior.



Strategy #7:

Collaborate to create a sense of belonging at school and at home.



The transition to a new middle school environment, often with new peers, teachers, and expectations, may lead to an early adolescent feeling anxious, insecure, and more likely to withdraw or act out. Families, teachers, and counselors can support early adolescents by being available in times of distress, providing security and comfort, and being personally involved with what is happening in their lives.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:
Collaborate with families to ensure that early adolescents are developing healthy friendships. Ask families to check in about friendships and to inform school staff if their early adolescent is feeling lonely.



Strategy #8: Communicate and model confidence in the early adolescent's abilities.



Early adolescents need their families to help them develop three “motivational resources” to help them be successful in school: the understanding that their actions are connected to future success or failure, the belief that they can carry out the actions necessary for success, and the belief that they are choosing the action for themselves that will lead to the successful outcome.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:
Implement student-led conferences: use family-teacher conferences as an opportunity for early adolescents to lead the conference and share work they are proud of and how they have grown as a learner.



Strategy #9:

Value home-based involvement as the most impactful and developmentally appropriate form of family engagement.



Traditionally, family engagement is thought of as direct involvement on the part of the family with the school, through volunteering, contacting teachers, etc. We know now that being involved with early adolescents at home is the most impactful and developmentally appropriate form of family engagement at the middle school transition. Teachers and counselors can and should help families to understand effective family engagement at the middle school transition.

To promote effective family engagement, schools can:

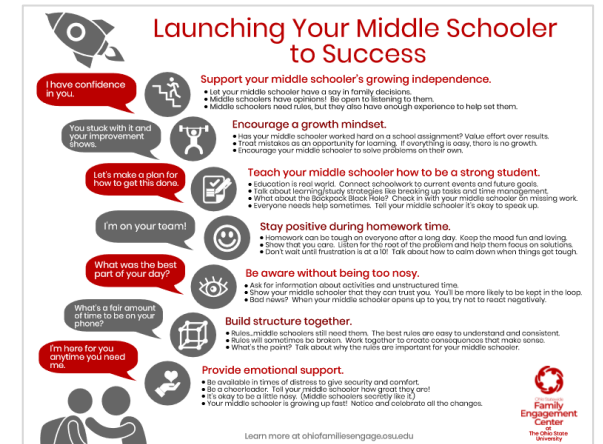
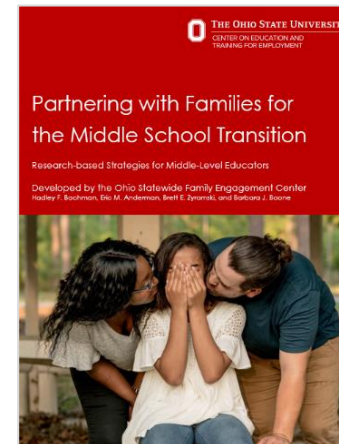
Tell families about the value of home-based involvement and express appreciation for their sometimes-unseen efforts.



Where can I go to learn more about the research and access tools for my school and community?

go.osu.edu/mstransition

Available Tools



- Research brief with brainstorming tool
- Tweet series for social media
- One-page parent infographic



Debrief

In the chat, respond to this prompt:

*I used to think....but now I think....
about family engagement in middle school.*



Thank you for attending my session!

Hadley Bachman—bachman.33@osu.edu



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Thank you for watching!

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