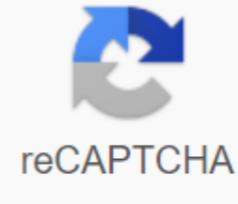




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Middle school chorus curriculum guide

The transition from middle school to high school marks a rather exciting time in a child's - and a parent's - life. But it can also be scary. It's not just a move to another school - it's a whole new environment. The beginning of high school can be overwhelming and confusing, and not just because the buildings are physically larger and the campus is unknown. Children leaving the middle school bubble for the jungle of high school not only have to deal with new teachers and academic requirements, but also a completely different set of students, some of whom are three years older and much more mature. The transition to high school can be disastrous if a child doesn't make the transition smoothly - more children fail ninth grade than any other class [source: Weber]. Most school systems pave the way by implementing transition programs, which can involve everything from campus visits to shadow students, but it's never easy. Our list of the top 10 differences between middle school and high school will help you identify some of the pitfalls you can run over when your child enters ninth grade - like what happens when your trombone-playing math whiz finds that band practice conflicts with calculus? We hope you will find some advice that will get you through this often crazy time. Ad Content One of the scariest things about moving from middle school to high school is the often dramatic increase in school size. It's frightening enough to make the transition from a three-grade school to a four-grade school - and then on top of that, several middle schools from one district often dump into a high school. So there could easily be four times as many children in high school, most of whom will be absolute strangers. As the first day of ninth grade looms, it can be overwhelming to imagine walking into a completely unknown (and much larger) campus and walking around in a sea of new faces. Most high schools are quite attentive to facilitating the transition, but it's not hard to see how kids can get lost in the shuffle. The larger student body leads to the next item on our list ... Ad We know that high schools have higher enrollments than secondary schools, so it stands to reason that the individual classes are also going to get bigger. The ratio of students to teachers varies widely across the country, but in general, high school classes are larger than middle school classes. It may not be much, but it makes a difference. The jump from a 15-student class to one with 20 kids doesn't seem like that big of an appointment, but it results in things feeling a little more impersonal and less one-to-one interaction with the teacher. There is definitely much less hand-holding in high school - older children are expected to be more responsible and independent, so they (in theory) don't need as much attention from their teachers. And a boy who is perfectly clear for task may end up falling through cracks. Ad Eighth grade teachers seem to spend an unordained amount of time trying to make it clear to their students (or trying to intimidate their students, but you want to look at it) that there's going to be a lot more homework in high school. And they do this for a reason: There are a lot more homework in high school. Children who are not ready for it can be in for a nasty shock during the first month or so of ninth grade. The increased workload — combined with the stress of new environments, schedules, expectations, teachers, and classmates — can really throw some kids for a loop, so it's especially important for parents to be part of their game during this transition period. Advertising Eighth Grade - especially in the last couple of months - is a giddy time for some children. They are the oldest (and thus coolest) at school, and they take every opportunity to master this fact over all they consider to be under them (that is, as, you know, everyone). But when September rolls around, they discover quite quickly how demoralizing it can be to plummet from the head of the pack to the bottom of the barrel. For this and the other reasons we have just discussed, many children find themselves floundering in ninth grade. Some schools have tried to combat this phenomenon by separating freshmen from the crowd only slightly - they are introducing ninth grade academies or smaller class sizes to maintain some of that middle school feel for a while longer. Ad In most secondary schools, with an emphasis on community building and caring for students, children don't get much choice in what classes they take. Students can be put in different groups based on skill level, but in general there is little variation in the subjects. Sixth grade is American history, seventh grade is pre-algebra, and that's about it. High school is a brand new ball game, with seemingly endless choices - which is exciting, of course, but it can be overwhelming. And the planning is always tough too: What happens if your trombone-playing child is also a matte whiz, and advanced trigonometry is at the same time as the band practice? Or if physics conflicts with French? It may not be a simple answer or a quick fix, but if parents, teachers, and counselors work together, they can create a balanced schedule. Ad You might think that, as academic and athletic requirements increase in high school, parents can engagement. After all, this is a critical time in the child's life - pretty soon they fly the coop, never to be seen again. But you'll think wrong: Parental involvement actually decreases during high school years. One reason is that high schools often don't right parent engagement as much as primary and secondary schools do - it's just a more hands-off type environment. Parents also often assume that their contributions are not so much because the children are older and more responsible. Not so. Many studies have shown that parental involvement is an important factor in children's success. So go ahead and volunteer - your kids may be embarrassed to have you around, but it's for their own good. Ad People often refer to middle school as a bubble - students do their reading, writing and arithmetic, of course, but sometimes the process is emphasized more than the end result. Children learn about themselves, secure in their own small community, and there is not much focus on the outside world. But that all changes in high school. Suddenly, the goal is very clear: college. No more fooling around - this is the real deal. Some students, to be sure, are class-focused from day one, so this change in goals can be exciting - in the end, all those that count for something! However, it can be shocking for a child who may not have been so concerned with characters. Then again, it's up to you, parents - it's your job to remind underperformers to step up to the plate. Ad Bad ninth graders. As if they don't already have enough to manage, how about an overwhelming new environment, larger class size and increased academic requirements, they also need to juggle more new teachers. In middle school, kids probably have at least two or three different teachers per day, but high school (as it does with everything) kicks it up a few notches. Now they can have six or seven teachers every day - all with their own methods, standards, workloads, moods and idiosyncrasies. It's really no wonder that ratings plummet and dropout prices soar in ninth grade. So

even while staying on top of your child's work and grades, remember to be understanding - this can be a tough time. When they hit the 10th and 11th grade, though, you can really crack the whip. Ad Most of the changes we've discussed so far in this article have some ambivalence attached to them - the transition to high school is exciting and scary. But sports are part of high school life that can be parked right in an exciting place. Most middle schools have sports teams, but they don't bring the school to life as high school sports can. It's just like the switch in focus with academics: Sure, middle school sports are fun, but a high school football game is the real deal. Even if your child is not an athlete, sporting events offer many opportunities for social interaction with new classmates. Also, a taste of school spirit never hurts - it gives children the start of a new identity, which can make the transition a little less painful. Ad You knew we were going to come to this sooner or later, right? The peer pressure raises its ugly head quite early in every child's life, but the stakes are certainly raised in high school. Pressure to drink and make drugs certainly pop up for during middle school years, but children (and parents) soon realize that these concerns are small potatoes compared to what lurks in high school. And it's not just about illegal drugs - it's clothes, eating, cheating, you name it. Succumbing to peer pressure can quickly derail an academic career, and that is an important factor in many drop-out cases. As always, parents must be vigilant and, most importantly, keep the lines of communication open. To learn more about the differences between middle school and high school, see the links on the following page. Lawnmowers parents cut down obstacles and difficulties before the children can meet them. HowStuffWorks talks to experts about the style of parenting. Bennett, Laurie J. and Mac Iver, Martha Abele. 'Girls tend to stop walking; Boys are told they won't be coming back': A report on the gender and dropout problem in Colorado schools. October 2009. (Visited September 10, 2010) Ray. The right kind of peer pressure. Slate, May 12, 2010. (Visited September 10, 2010) Nancy B. and Irvin, Judith L. Transition from middle school to high school. National Middle School Association Journal, May 2000. (Visited September 10, 2010) High School Center. Easing the transition to high school: Research and best practices designed to support high school learning. (Visited 10 September 2010) PTA. Move from mid to high school. (Retrieved 9 September 2010) . Transition to middle and high school. (Visited September 10, 2010) Dave. Back to school: Toughest test of all is 9th grade. Orlando Sentinel, August 14, 2010 (Retrieved September 10, 2010) orlandosentinel.com/2010-08-14/news/os-niende-klassinger-snuble-081510-20100814_1_ninth-graders-ungdomsskoler-klasserom-ytelse 2010) schools-classroom-performance

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