

Bring reading materials with you everywhere

Want to do your child a wonderful favor? Push the message that reading is one of the best ways to spend any moment of free time. Your child can read when he is:

- **Waiting in line** with you at the market.
- **Waiting at the doctor's office.**
- **Waiting for the school bus.**
- **Riding in the car.**

Encourage your child to always have some reading material with him. Keep it in the car, in his backpack, in his coat. Don't worry if it's a book, a magazine or part of the newspaper—even the comics. Take it a step further by going to the library, checking out some books you think he'd like and keeping them in the car for him. Boys, especially, need encouragement to read. They tend to like reading material about sports, the outdoors, collecting and hobbies. They also like science fiction, mystery, adventure and fantasy. Be sure to have reading material for yourself, too. Your example is a powerful motivator.

Source: Vicki Poretta and Marian Edelman Borden, *Mom's Guide to Raising a Good Student* (Alpha Books, 212-366-2000, www.alphabooks.com).

Focus on positive discipline for your middle schooler this summer

By middle school, your child will have learned to tune out negative discipline, such as yelling. And you have probably realized that it doesn't work anyway. This summer, when you may see more of your child, use positive discipline whenever possible. In return, you may see a positive change in your child by summer's end.

Here's how to get started:

- **Be generally pleasant** to your child, even if she is not! Smile. Show affection—hug her if she is comfortable with it, pat her arm or shoulder if not.
- **Encourage your child** to learn a new skill this summer. Cooking a meal is a great one to try. Thank her for doing it and mention that it helps the family.
- **Notice what your child** does right and compliment her.
- **Say thank you** when your child does something for you or the family. Say *please* when you ask her to do something.
- **Trust your child.** If your child has been generally trustworthy, give her the benefit of the doubt. Believe what she says. Give her a new freedom if she has shown responsibility.
- **Ask your child for a lesson.** There are probably things your child knows how to do better than you, especially when it comes to technology. Also ask her opinions on issues that matter to the family.

Source: Julia G. Thompson, *Discipline Survival Kit for the Secondary Teacher*

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