



Dear Young People in Middle School and Your Families,

*Warm and wonderful, bewildering, sometimes scary, silly and exciting!* Do any of these words describe your life today? The middle school years—more than during any other stage of life—are filled with dramatic changes in life experiences, body changes, intellectual growth, and emotional expansion.

Thinking of issues in your lives, we decided to create this *Survival Guide* in an effort to provide information, to introduce topics you may want to discuss, and to recognize in print some of the wonderful and difficult realities you might encounter in your personal and family lives.

A beloved philosopher\* told parents that we can give you our love but not our thoughts, for you have your own thoughts. We can try to be like you, but we shouldn't aim to make you like us, because life moves on, and you are like arrows that spring from us into the future.

May your todays and tomorrows hold stimulating challenges, strengths—giving, fulfillment, love, and happiness. We, your community, strive to stay in tune with you, to help you, and to cheer you on with admiring and hopeful hearts.

With best wishes,

The Middle School Coalition  
Family Services Network Committee

\*Gibran, Kahlil, *The Prophet*. Alfred Knopf, Inc., New York, 1923, pp. 17-18.



# ETIQUETTE

Manners and etiquette are about knowing what it takes to feel comfortable in unfamiliar situations and behaving in a way to make others feel comfortable, too. Knowing a little something about proper etiquette and good manners makes it easier to be around others, and it makes others want to be around YOU!

The following sampling of proper etiquette is NOT meant to be a complete list or even the most important things for you to know. Library shelves are stocked with books about etiquette. This is, however, a good place to start.

## Important Word to Parents

To raise a great kid, set a great example! Practice good etiquette yourself if you want to teach your child the same. He or she is watching you! In addition, if your child sees you involved in unethical behavior, your child will learn that unethical behavior is OK. If a child witnesses his parent lying to a police officer to get out of a ticket or overhears the parent discussing ways to cheat on income taxes, or sees the parent bringing home a briefcase full of office supplies for home use, that child will learn that its OK to lie, cheat, and steal.

## The Basics

Young people should know the importance of showing respect, and, therefore, should do the following:

- Stand when being introduced to someone.
- Pass the food first to guests and his or her parents.
- Wait to begin eating until everyone has been served.
- Do not interrupt others while they are talking, but wait until there is a pause to say what he or she wants to say.
- Offer to serve as “an extra pair of arms and legs”: “Would you like me to reach that for you?” “Excuse me, but you dropped your gloves.”
- Realize that in public places (in the mall, at the movies, on the bus, on the street) it is rude to make a lot of noise with friends that upsets other people.
- Never yell at others in the house (with hope that the parents don’t yell either!).
- Remove hat or cap when entering a home, school, or any public building.
- Speak when spoken to, and don’t maintain a sullen silence.
- Show respect at all times. Respect for parents, grandparents, teachers, the pastor, police officers, and anyone else in position of authority should be instinctive.
- Follow house rules regarding curfew and telephone use.
- Chew gum quietly with your lips closed.
- Say “thank you” whenever anyone steps back to allow you through or holds a door for you. Do the same for them.
- Say “excuse me” if you accidentally brush against anyone.
- Write thank-you notes for every gift (including any gift from grandparents, aunts, uncles, or friends of any age), after every meal at a friend’s house, or as a friend’s guest at a restaurant.
- Do not litter on the street, school yard, or ANYWHERE!
- Respect our environment.

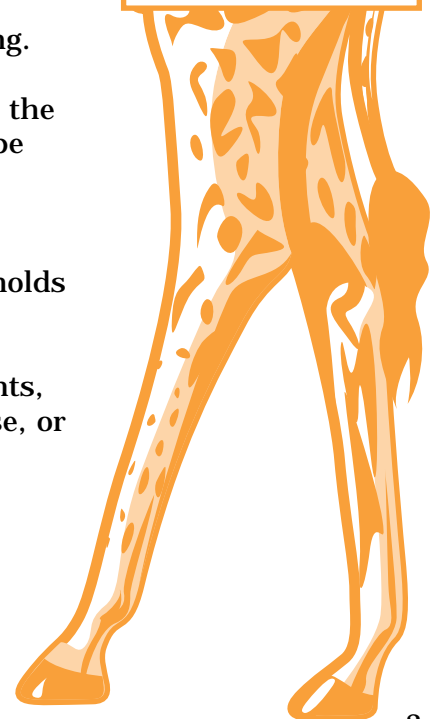
Adapted from *Basic Black: Home Training for Modern Times*, Karen Grigsby Bates and Karyn Elyse Hudson, Doubleday (publisher)

## READING LIST:

*BASIC BLACK:  
HOME TRAINING  
FOR MODERN  
TIMES*

BY  
KAREN GRIGSBY  
BATES  
AND  
KARYN ELYSE  
HUDSON

*LETITIA  
BALDRIGE’S  
COMPLETE GUIDE  
TO THE NEW  
MANNERS FOR  
THE ’90S*  
BY  
LETITIA  
BALDRIGE





# RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The middle school years are filled with changes for your children. Some of the most important changes have to do with their relationship with you and the family, as well as with friends. Here are some general characteristics of youth at this age.

## **Family Relationships with Fifth and Sixth Graders**

- Your child may display exaggerated emotions. He or she may be very happy, silly, very sad, or very mad and not much in-between.
- They may develop better relationships and increased trust with adults.
- Your child may be more willing to participate in family activities.

## **Friend Relationships with Fifth and Sixth Graders**

- Your child may become more conscious and judgmental of his or her own appearance.
- Your child may begin to conform to peer expectations.
- Your child and his or her friends may have secret codes, meeting places, cliques, etc., with other friends.
- Your child will begin to select friends based on mutual interests, as opposed to the childhood playmate next door.
- As your child begins to try to conform to both societal expectations and peer expectations, he or she may experience conflict between the two.
- Dangers lie in possible experimentation with sex, drugs, and alcohol at this age.

## **Family Relationships with Seventh and Eighth Graders**

- Your child will probably continue to experience emotional highs and lows.
- Your child at this age may spend less time with family and more time with friends.
- Your child still has a strong need for parental attention and respect. He or she needs to have his or her opinion taken seriously during his or her growing independence.
- Your child is likely to develop a strong need for his or her own privacy.

## **Friend Relationships with Seventh and Eighth Graders**

- Sense of humor blossoms.
- Youth become critical of their own appearance.
- Youth become very preoccupied with self-interests.
- “Best Friends” become very important. Activities like going to movies, talking on the telephone, and gossiping tend to increase.

## **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- Your awareness, limits, guidance, and approval of your teen are very important now. During children’s newly emerging independence, they may act contrary; but they need the safety net of your support and limits to test their wings.
- Younger middle schoolers may be much more open to talking with you. However, older middle schoolers may not want to talk with you.
- If your child has done something wrong (and you are upset), try to say at least two GOOD THINGS to him or her BEFORE you talk about the bad things.
- Use your child’s name when talking to him or her.
- Look at your child when you’re talking and listening to him or her.
- Keep talking and listening to him or her! Preserve and grow in your relationship!
- Humor is important. Be “funny” and let him or her be “funny.”
- If you like what he or she is doing or wearing, tell him or her EXACTLY what you like. This shows you aren’t just saying it; it shows you care.

### **SAY ONCE A DAY:**

“ I LIKE TO BE  
WITH YOU.”

“ I LIKE YOUR  
GOOD WORK.”

“ YOU’RE DOING  
A GOOD JOB.”

“ GOOD WORK!”

“ I’M PROUD  
OF YOU.”

“ I LOVE YOU.”

“ YOU ARE VERY  
IMPORTANT  
TO ME.”

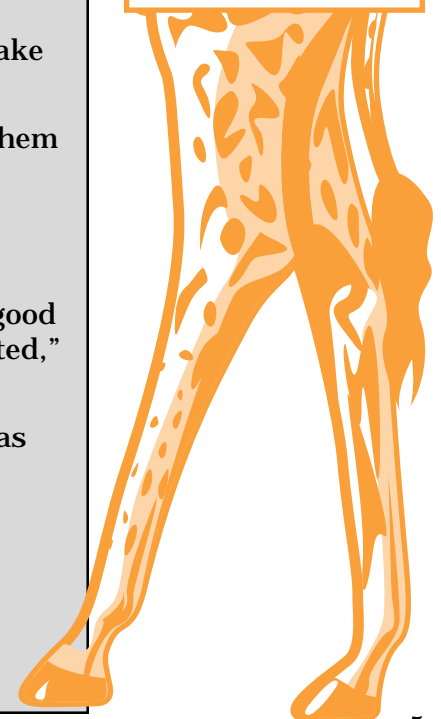
- If your child did something well, **PRAISE** him or her.
- “I” messages let children know exactly what you want, why you want it, and how you want it. They won’t have to guess what you want or how you feel. This is a way of setting limits. Examples: “I feel very upset when you throw your clothes on the floor. Clothes cost money. I work hard for my money and I want you to have nice clothes to wear.” “I do not want you to carry those two full glasses of milk at one time. I am afraid they will spill.”
- Find a reason to say each of these phrases once a day to your children:
  - I like to be with you.
  - I like your good work.
  - You’re doing a good job.
  - Good work!
  - I’m proud of you.
  - I love you. You are very important to me.
- Respect your child’s need and right to grow up.
- Support your child’s decision-making process. Help him or her see the pros and cons of various choices and likely outcomes. More and more let the child make decisions (if not life or death decisions). We all have a right to our successes and mistakes and to learning from our mistakes.
- Choose your battles! With teens trying out their independence more and more, it is easy to fight over everything. Ask yourself, “Does this really matter?” Save your battles for the big issues.

## MAKING A FRIEND

- Talk with your teen about how he or she feels about making friends. Is it hard, easy, fun, or does he or she like to make new friends?
- Ask what kind of friends your teen liked before. “What did you like about him or her?”
- Have your teen think about the people he or she knows and how they make him or her feel.
- Let your teen know the positive effects of keeping the friends that make him or her feel good when he or she is with them.
- Let teens know that you have to be a friend, and that helps you to make a new friend.
- Let teens know that they should stay away from the ones who make them feel bad or get them into a problem.
- Let your teen know that we all often feel shy when making friends.
- Let your teen know that some things about him or her are good and “other kids will like you when they get to know you.” Talk about the good things by saying, “I *think* you are honest,” or “I *think* you can be trusted,” or “I *think* you are fun to be with.”
- Talk about what your teen can do or discuss with new friends, such as going to movies, sports events, homework, and so on.
- Some activities your teen may want to do with a new friend:
  - Learn to do something new together, like cooking.
  - Take exercise classes or do a sport together.
  - Learn to use a camera or to grow a garden.
  - Do neighborhood or community volunteer activities together.

## ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH A NEW FRIEND:

- **LEARN TO DO SOMETHING NEW TOGETHER, LIKE COOKING.**
- **TAKE EXERCISE CLASSES OR DO A SPORT TOGETHER.**
- **LEARN TO USE A CAMERA OR TO GROW A GARDEN.**
- **DO NEIGHBORHOOD OR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES TOGETHER.**



# BULLIES



## Dealing with Bullies

- Pay attention to your reactions. Often you will feel fear or anger when other kids pick on you. It is important to recognize your feelings as normal so you don't overreact. When dealing with bullies, the trick is not to get "rattled."
- Realize, first of all, that they are the ones with the problem, not you. People who like themselves don't need to make fun of others to feel OK.
- Walk away when you can. This is the best way to avoid a situation that can escalate into an intense argument or fight.
- Talk with your school guidance counselor or a teacher. It is important to let someone know when you are having difficulty with any other student at school. They can sensitize other adults at school to be your allies before conflicts arise.
- Talk to your parents. Parents can help you think through ways to avoid situations where you feel unsafe and can work together with your school to ensure your safety.
- Spend time in groups where you feel safe. Stay with friends when you walk in the halls, eat lunch, or go to your bus stop. It is more difficult for bullies to pick on you when you are in the security of a group of friends.

## READING LIST:

*DIGBY AND KATE*  
BY  
BETTY BAKER

*OLIVER BUTTON  
IS A SISSY*  
BY  
TOMIE DE PAOLA

*RUTHIE'S RUDE  
FRIENDS*  
BY  
JEAN AND  
CLAUDIO  
MARZOLLO

*WENDY AND THE  
BULLIES*  
BY  
NANCY K.  
ROBINSON

## Advice for Parents

- Watch for signs of bullying:
  - Torn clothing
  - Fear of going to school
  - Changes in behavior
  - Decline in grades
  - Loss of appetite
  - Moodiness
- Take an active role in your child's schooling and activities.
- Work on boosting your child's self-esteem.
- Talk to school administrators if you suspect a problem.
- Keep a written record of any episodes—what happened, where and when it happened, and who was involved.
- Never tell your child to "hit back." That not only can lead to more problems, it's a poor lesson in solving a dispute.

## WHEN SOMEONE PUTS YOU DOWN

- You can help your teen feel good by teaching him or her to say something like, "I like myself, and at least I don't have to stoop to saying mean things to others." Have your child keep saying this over and over again!
- When other teens say bad things to him or her, teach your teen to say, "That's what you think, but at least I don't try to hurt other people's feelings."
- Have your teen practice saying these things to you so that he or she gets used to them.
- If the sentences here do not work for your teen, make up others. He or she should be able to say something to help him or her feel better and to the other child who said something bad.

# DISCIPLINE

## To Parents:

A study of successful parents found that when they adhered to the following six basics, their discipline was absolutely fair and highly effective.

- Have a few key rules, not a lot of general ones.
- Clearly state rules and write them down so that if they are broken, there will be no debate as to what you meant.
- Eliminate the phrase “One more time” from your vocabulary.
- Replace this phrase with “Take responsibility for your actions.”
- Enforce rules consistently and confidently. Follow through with the consequences of a broken rule without fail.
- Discipline silently through your ACTIONS—not warnings, threats, or discussions—and never, never yell.

## Here is an additional list of tips successful parents used to ensure reason over rebellion:

- Avoid any excessive or unnecessary discipline. Harsh punishment can result in hostility from the child.
- Provide punishment that “fits the crime” and that can be enforced. Do not tell your child that he or she is grounded for a month if you both know that neither of you will make it that long.
- Be certain that your punishment has a distinct beginning and end. Let your child know the exact time the “time out” or the “grounding” is to start and stop. (One parent made her child weed the garden as the “time out” punishment.)
- Take measures that teach a lesson. Example: A young person had to go without dinner when she came home long after dinner was over without notifying her parents.
- Stick to your word! As one parent says, “You want to hear your kids say to one another, ‘Better do it, Mom or Dad means it!’”

Adapted from: *How Good Parents Raise Great Kids: The Six Essential Habits of Highly Successful Parents*, Alan Davidson, Ph.D., and Robert Davidson, Warner Books

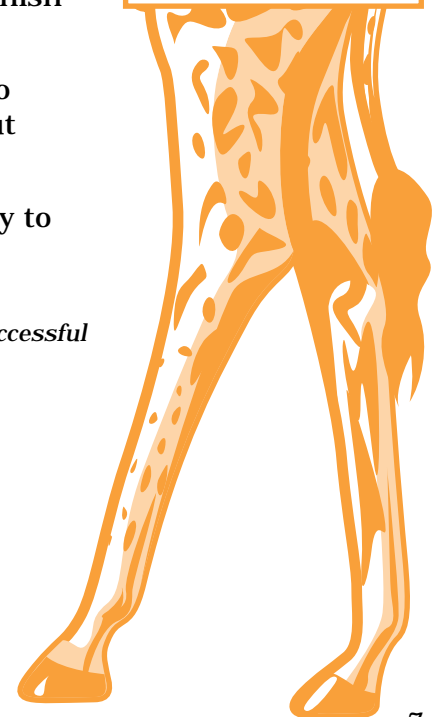
## READING LIST:

*POSITIVE  
DISCIPLINE*

BY  
JANE NELSON,  
ED.D.

*HOW TO TALK  
SO KIDS WILL  
LISTEN, AND  
LISTEN SO KIDS  
WILL TALK*

BY  
ADELE FABER  
AND  
ELAINE MAZLISH





# GUIDELINES FOR HOSTING A PARTY

Parents may be confused about providing guidelines. Your example and guidance are the most important influences in your child's life. The following are suggested guidelines to help parents guide their youth when there is the most pressure to drink—when hosting and attending parties. Please read this information to help provide a healthy atmosphere where youth realize they don't need alcohol and other drugs to have fun.

## **Set the ground rules with your daughter or son before the party.**

- Let them know what you expect.
- Develop ground rules:
  - **NO** drugs or alcohol served or brought in
  - **NO** leaving party and then returning
  - **NO** gate crashers
  - Lights on
- Set the time limit for party
- Stick to the agreed-upon rules.

## **A parent should be at home during the entire party.**

- Carefully decide what part of the house will be used for the party, preferably where you can maintain supervision.
- Greet guests and be on hand when they leave.
- Provide supervision by serving refreshments (plenty of food and nonalcoholic beverages).

## **What to do if there are problems**

- Be alert to the signs of alcohol/drug use by youth, i.e., inappropriate behavior, negative attitude, slowed reactions, bloodshot eyes, bragging about use, staggering, etc.
- Request the departure of those who try to bring in alcohol or drugs or who begin to do any physical or property damage or who otherwise refuse to cooperate with your expectations. Call their parents for transportation and to relay your concerns.
- Notify the parent of any child who arrives at the party drunk or under the influence of any other drug, to ensure the youth's safe transportation home.
- Be willing to call police if unwanted guests refuse to leave.
- Do not let anyone drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **Communicate with your child in order to encourage two-way communication.**

- Listen carefully for feelings as well as words.
- Be patient and remain calm.
- Don't hesitate to ask specific questions until you're comfortable with what might be happening.
- Help your children encourage their friends NOT to use drugs/alcohol.

## **Other ideas**

- Avoid easy access to alcohol or other drugs in your home.
- Consider the importance of alerting other parents to any local youth alcohol or drug problem that might affect their children.
- Encourage shared chaperoning.
- Develop an understanding with your youth beforehand that these guidelines are in effect at all parties, whether planned or spontaneous.

### **SUGGESTED GROUND RULES:**

**NO DRUGS  
OR ALCOHOL  
SERVED OR  
BROUGHT IN**

**NO LEAVING  
PARTY AND  
THEN  
RETURNING**

**NO GATE  
CRASHERS**

**LIGHTS ON**



# GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDING A PARTY

## Parents should know where their youth will be.

- Obtain the address and telephone number of the party giver.
- Let your youth know that you expect a telephone call if the location of the party is changed.

## Contact the parents of the party giver:

- Verify the location/occasion.
- Offer assistance.
- Make sure that a parent will be present.
- Be certain that alcohol and other drugs will not be permitted.

## Communication with other parents is encouraged.

- Support other parents.
- Be aware of others' values as well as your own.
- Share common experiences.
- Cooperate with other parents so that peer pressure can be reversed and redirected into more healthy channels.
- Get to know your child's friends and their parents.

## Know how your youth will get to and from the party.

- Assure your youth that you or a specific friend or neighbor can be called for a ride home. Make sure he or she has that telephone number.
- Discuss with your youth the possible situations in which he or she might need to make such a call.
- Encourage your child to leave a party:
  - if the host's parent isn't present.
  - if alcohol/drugs are available.
  - if any physical or property damage is being done.
  - if he or she is uncomfortable at all.

## Young people should know what time they are expected to be home.

- Be awake, or have your child awaken you when he or she arrives home. Set your alarm for 30 minutes past curfew, so you can follow up if your child still isn't home.
- Confirm "sleep-over" arrangements with host parents.
- Develop your own "curfew." Some suggested guidelines follow:

### School Nights

5th/6th graders      8:00   -   8:30 p.m.

7th/8th graders      9:00   -   9:30 p.m.

9th/10th graders    9:30   -   10:00 p.m.

11th/12th graders   10:30   -   11:00 p.m.

- **Regardless of the time you set as curfew, it is important that you know where your children are at night!**

## SUGGESTED CURFEW:

5<sup>TH</sup>/6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE  
8:00 - 8:30 P.M.

7<sup>TH</sup>/8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE  
9:00 - 9:30 P.M.

9<sup>TH</sup>/10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE  
9:30 - 10:00 P.M.

11<sup>TH</sup>/12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE  
10:30 - 11:00 P.M.

IT IS IMPORTANT  
THAT YOU KNOW  
WHERE YOUR  
CHILDREN ARE!



# GANGS



## Why Children Join Gangs

- Need to belong, looking for a “family,” feel complimented when being invited
- Feel as if parents and most adults don’t care
- Think it’s cool, exciting, and fun
- Want to feel protected by gang in their neighborhood and elsewhere
- Fear of their peers
- Feel unloved, bad about themselves, and bad about their academic ability
- Need to feel important, powerful, and accepted
- Lack trust in adults, but believe that their gang would never harm them
- Think they’ll find acceptance, respect, and safety
- Feel powerless to achieve desired life style through education
- Feel resentful toward family and school

## How to Avoid Gangs

- Choose positive people to be around.
- Be selective about your friends.
- Don’t hang around troublemakers or the places where they hang out.
- Know yourself.
- Find some adults you trust, and talk to them about your unhappy feelings and what can be done to help.

## What Parents Can Do

- Really listen to your children.
- Love your children no matter what, and show it; tell them too.
- Respect your children.
- Spend time with your children doing activities they choose.
- Learn about gang and drug activity, graffiti, dress, behavior in your neighborhood and community. Attend informational meetings.
- Be involved in your children’s education and school. Help them with their schoolwork.

- Be sure that school problems get worked out.
- Show you care—actions speak louder than words.
- Know your neighbors, and be an active community member.
- Organize neighborhood watch groups to detect gang or drug activity.
- Remove graffiti.
- Be an active parent.

JCPS  
SAFE AND  
DRUG-FREE  
SCHOOLS  
485-3260

LOUISVILLE  
POLICE  
DEPARTMENT  
GANG SQUAD  
574-7691

## FEELING GOOD ABOUT “ME”

- Help your teen think about what is good about himself or herself, what people can see in him or her, and what he or she has that is good on the inside. Other things to think about:
  - How nice your teen is to others
  - How considerate, respectful, caring he or she is
  - How your teen keeps clean and neat
  - How reliable he or she is
- Talk to your teen about things you think are good and special about him or her. “You must be proud of yourself. I would be if I knew I could do that.”

# TEENAGERS AND DATING VIOLENCE

Many young people begin to be interested in dating during the middle school years. Many feelings are associated with dating—enjoyment, excitement, anticipation, even uncertainty. However, one feeling should never be a part of the dating experience, and that feeling is FEAR.

Dating violence is not part of growing up. It is the physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse between partners in a relationship. It is NOT a normal part of the dating experience, and it is illegal!

## Here are some facts about dating violence:

- Violence in a dating relationship is a strong indicator of the potential for violence later in adult relationships.
- Getting married is NOT a solution to end violence in a relationship. Violence only tends to get worse after marriage.
- Violence is much more common among couples who are dependent upon each other; who have withdrawn or even cut off relationships with friends and family members.
- The violent partner (perpetrator) can be charming in his (or her) attempts to control his or her partner's behavior. Often the victim mistakes this constant attention for flattery and love.
- In the early stages of a violent relationship, the violent partner often tries to make the victim feel less attractive: "I love you, but...I don't like that color on you. I care for you, but...I wish you wouldn't wear that."
- The victim gradually becomes unsure of himself or herself and begins to question his or her own feelings and goals. He or she begins to feel inadequate and more dependent upon the approval of the perpetrator.
- As the relationship progresses, the perpetrator tries to expand his or her control over the victim's access to family and friends. Isolation begins as the victim gives up favorite activities, close friends, school, or his or her own family. This is very dangerous!

## Victims must remember:

- No one deserves to be abused! Each of us has a right to live without violence.
- You are not to blame! Your partner may say you are at fault and that if you "only behaved or looked differently, everything would be all right." But this is just part of the game; the rules will always change. Unless the abuser makes the decision to stop abusing you, the abuse will continue.
- The best course of action, if you find yourself in an abusive dating relationship, is to STOP the relationship, seek help from family and friends, and perhaps talk with a counselor.

**By law, any person having reasonable cause to suspect that any adult or child has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation, shall immediately report to Adult Protective Services, 595-4803, or Child-Abuse Hotline, 595-4550. The caller does not have to reveal his or her name.**

CENTER FOR  
WOMEN AND  
FAMILIES  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
PROGRAM  
(24-HOUR  
CRISIS LINE)  
581-7222

SEVEN COUNTIES  
SERVICES CRISIS  
AND INFORMATION  
CENTER  
589-4313

CENTER FOR  
WOMEN AND  
FAMILIES  
RAPE CRISIS  
PROGRAM  
(24-HOUR  
CRISIS LINE)  
581-7273





### **HOME TELEPHONE USE:**

- **BE SURE YOUR TEEN KNOWS HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HOW LONG HE OR SHE TALKS ON THE TELEPHONE, CALLS AFTER A SPECIFIC TIME AT NIGHT, MAKING LONG-DISTANCE CALLS, AND SO ON.**
- **THERE MAY BE A TIME WHEN YOUR TEEN CANNOT KEEP THE RULES. TRY TO WORK IT OUT TOGETHER IN ADVANCE.**



## **PEER PRESSURE!**

### **Feeling Pushed to Do Things, Some Good and Some Bad**

- Talk together about friends wanting your teen to do something. Decide if these are good, bad, or in-between things to do.
- Talk together about how your teen may want to do something so he or she can be part of a group. Friends may ask your teen to do something, and your teen does so because he or she wants the friends to like him or her.
- Help your teen think if he or she wants, or doesn't want, to do what friends say.
- Would I do this on my own, or am I doing it to please my friend?
- Is it something that is wrong to do?
- How will I feel if I do it? Will I feel guilty that I did the wrong thing?
- How would you handle it if your friends want you to:
  - skip school?
  - take drugs or drink?
  - destroy someone else's property?
  - "pick on" another person (be a bully)?
- Talk about how your teen can get out of being someplace or doing something that is not right.
- Together plan a "code." It can be one word or a few words that mean he or she wants you to come and get him or her. "Just called to say, 'Hello!'" ("Hello" may be the code word.)
- The friends should not know about the "code." This way, your teen can use it when he or she needs to get away from the friends.
- Have your teen say some of the things over and over in front of you so that it will be easy to say it to others, such as "I don't do drugs." Say family rules, such as, "I can't do that; I have to be home in ten minutes."
- Ask your teenager to list "rights and wrongs." If he or she can't, help him or her with the list.
- Try to get your teen to lead or to get his or her friends to do things that are okay. Think before you act!

# EAR AND BODY PIERCING AND TATTOOING

**“Hey, Mom and Dad, I want to pierce my \* # ! ? \* #!” “You what?”**


Looks as if parents and kids need to talk. Here are some considerations you may find helpful.

## **Risks**

- Whenever the skin is broken, there is a possibility of infection. When a needle is used, there is also a risk of transmission of disease, including AIDS (HIV) and some forms of hepatitis.
- Some piercings can lead to permanent deformity or loss of function.
- Tattoos are basically considered permanent. With considerable effort and expense, it may be possible to remove them. Small accessible tattoos might be excised. Repeated and time-spaced laser treatments may remove tattoos. Generally, the discomfort and expense of tattoo removal far surpass that of the original tattooing.

## **Regulations**

- At this time, there is no regulation of people, places, or businesses that do ear or other body-part piercing—not earring shops in malls or elsewhere, not piercing parlors, etc.
- Since 1992 the Kentucky Department for Public Health, Food Safety Branch, requires the annual registering of tattoo artists and tattoo studios and the twice-per-year inspection of tattoo studios for sanitary practices and cleanliness. Local health departments are charged with registering and inspecting those in their districts.
- No training is required by the state to be a tattoo artist.
- State regulations do not allow the tattooing of persons under 18 years of age without the consent of one parent or guardian.



### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:**

JEFFERSON  
COUNTY  
HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT  
574-6650

KENTUCKY  
DEPARTMENT FOR  
PUBLIC HEALTH,  
FOOD SAFETY  
BRANCH  
(502)  
564-7181

DERMATOLOGISTS

TATTOO  
ARTISTS

# EATING DISORDERS

CRISIS AND  
INFORMATION  
CENTER  
589-4313

NATIONAL  
EATING  
DISORDERS  
ORGANIZATION  
(918)  
481-4044

ANYONE CAN  
DEVELOP  
AN EATING  
DISORDER!

## What are eating disorders?

Eating disorders in young people are signals that something is wrong. These disorders usually involve a major preoccupation with food, eating, and weight control as a way of avoiding or dealing with emotions and problems.

## Who can develop an eating disorder? Why?

- Anyone can develop this disease. It is found more often in girls than in boys. The peak onset time of anorexia nervosa (self-starvation) is between ages 12 and 18.
- The causes of these diseases are complicated. Most sufferers experience conflicts over control in their family or personal lives. Food becomes the one area over which they alone are in control.
- Other factors include our society's preoccupation with weight and food, as well as the young person's parents' own preoccupation with weight and food.
- Alcoholism or depression within the young person's family, being a perfectionist, and having difficulty in dealing with emotions and social relationships, a history of sexual abuse, and having low self-esteem are all factors that predispose one to develop an eating disorder.

## The main types of eating disorders

### **ANOREXIA NERVOSA** (self-starvation)

The following are signs of anorexia:

- An intense fear of gaining weight
- Distorted body image (seeing themselves as "fat" when they are thin)
- Body weight is 15 percent or more under desirable body weight
- Absence of menstruation in girls old enough to have periods
- Preoccupation with food and weight
- Secrecy about eating or dieting
- Excessive exercising
- Being overly tired
- Interrupted sleep patterns
- Feeling cold all the time
- Vomiting or using laxatives or diuretics to control weight
- Reports "not hungry" at mealtime or after eating small quantities of food

### **BULIMIA NERVOSA** (binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting)

Signs include the following:

- Eating large amounts of food in a short time
- Hoards or steals food with secrecy and guilt
- Spending lots of time in the bathroom after eating (to vomit)
- Bruising or teeth marks on hands from self-induced vomiting
- Using laxatives or diuretics
- Not eating for long periods of time (fasting)
- Normal or low body weight
- Excessive exercise
- Preoccupation with body shape or weight and distorted body image
- Complaints of stomach, bowel, or sore throat pain

## **COMPULSIVE OVEREATING**

Signs include the following:

- Binge eating
- Nibbling and snacking over several hours
- May or may not overeat at mealtime
- Usually does not overeat in front of people
- Prefers high-sugar, high-fat comfort foods
- Eats not to satisfy physical hunger, but to relieve stress and numb painful feelings
- Does not compensate for overeating by vomiting, exercising, fasting, or abusing laxatives and diuretics


### **Are eating disorders dangerous?**

Yes! People can die from eating disorders due to nutritional imbalances, cardiac abnormalities, and failures in body systems that are associated with starvation, purging, or great overweight. Other dangers include the following:

- Disruption or absence of menstrual cycle
- Erosion of tooth enamel or other dental problems
- Loss of bone density
- Hypothermia
- Fainting or lightheadedness
- Reduced immunity to diseases
- Depression, withdrawal, anxiety, helplessness, and hopelessness

### **What can I do if I think my middle school student has an eating disorder?**

- Talk with a trusted adult, school counselor, or family doctor.
- Get evaluation and help from your family doctor, counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or nutritionist.
- Get dental care.
- Contact support groups for people who struggle with eating disorders.
- **DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO HELP YOUR CHILD! THE SOONER, THE BETTER!**



**JEFFERSON  
COUNTY HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT  
574-6676**

**OVEREATERS  
ANONYMOUS  
588-1584**

**DO WHATEVER  
IT TAKES TO  
HELP YOUR  
CHILD!**

**THE SOONER,  
THE BETTER!**

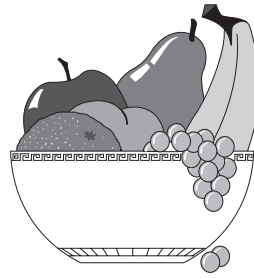
**EAT BREAKFAST!  
YOU WILL:**

**BE MORE ALERT**

**GET BETTER  
GRADES**

**CONCENTRATE  
BETTER**

**PERFORM  
BETTER ON  
TESTS**



## I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EAT NOW... HEALTHY EATING HABITS

Typical adolescent food habits include increased meal skipping, snacking, consumption of fast foods, and dieting. These habits make adolescents highly susceptible to nutritional deficiencies such as a deficiency of calcium, vitamin A and iron. The middle school youth is beginning the journey into the adolescent years. If parents and youth are aware and can overcome the pitfalls of improper eating habits, snacking and signs of an eating disorder, the youth will form a foundation to build a healthy life style.

### **Teens and Breakfast**

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day and is considered the foundation of healthy eating habits.

Studies show that eating breakfast is associated with the following:

- Strength and endurance in the late morning
- Improved physical performance
- Increased alertness and attentiveness
- Increased concentration
- Better performance on tests
- Improved grades

Studies also document the following negative effects from not eating breakfast:

- Headaches
- Stomach cramps
- Irritability
- Poor concentration
- Fatigue

For people on a diet, studies show that skipping a meal does not help them lose weight. In fact, skipping breakfast increases the chance of overeating later in the day. Thus, people should not skip breakfast.

### **Ideas for Quick and Healthy Breakfasts**

- Build a breakfast or lunch around nutritional foods that are ready-to-eat or take little preparation time, such as fresh and canned fruits, yogurt, cheese, cold cereals, sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, crackers, instant breakfast drinks, and low-fat breakfast bars.
- People who do not feel hungry in the morning can breakfast by drinking juice, one-percent or skimmed milk, yogurt shakes, or instant breakfast drinks. Better yet, combine fruit juices or fruits with milk in a blender. Eating something is better than nothing.
- People who do not have time to eat should take breakfast food with them. Another time-saving strategy is to make breakfast and/or lunch the previous night.



## Ideas for Quick, Healthy Snacks or Meals

- Vegetarian pizza with low-fat cheese
- Veggieburger (in the frozen foods section)
- Baked french fries
- Hamburger with salad (use low-fat dressing)
- Sandwich with salad (use low-fat mayonnaise)
- Potato baked in the microwave (puncture with fork to prevent exploding)
- Tuna salad and chicken salad (low-fat mayonnaise)
- Baked chicken (no skin)
- Low-fat, low-sodium frozen dinners
- Spaghetti with vegetable sauce or low-fat meat sauce
- Low-fat, low-sodium canned soups

## Eating Out

Studies of money spent in all United States restaurants show that half is spent at fast-food restaurants. The average American spends approximately \$250 a year on fast foods. Since it is unlikely that teens will not consume fast food, they need to be able to make healthier choices when dining out at these establishments.

## Healthy Guidelines for Eating Out

- Limit fried foods.
- Choose a baked potato instead of french fries. If ordering butter and/or sour cream, obtain it separately and use small portions.
- Choose a salad instead of french fries with a hamburger.
- Order salad dressings on the side. Dip the fork in the dressing and then pick up some salad with it.
- Limit foods with heavy sauces and high-fat cheese. Ask for lighter amounts or for them to be served “on the side.”
- Eat fewer pizzas with lots of meat. Instead choose plain cheese, or select vegetables as toppings.
- Choose frozen yogurt instead of ice cream.
- Share a dessert with a friend instead of eating a whole one.
- Order water with lime or lemon wedges instead of high-sugar drinks.
- Save food to eat at another time by asking to have leftovers wrapped.
- Do not add salt at the table.
- Choose low-fat vegetarian (meatless) entrees more often.
- Choose low-fat pasta dishes.
- Have fresh fruit for dessert.



JEFFERSON  
COUNTY  
HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT  
574-6661

## WHAT THE FACTS SHOW:

- STUDIES SHOW THAT SKIPPING A MEAL DOES NOT HELP PEOPLE LOSE WEIGHT.
- SKIPPING BREAKFAST INCREASES THE CHANCE OF OVEREATING LATER IN THE DAY.

# SEXUALITY

## RESOURCES:

PLANNED  
PARENTHOOD  
OF LOUISVILLE  
584-2471

JEFFERSON  
COUNTY  
HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT  
574-6661

Talking to kids about sex is often perceived as a difficult thing to do. However, if done with care and respect, talking with your middle school child about this very important subject has the potential to create stronger bonds of trust between you and your child. Remember: If anything written here is against your religious or moral beliefs, don't do it!

### Here are a few ideas about talking with your child about sex:

- Both parents should participate. When possible, both parents should share the responsibility for sex education. When both parents participate, the child sees sex education as a family affair.
- Telling children about sex will not make them think more about it. It will not lead them to experimenting or trying to do it.
- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Then try to find out. There are books about this that your child can understand. First, read the book by yourself so that you know what is in it. Then read it with your child.
- Let your child know that you want to be asked questions and will answer them. Don't say, "I'll tell you when you're older." **DON'T WAIT FOR YOUR CHILD TO ASK!** If he or she isn't asking questions about sex, it may be because the child got the feeling from you that you don't talk about sex in your home. It is your job to see that he or she knows the right things about sex and does not turn to others whose values you don't approve of to get their information.
- Some questions may shock you; try to answer them. If not, your child may ask someone else who may not have the facts. When the child asks you about these things, he or she is letting you know that he or she trusts you.
- Let the child know that it is normal and okay for there to be changes in his or her body. You may say, "I see that your body is starting to change. If you have any questions or if there is something you're wondering about, I'm here." Let the child know that it is your job, because you are the parent, to help and guide him or her to understand questions about life, his or her body, sex, and making good choices.
- Keep your sense of humor. If something is hard for you to discuss, it's okay to say, "This makes me uncomfortable, but because I love you, it's something we need to talk about." Your middle schooler may be almost as uncomfortable or embarrassed as you are!
- When you talk about sex, don't talk to the boys alone or girls alone. Boys and girls need to know how the other's body works. Boys will be living around women all their lives. They need to know about ovulation; contraception (how to keep from getting pregnant or sexual diseases); HIV, AIDS, and other diseases that can result from having unprotected sex; and menstruation (the period). Girls also need to know how a man's body works. You want to be sure they learn that sex is something that your family can talk about.

## **Tell your child what is “normal”**

- Changes in the body are normal, but everyone’s body doesn’t change at the same time. Boys and girls grow at different speeds. When hormones start to “take over your body,” wet dreams are normal, irregular periods are normal, and so on.
- Tell your child that there are many ways to show affection, love, and caring. Sex is only one of the many ways. Other ways can be hugging and kissing. Talking together can also be an intimate experience.
- It is important to teach the child to make good choices in what he or she does and says even when you are not around. You cannot be with your child all the time.
- Let your child know that some people, when they are dating, have sex so that they can “use” someone, and that can really hurt a boy or girl.
- Keep books in your home on male and female sexuality that your child can refer to on his or her own.



**CHILD-ABUSE  
HOTLINE  
589-4550**

**ALERT! If your child talks about things that make you think he or she may have been sexually abused, contact your pediatrician or clinic, or telephone the Child-Abuse Hotline at 589-4550.**

# HEAD LICE

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

JEFFERSON  
COUNTY  
HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT  
574-6660 OR  
574-6433

Between 8 and 12 million children in the United States will get head lice this year. It can happen to anyone regardless of cleanliness or income. It is an easily treated condition that can be eliminated by the treatment of the infested family member and household environment.

### Prevention Tips

- Do not borrow combs, brushes, barrettes, ribbons, headbands, or other personal items.
- Do not share hats, helmets, scarves, pillows, or sleeping bags.
- Hang coats and hats separate from others, instead of on top of each other.
- Clean thoroughly any sports equipment, headphones, or ear phones that must be shared.
- Wash any clothing that has been returned to you from the lost-and-found box at school.

## KEEPING CLEAN

**Make sure your teen has the things needed for keeping clean.**

**Tell how often one needs to use these things:**

- Toothbrush—morning and night
- Deodorant—every morning
- Shower or bath—once a day or when sweaty or dirty
- Hairbrush, comb—whenever hair looks messy (Show how to best brush or comb your teen's hair and how it should look when it's done neatly.)



# 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

The Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

<b>EXTERNAL ASSETS</b>	
<b>TYPE</b>	<b>ASSET NAME AND DEFINITION</b>
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.</li> <li>• Positive family communication—Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s) advice and counsel.</li> <li>• Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.</li> <li>• Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.</li> <li>• Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.</li> <li>• Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.</li> </ul>
<b>Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.</li> <li>• Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.</li> <li>• Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.</li> <li>• Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.</li> </ul>
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.</li> <li>• School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.</li> <li>• Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.</li> <li>• Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li>• Positive peer influences—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.</li> <li>• High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNAL ASSETS</b>	
<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.</li> <li>• Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.</li> <li>• Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.</li> <li>• Time at home—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do," two or fewer nights per week.</li> </ul>
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.</li> <li>• School engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.</li> <li>• Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.</li> <li>• Bonding to school—Young person cares about his or her school.</li> <li>• Reading for pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.</li> </ul>
<b>Positive Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.</li> <li>• Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.</li> <li>• Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.</li> <li>• Honesty—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."</li> <li>• Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.</li> <li>• Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Competencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.</li> <li>• Interpersonal competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.</li> <li>• Cultural competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.</li> <li>• Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.</li> <li>• Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.</li> </ul>
<b>Positive Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."</li> <li>• Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.</li> <li>• Sense of purpose—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."</li> <li>• Positive view or personal future—Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.</li> </ul>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCEED, CALL **1-800-888-7828** OR VISIT **WEB SITE: WWW.SEARCH-INSTITUTE.ORG.**



# USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

## To Young People:

It's out there, in your face. You probably know where and how to get it. You get all kinds of messages: try it, be cool, just say no, everybody uses it, it helps you deal with problems, you'll like it, you'll get caught, I won't let you, and on and on. You've probably heard it all.

The bottom line is: This is your life, your one, original, healthy body; your decision; your future; your safety; your consequences—your choice.

Today counts. This is serious stuff. Everybody doesn't try it or use it. Nobody can make you, or can stop you. You're in charge of yourself.

Also, you are responsible for yourself. You're not responsible for what your friends choose to do or for what your family did or does. They affect you and you affect them. But this is your decision about using drugs or alcohol. The only one you can control is yourself.

What do you want for yourself, the wonderful unique you in all this world? Help is out there to get what you want, to go where you want to go. It's up to you. You're your own life's engine. And by now you're likely to be figuring out who can help you get where you want to go in life, and to help you get what you need today.

Then, of course, there are alcohol and other drugs. They can give you a temporary high, erase reality, and freeze you in your tracks so that you stop learning coping skills, social skills, and "smarts" to help you succeed in the real world. Maybe you can get and use drugs "safely" sometimes—not getting caught, not getting sick, not getting expelled from your home, not getting into a fight, not getting shot, or not going to jail—maybe not this time.

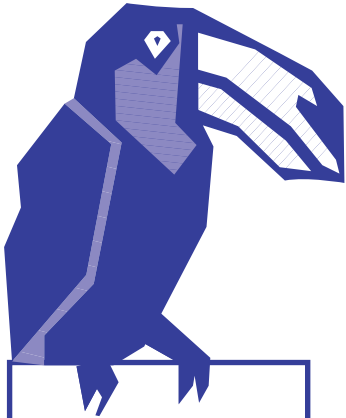
**REMEMBER: ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS ARE ILLEGAL FOR YOU.**

So, what do you want for yourself? It's your choice, your decision. See this fact clearly. You are the only one who can truly control you. It's your life. We need you and all your unique contributions, small and large, to make our crazy and wonderful world a better place. Will you make the right decision? You have the potential right now. You still have lots of growing to do and discovering about yourself and where you fit into this human family of ours. Having your clear-headed wits about you helps.

Please think of this when someone says, "Here! Try it!" or when you feel down or alone. Find a real friend who likes you just as you are, take a walk, talk, listen to music, play a sport, socialize, take a nap. Discover what you can rely on to help you cope safely.

If you use or have used drugs, this does not make you a bad person. If you want to direct your own life, instead of having a drug craving or addiction drive, what you do is get help. Go to your family or a trusted adult; call an anonymous hotline (in Louisville and Jefferson County 589-4313). We all have problems. It's what we do about them that helps strengthen our character. Help is out there. You are not alone. It's your life, your choice.

Courage and best wishes to you, with our love.



ALATEEN  
458-1234

JADAC—  
JEFFERSON  
ALCOHOL AND  
DRUG ABUSE  
CENTER  
583-3951

ALCOHOL,  
TOBACCO, AND  
OTHER DRUG  
EDUCATION  
RESOURCE  
LIBRARY  
485-3260

# USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

## To Parents and Guardians:

Children get many messages from society about the use of alcohol and other drugs. Experimentation and use among young people are common and can be so destructive and dangerous. Use is also illegal.

Your role and presence in your child's life are very important. This includes demonstration of your love and respect; open and honest talk with your child; and continuous awareness of your child's whereabouts, activities, and friends. Strong family guidance by parents and guardians, the maintaining of your child's role in your family (such as helping with younger children, chores, meals, special identity for something he or she does well, etc.), and having regular fun times together all strengthen your family influence on your middle schooler as he or she faces the issue of alcohol and other drug use.

## Tips

- Have an honest talk with your young person on your attitude toward the use of alcohol and other drugs. Give clear and consistent messages that you do not want him or her to use.
- Look at your own example. Do you use or abuse? Your example is a greater teacher than your words. If you need help, get it. Give that example too.
- Children often talk more easily at this age to a non-parent trusted adult. Encourage this, if appropriate.
- Keep communication lines open. Ask your child what he or she thinks, prefers. Really listen and hear without interrupting. Let your child know you care what he or she thinks, and respect the child's right to his or her own ideas. Tell your thoughts and values clearly, and explain why. Be respectful—keep talking and listening. Keep a sense of humor too.

## Signs of alcohol or other drug use

- Physical deterioration in memory, grooming, coordination, eating habits, or sleeping patterns; weight loss; bloodshot eyes; dilated pupils; slurred speech
- Downward changes in school and responsibility performance: late or truant and falling grades
- Family and social changes: more time alone, secretive, change in friends, depressed, hostile, dishonest, drops regular activities and interests, household money or objects missing, and reports from others about negative behaviors
- Evidence: empty alcohol bottles, drug pipes, rolling papers, small butane torches, seeds or leaves in clothing or ash trays, drug slogans or magazines, odor of alcohol or other drugs or "cover-up" scents

## What to do if you think your child is using

- Face it head-on. You are not a bad parent because your child uses. You owe it to your child to help him or her deal with this, to get through these teen years, safely to adulthood.
- Prepare before confronting. Call a drug counselor or crisis hot line to learn how to address your child's suspected use: when, what to say or do, what resources to investigate before confrontation. PREPARE.
- Get help for your child and information and support for yourself and your family. You are not alone. Many other young people and parents are going through the same thing. Help and support are definitely available, regardless of income. You are the parent or guardian—take charge. Somehow, we find strength and help when we persist.

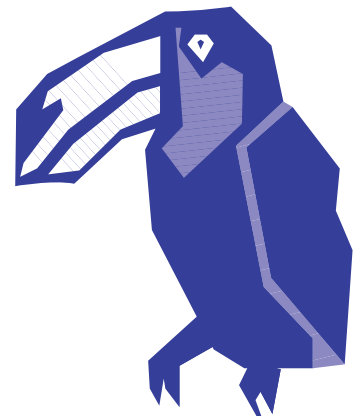
CRISIS AND  
INFORMATION  
CENTER  
589-4313

NATIONAL  
CLEARINGHOUSE  
FOR ALCOHOL  
AND DRUG  
INFORMATION  
1-800  
729-6686

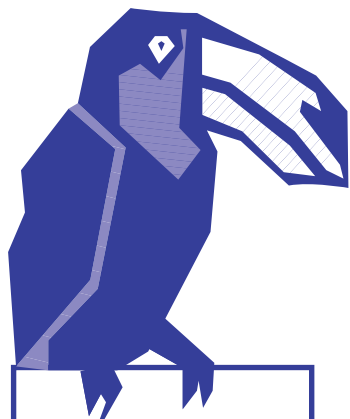
CENTER FOR  
SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE  
TREATMENT  
1-800  
662-4357

LOUISVILLE  
YOUTH ALLIANCE  
574-8727

LIGHTHOUSE  
ADOLESCENT  
RECOVERY  
CENTER  
366-0705



# DEPRESSION IN ADOLESCENTS



## **FOR HELP CALL:**

CRISIS AND  
INFORMATION  
CENTER  
589-4313

SEVEN  
COUNTIES  
SERVICES  
FAMILY  
CONNECTION  
589-8731

FAMILY AND  
CHILDREN'S  
AGENCY  
583-1741

**Middle school students will go through many changes during their teen years.**

- Fast-paced physical growth
- Making new friends
- Meeting people with different values
- Becoming more independent
- Adjusting to a new school building
- Adjusting to multiple classes
- Peer pressure
- Higher academic demands

These changes will likely cause middle school students to feel unsure of themselves. However, most young people adapt to these changes over time.

But what if your middle school student doesn't seem to be adapting very well at all?

There are signs that may tell you if your middle school student is having trouble. These can be signs of depression, and they should be heeded. Determining whether or not your child is depressed depends on several factors.

- **Frequency**—How frequent are these behaviors? Everyone has a bad day once in awhile, but if your student seems to have a string of bad days, you might want to pay closer attention.
- **Severity**—How bad are the “bad days”? Moodiness is a common characteristic of teens, but intense rages, crying binges, or fearfulness may be a sign that something else is going on.
- **Endurance**—If these signs don't seem to go away, you might want to seek help for your child. Helpful numbers are found on this page.
- **Previous changes**—If your young person has undergone a big life change (e.g., parents' divorce, moving, death of someone close) or even a smaller change (e.g. going to a new school, peer problems), he or she is more vulnerable to developing depression.

**Here are some things to look for to determine if your teen may be suffering from depression:**

- Sad or “down” mood
- Increased irritability
- Intense worry
- A lack of interest or enjoyment in normal activities
- Low energy
- Withdrawal from interactions with others
- Increase in anger or verbal hostilities
- Defiance of authority
- Restlessness
- Frequent complaints of being bored
- Drop in school performance
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Poor self-esteem
- Intense self-criticism

**What should you do if you think your middle school student is depressed?**

- Be available to your young person as much as possible. Finding ways to be with him or her will send a message that you are available to talk when he or she is ready.
- Talk to the Youth Services Center coordinator or school counselor at your child's middle school, a youth minister at church, a worker at the local community center, or a mental health professional.
- Get evaluation and help.
- Do not ignore depression.



# SUICIDE

Suicide is the third most common cause of death among adolescents in the United States. The actual number of youth suicides is several times greater than those reported because many are reported as accidental deaths.

## Why Do Teens Commit Suicide?

Some reported reasons include the following:

- Breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Feeling of hopelessness
- Depression (changes, losses)
- To escape a bad situation
- Money (need money, unpaid bills)
- Family problems
- Problems with growing up
- To change a situation
- Drug habit out of hand
- Pressure to succeed
- Not getting good enough grades
- Not making a team
- Feelings of being unwanted/un-needed
- Lack of attention

# TEENS AND GUNS

## Why Do Teens Carry Guns?

Some reported reasons are:

- For Attention
- To Feel Powerful
- To Look “Cool”
- For Protection Against Perceived Threats
- To Threaten and Intimidate Others

### Some danger signals include the following:

- Threats
- Extreme depression
- Changes in personality or behavior
- Preparations for death
- A sudden lift in spirits (can mean the person is relieved because he or she has decided his or her problems will “soon be ended”)

If you notice someone acting out of character (making threats, talking about death), be aware. Do not minimize the signs. They just may be having problems dealing with one of these situations and need help. Most people who hurt themselves and others give clues of their intentions.

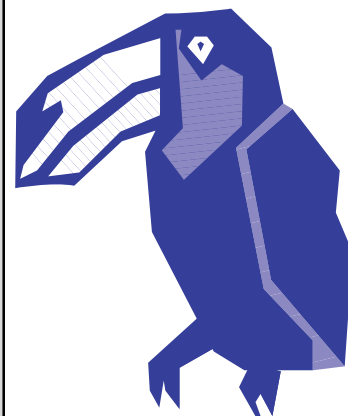
### What You Can Do

- Never assume the situation will cure itself. Threats are almost always a way of asking for help!
- Never keep it a secret.
- Tell someone and seek help.
- Avoid leaving a suicidal person alone.
- Show that you take the person’s feelings seriously and that you do wish to help.
- Listen to him or her and ask concerned questions.
- Explain that with help and support, he or she can recover. Stay close until professional help is available.
- Ask a “down” person if he or she is thinking of hurting himself or herself. This does not give the person the idea. It does give the person an opportunity to talk and to know someone to call.

**Remember that violence is a permanent answer to a very temporary problem!**

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
AND HELP,  
CALL:**

CRISIS AND  
INFORMATION  
CENTER  
589-4313



# HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is described as the picture people have of themselves. High self-esteem is the feeling you get when you know you are capable of success and competent to handle life's challenges. It is that sense that you are "OK" and adequate deep down inside. High self-esteem helps children do the following:


- Make good friends
- Care about themselves and others
- Enjoy learning
- Feel pride in their accomplishments
- Handle failure

Used with permission from *ON BASE*, Barb Friedmann

## **Parents:**

Without your love and approval, children simply will not develop high levels of self-esteem. For children to feel good about themselves, you must feel good about them first. But feeling good about your children requires some **ACTION** on your part. Here are suggestions of activities you can do with your children to help strengthen their self-esteem.

- Identify and praise your child's strengths and good qualities.
- Prove to your children that they are worthy and deserving of love by loving them openly and unconditionally—when they succeed **AND** when they fail.
- Remind your children that regardless of the outcome, they do matter to you, to their teachers, friends, and most of all, to themselves. It isn't the result but the effort they put forth that shows their character and makes everyone feel proud.
- Encourage your children to participate in all aspects of life—school, religious worship, sports, clubs, hobbies, work, and friendships. These activities help children become more assertive and learn leadership and speaking skills as they share experiences with an ever-widening circle of friends.
- Teach self-reliance by refusing to pamper your children with handouts every time they demand something. Let them develop the resourcefulness to do the most with bare minimums. Do not do for your child what they can do for themselves. Teach them and let them do it. Saying "NO" to your child is OK.
- Children need lots of reassurance in this big and sometimes frightening world. Reassure your children that they have the skills to handle life's challenges if they have the willingness to face them and to do the best they can.
- Do not expect perfection from your children. If they encounter failure and defeat, reassure them that though it may not seem like it at times, their talents and abilities are perfectly adequate and they are highly capable children—just not at everything. Remind them that no one is good at everything.
- High self-esteem, courage, and perseverance go hand in hand. Remind impatient children that success takes time. Avoid lecturing or threatening punishment when they shy away from activities. They may just lack the courage they need to move forward. When they are uncertain of their abilities, they need gentle coaxing, and maybe instruction and company, not reprimands or reminders that they are inadequate.



**REMEMBER,**  
WITHOUT  
YOUR LOVE  
AND APPROVAL,  
CHILDREN  
SIMPLY WILL  
NOT DEVELOP  
HIGH LEVELS OF  
SELF-ESTEEM.

Adapted from: *How Good Parents Raise Great Kids: The Six Essential Habits of Highly Successful Parents*, Alan Davidson, Ph.D., and Robert Davidson, Warner Books

# EIGHT HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

## 1. Be Responsible and Know Yourself

- When the word “responsibility” is broken down, the key words are “respond” and “ability.” A successful person has the ability to respond to challenges.
- Choose your own response to a difficult situation beforehand, rather than wait for it to happen and not be prepared.
- Begin by looking honestly at your personal strengths and weaknesses, and determine your own sense of responsibility for your behavior, and for your family and friends.

## 2. Reflect Success

- Have a clear picture of the kind of person you would like to become and the types of goals that you want to achieve.
- Identify a positive adult role model, who has achieved the same goals and reflects the same success that you desire. You can imitate similar pathways to success.
- Not every role model has to be a famous basketball player or movie actor. Some of the best role models are in your own neighborhood, schools, churches, and even your own home.

## 3. Aim Toward Your Goal

- Put life, family, friends, and values in a good perspective.
- To design a successful career, start by first identifying the end goal, and then determine the steps necessary to obtain it.
- Find a caring adult who will be able to help you put your plan into place one step at a time.

## 4. Prioritize and Maximize

- Now that you have a successful vision of yourself, you can begin prioritizing your daily routine so that you are able to make the best use of your time and your energy.
- Don't get caught up in things that may take you away from your goal, such as alcohol, drugs, or negative people.
- Anything that does not benefit your vision of success does not benefit you.
- Organize your work area and keep it free from distractions.
- Improve your organizational skills by using a daily planner, a personal “To Do” list, and a regular personal evaluation meeting with an adult or a mentor to check your progress.

## 5. Be a Winner

- Build relationships in which you and the other person both succeed. These are called “win-win” partnerships.
- These “win-win” partners should be friends whom you can call on for support, tutoring, or for conversation that helps you stay on track.
- Teachers, coaches, principals, and mentors could be partners who help you succeed.

## 6. Communicate

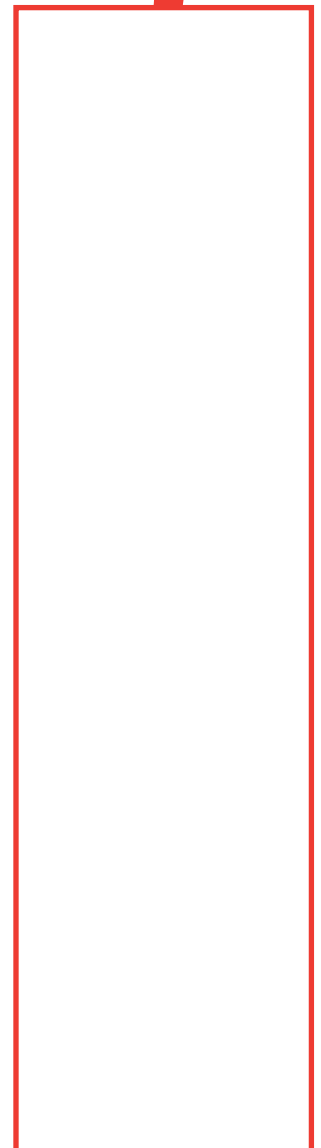
- Communication is the essential key to understanding.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions, and when answers are given be sure to listen.
- The cycle of communication is usually broken when you try to second-guess what others are trying to say.
- Try to understand the motivations and goals of others around you. This can improve your communications and increase your network of positive partnerships.

## 7. Connect to a Good Power Source

- Having access to strong, positive partners will increase your ability to succeed.

## 8. Stop, Look, and Listen

- Your world will continue to change and evolve, so be prepared to review, reevaluate, and renew your goals.
- Look at these changes not as disappointments, but as opportunities to improve a realistic plan for your long-term success.



# JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE STANDARDS PARENT INFORMATION

LOOK AT  
YOUR CHILD'S  
*SCHOOL AGENDA*  
TO SEE THE  
PERFORMANCE  
STANDARDS!

REMEMBER,  
HIGH STANDARDS  
MEAN HIGH  
SUCCESS!

## **What are standards and what do they mean for my middle school student?**

There is a lot of talk in the media about national and state standards and about raising student achievement by using standards. In Kentucky, we have been involved in standards-based reform for some time, yet not everyone has a clear idea of what standards are.

In Jefferson County Public Schools, we are focusing our improvement efforts on Content and Performance Standards. Content Standards are a set of statements that provide a clear description of what students should be able to do in a subject area. Performance Standards are a set of statements that tell us how good students' work must be to meet the Content Standards. There are Performance and Content Standards for all the subject areas.

Our new Performance Standards for student achievement give students, teachers, and parents clear goals to work toward.

## **How do I know if my child is meeting the standards?**

All of us think our children do wonderful, creative work. That is why we hang it on the refrigerator. What we don't know is if it is good enough to meet the standards of our school district and state. This is why the Performance Standards are accompanied by several other important pieces of information, which you can compare with the work you see your child actually doing:

- A sample performance task that shows you the kind of work you can expect to see your child doing;
- A sample of student work along with the scoring criteria of what makes it a quality piece of work;
- A listing of the supporting skills and prior learning your child needs to meet the standards successfully.

## **Where do I go to see these standards?**

Your child has been given a *School Agenda* for his or her daily use. The beginning pages of the agenda define the Performance Standards and supporting skills in all content areas. This tool will enable you to learn what your child is doing daily in his or her classes. Please ask to see the *School Agenda* each evening.

## **Remember, high standards mean high success!**

SHOW YOUR STUDENT THAT YOU LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT HIS OR HER HOMEWORK.

- Praise your teen for putting the homework in the spot you both pick out. It should be placed in the same spot every day. "I'm glad you put the homework on the hall table." Tell other things you are glad your teen did.
- You may ask, "What homework do you have tonight?"
- Plan a special time to do homework. The TV should not be on at this time.
- Have a place at the table where written homework can be done.
- Go over the work with your teen when it is done.
- Ask your teen if he or she needs help with some work or subject. You may say something like, "I am pleased with your history quiz. Tell me about your spelling grades."
- If needed, try to get your teen to ask the teacher for help with the subject.

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL

Our schools are committed to helping all children learn at high levels. As a parent or guardian, there are ways that you can seriously help your child in his or her job of school learning. Here are some of them:

- Meet your child's teachers, counselor, principal as soon as possible each school year. These are important members of your child's "school family." Learn the best time and manner to reach them, for future use. Every middle school teacher has a planning period during the school day that can be used for parent conferences.
- Be involved in your child's school. Volunteer to help. Join and help the PTA and/or the school council.

## **When problems arise:**

- Ask your child for his or her understanding of what's wrong. Then contact the school person involved, usually the teacher. If it cannot be resolved by telephone, ask to meet with the teacher or your child's team of teachers. If you need further help, talk with the counselor for that grade level, and finally the principal. Assume that someone at the school can help clarify the problem and work out an agreeable resolution.
- If your child is having trouble learning or has behavior or emotional problems in school, discuss testing your child in order to detect specific needs that require specific methods of instruction. Various programs and schools exist within JCPS that are designed for students with physical, learning, behavioral, or emotional difficulties. School failure can lead to misery and many other problems that could be avoided by early intervention. Your child needs your help and belief in him or her, especially when there are problems. Do whatever it takes to get on a better course.

## **Other members of your school's team who might help:**

- The multicultural education contact person (regarding any perceived cultural, racial, or religious insensitivity or discrimination)
- The Youth Services Center coordinator can assist the child and help guide parents through the various resources available in pursuing a solution
- School staff can teach "conflict resolution" skills to settle disagreements respectfully and peaceably. Other students may be trained as "peer mediators" to help youth hear one another and work things out

## **If the problem has not been resolved to your satisfaction after talking with all local school personnel listed above, call one of the following:**

- JCPS Middle School Liaison at 485-3549
- JCPS Exceptional Child Education Office at 485-8500
- JCPS Parent Advocate at 485-6270
- JCPS School Board Member (five were elected to serve as independent advocates for students and families) at 485-3566
- JCPS Superintendent at 485-3566

Options exist to help all children succeed. Often, they are easy to find, but not always. **PERSIST.** Your child deserves support, and you are most likely the best one to give it.



**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION,  
CALL:**

**THE PEACE  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAM**  
(CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
AND PEER MEDIATION  
TRAINING INFORMATION)  
**589-6583**

**UNIVERSITY OF  
LOUISVILLE  
CHILD  
EVALUATION  
CENTER**  
**852-5331**

# TRUANCY

## **FAMILY TIME:**

- **TELL THE FAMILY THAT YOU WANT TO PLAN TO DO SOMETHING TOGETHER, BESIDES WATCHING TV.**
- **TALK ABOUT THE IDEA.**
- **SUGGESTIONS: GAMES, PUZZLES, RADIO, DANCING, QUIET TIME, CARDS, GOING TO THE PARK OR LIBRARY, OR GOING FOR A WALK, OUT FOR DINNER OR ICE CREAM, TO THE ZOO OR MUSEUM, FOR A PICNIC.**

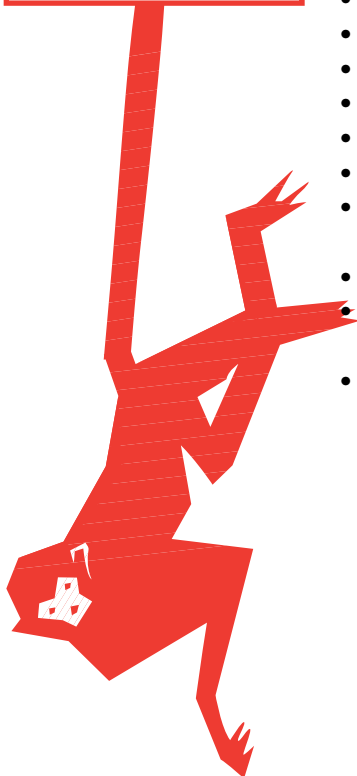
**Kentucky School Law 159.150 states: “Any child who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for more than three (3) days, or tardy more than three (3) days, is a truant. Any child who has been reported truant more than three (3) times is a habitual truant.”**

## **First Signs of a Problem with Attendance**

- Excessive absences, excused and/or unexcused
- Resisting going to school, making excuses to stay home
- Poor grades/academic performance
- Being disruptive in school
- Hanging out with students who get into trouble
- Becoming more and more defiant/disrespectful
- Cutting classes and/or skipping school
- Failing classes, expressing negative attitudes about school attendance

## **What Parents Can Do**

- Ask “why” your child is avoiding going to school. Deal promptly and thoroughly with school problems.
- Make going to school expected, not to be taken lightly.
- Praise and reward good attendance.
- Verbalize positive outcomes.
- Remove avoidable excuses (i.e., no clean clothes, not meeting dress code, exaggerating minor aches and pains, being late, etc.).
- Set reasonable, age-appropriate bedtimes.
- Purchase/Use an alarm clock.
- Help student organize morning routines.
- Reinforce student’s getting up and getting ready independently.
- Maintain frequent contact with the school.
- Send a note clarifying legitimate absences.
- Check student’s report card for attendance.
- Keep a calendar, and record absences.
- Establish consequences for cutting school.
- Make appointments (i.e., doctor, dentist, etc.) during non-school hours if possible.
- Request a conference with school after three (3) unexcused absences.
- Check in with the school periodically if you have any concerns about your child’s attendance.
- Create a positive atmosphere in the morning routine so your child leaves for school in a good mood.

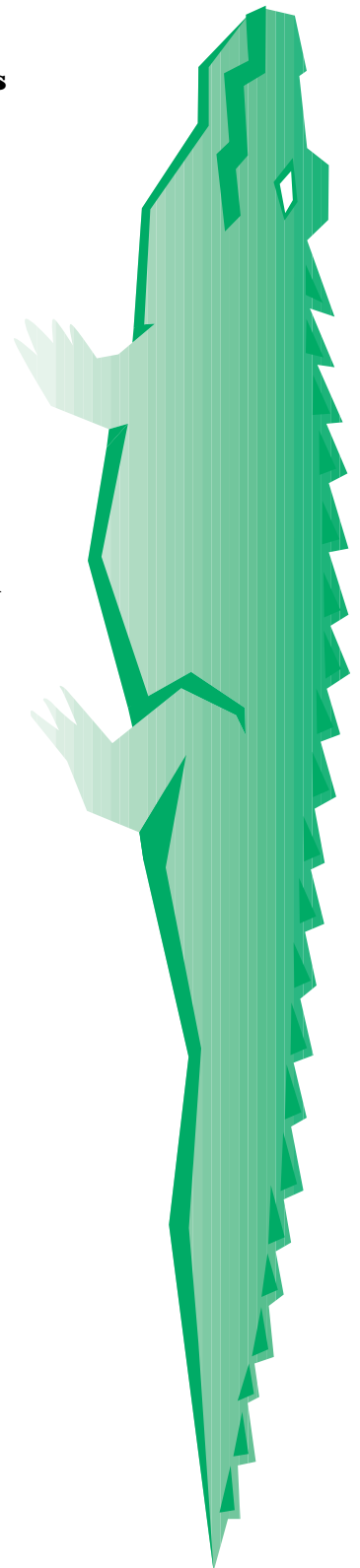


# VOLUNTEER OPTIONS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL-AGE YOUTH

Volunteering or contributing to others in our community helps youth realize that they have value just as they are. It helps them to connect with and learn from those they work with in their project, and it helps to improve our community. Youth act responsibly when they know they are needed.

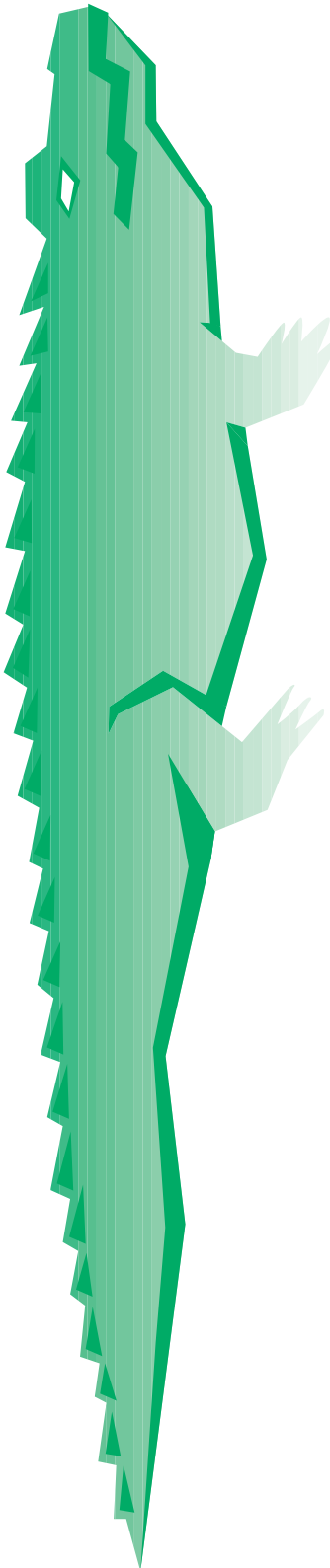
## **Resources to Call About Volunteer Opportunities for Middle School Students**

- Volunteer Connection at Metro United Way has a list of current age-appropriate volunteer opportunities in our community. Call 266-6328.
- Nursing Homes/Senior Citizen Centers—Call and say “Partner me with someone who needs or would welcome a young volunteer.” Some possible activities include organizing and leading group or individual craft activities, reading aloud, helping write a letter, or leading a bingo or other game.
- Day Care Center—Call in advance to set up a visit. Some possible activities include reading at story time, bringing a game and playing it with one or more kids, or just playing.
- Homeless Shelters have child-care centers that need volunteers.
- Help homeless shelters (Wayside Christian Mission and Volunteers of America) to organize donated gifts.
- Call the American Red Cross and volunteer to assemble “Friendship Boxes” for distribution to young people in disaster areas. These are boxes filled with school supplies, toiletries, etc. This activity can be done in your own home. Call 589-4450.
- Call local “Meals on Wheels” and volunteer to make greeting cards for homebound people for various holidays. These cards are then given with holiday meals. This can be done in your own home or classroom. Call 574-6325.
- Peace Education Program often needs volunteers for help with mailings and other jobs. Call 589-6583.
- Louisville Youth Alliance, 574-3929
- Humane Society—Animal Rescue League, 366-3355
- Louisville Zoo, 459-2181



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership	Prichard Committee	1-800-928-2111
How to Succeed in Middle School	Jenny Cain	485-8842
Middle School Coalition	Susan Shortt	485-3946
Parent University	Susan Shortt	485-3946
Planned Parenthood of Louisville	Amber Davies	584-2471
Site-Based Decision Making Council (SBDM) Training for Parents	Sharon Solomon	485-3228
15th District PTA (various trainings)	Sharon Barker	485-3535
Advisory Committee for Youth Services Centers at your local school	Patricia Lambert	485-6270



## FAMILY JOBS— SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

- Think of three daily and three weekly jobs to be done. Your teen should pick and do one job from each list. Daily work may be emptying trash or dishwasher; feeding and watering animals; carrying clean clothes to bedrooms, and so on. Weekly work may be to dust or vacuum the house, to clean the bathroom, and so on.
- Plan together for what time and day the jobs should be done.
- Very often you may have to tell your teen, "The job must be done today!"
- Praise your teen for:
  - Doing the job on his or her own
  - Doing the job when you reminded him or her
  - Good attitude or working willingly on the job
  - Helping the family
  - Taking responsibility

