

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Parent Letter | 4 |
| What Is SEL? | 5 |
| How SEL Benefits Students | 6 |
| SEL and Middle School | 8 |
| Communication Is Key! | 10 |
| Reliable Resources for Parents | 12 |
| Reading Recommendations for Students | 14 |
| Self-Awareness | 16 |
| Self-Management | 20 |
| Social Awareness | 24 |
| Relationship Skills | 28 |
| Responsible Decision-Making | 32 |
| Tips & Tricks | 36 |
| You've Got This! | 38 |
| SEL Daily Emotions Chart | 39 |
| SEL Inspirational Poster | 40 |



Communication Is Key!

Talk It Out ♥ Speaking with your middle schooler can feel like pruning a prickly cactus. You might get some eye rolls, some heavy sighs, or even some slammed doors; however, the key is to be pleasantly persistent. Keep trying different ways to communicate until you find something that works. Continually let your middle schooler know you are there for them so that when they are ready to talk it out, they will come to you. This page includes some tips to help you successfully speak with your child, while the following page focuses on suggestions on how to teach them to communicate effectively with others.



Communication Tips

- When speaking with your middle schooler, vary the speed and tone of your voice, pause during transitions, and maintain eye contact to model positive speaking.
- Actively listen and give your full attention when your middle schooler is talking to you.
- Make sure technology doesn't take the place of face-to-face interaction but rather supplements it.
- Use body language that shows you are open to listening to what they have to say. Convey a warm and open body posture rather than an angry, closed-off stance.
- Ask questions to keep the conversation going.
- Remember not to overload your middle schooler with too many things all at once. They are already going through so much with their developing brains and hormones. Try to keep the list of topics brief.



Awesome Advice

Don't attempt to multitask, such as trying to look up a dinner recipe on your phone while your middle schooler is talking to you. Set your phone down, make eye contact, and really listen to what they are saying to you. Give them your full attention and respect. Consistently doing this will also show them how to treat you and others.



Self-Management

What Is Self-Management? ♥ Once middle school students understand self-awareness, the next step is self-management. This means that they can effectively manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. This includes being able to manage stress, self-motivate, delay gratification, and set and work toward goals (both personal and academic, as well as with a group). Middle school students with strong self-management skills come to class prepared and ready to learn. They follow directions and pay attention to what is going on around them. They effectively work independently, and they allow others to speak and participate in discussions without interruption. Middle school students should also be able to take initiative and build resilience.



Make a List and Check It Twice

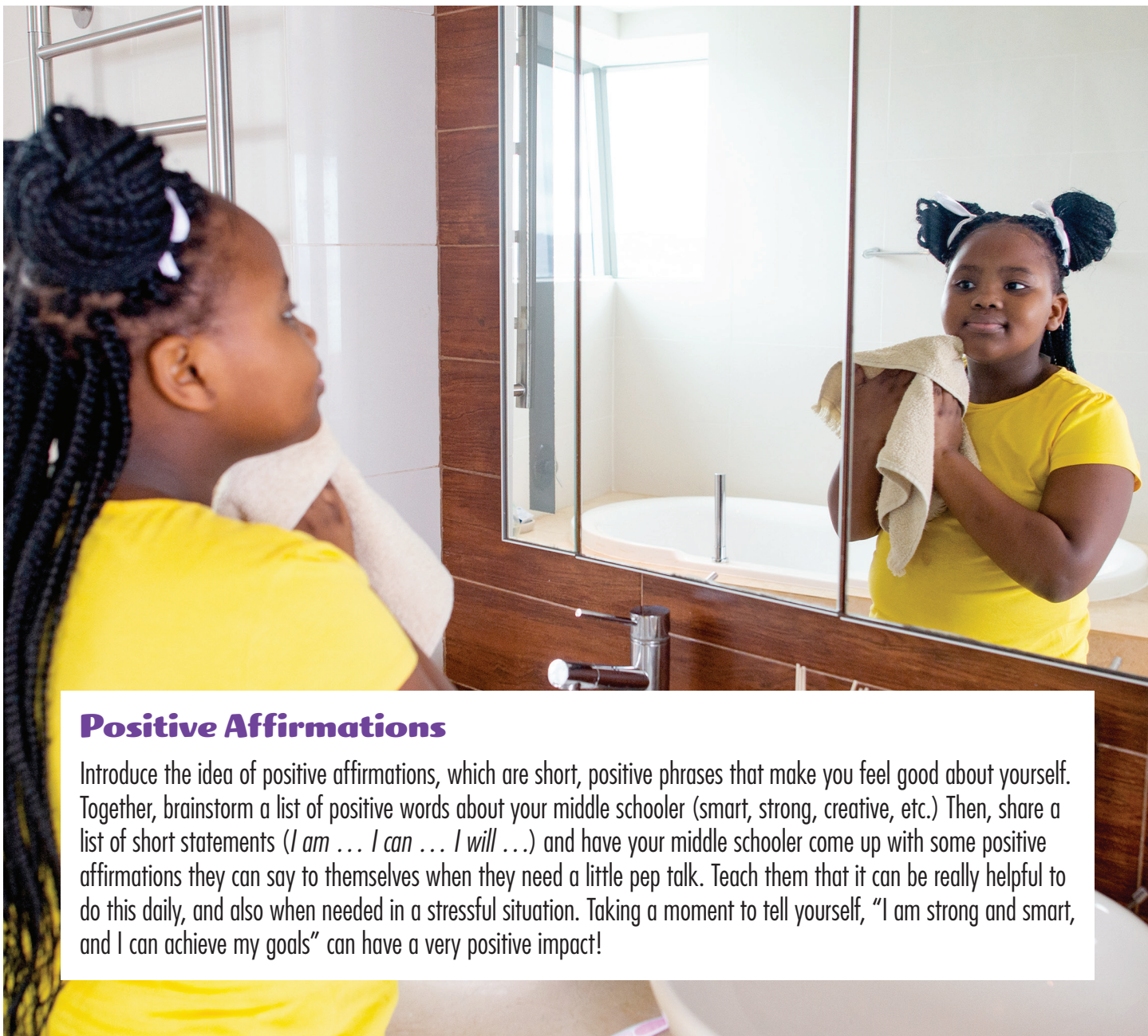
Teach your middle schooler to make a checklist of what they need for a specific situation. This can be a mental checklist, written on a sticky note, or recorded in the notes app on their phone. Ask them to think through the situation at hand ahead of time so they can avoid stressful situations:

- ✓ Do I have all the tools I need for success? (for school: pens, specific paper, folders, etc.; for a sports activity: cleats or specific gear, water bottle, etc.)
- ✓ Do I understand all the instructions or what I need to do for this activity?
- ✓ Am I ready to listen and focus on getting my work done?
- ✓ Is there anything else I need to do to get ready?



Awesome Advice

Use the term “take a break” when you see your middle schooler getting stressed out. Teach them that when they hear you say this term, they should change their physical situation. They could step outside for a few moments, take deep breaths, or simply squeeze and relax the muscles in their body before returning to the task at hand. This quick change of setting and taking a few minutes of “me time” can help them to refocus and relax.



Positive Affirmations

Introduce the idea of positive affirmations, which are short, positive phrases that make you feel good about yourself. Together, brainstorm a list of positive words about your middle schooler (smart, strong, creative, etc.) Then, share a list of short statements (*I am ... I can ... I will ...*) and have your middle schooler come up with some positive affirmations they can say to themselves when they need a little pep talk. Teach them that it can be really helpful to do this daily, and also when needed in a stressful situation. Taking a moment to tell yourself, “I am strong and smart, and I can achieve my goals” can have a very positive impact!



















Steps To Goal

Have your middle schooler think of a goal that is important to them. It could be academic or otherwise. Then, have them brainstorm all the things that need to be done to achieve that goal. Once that is done, have them list all the steps it will take to achieve that goal in chronological order. This can be written on paper, in a journal, or in the notes app of their phone. Then, have them set a date to achieve the goal by, and try to set dates for the steps needed along the way as well (if it is a long-term goal). Once each step is achieved, have your middle schooler check it off so they can visually see how they are one step closer to their goal. Be sure to celebrate the goal as well as the steps achieved along the way.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Parent Letter | 4 |
| Student Letter | 5 |
| Feelings Tracker | 6 |
| <i>Introduction Entries</i> | |
| Feelings | 9 |
| Hard Feelings | 10 |
| <i>Self-Awareness</i> | |
| Five Things | 11 |
| Mistakes | 12 |
| Worry | 13 |
| Super-Strength | 14 |
| <i>Self-Management</i> | |
| Overwhelmed | 15 |
| Goals | 16 |
| Recharge | 17 |
| Healthy Habits | 18 |
| <i>Social Awareness</i> | |
| Empathy | 19 |
| Point of View | 20 |
| World Cultures | 21 |
| Be an Includer | 22 |
| <i>Relationship Skills</i> | |
| Forever Friends | 23 |
| Team Player | 24 |
| Conflict Resolution | 25 |
| Communication | 26 |
| <i>Responsible Decision-Making</i> | |
| Peer Pressure | 27 |
| Cell Phones | 28 |
| Responsibility | 29 |
| Dream Job | 30 |
| <i>Closing Entries</i> | |
| What I Learned | 31 |
| How I Feel Right Now | 32 |

Feelings Tracker

| Feelings | Days | | | | | | | |
|--|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Afraid  | | | | | | | | |
| Angry  | | | | | | | | |
| Anxious  | | | | | | | | |
| Bored  | | | | | | | | |
| Calm  | | | | | | | | |
| Disappointed  | | | | | | | | |
| Embarrassed  | | | | | | | | |
| Excited  | | | | | | | | |
| Frustrated  | | | | | | | | |
| Happy  | | | | | | | | |
| Jealous  | | | | | | | | |
| Sad  | | | | | | | | |
| Shy  | | | | | | | | |
| Silly  | | | | | | | | |
| Surprised  | | | | | | | | |
| Worried  | | | | | | | | |

Date _____



What do you worry most about? Why do you think you worry about this so much? How does your body feel when you are worried?



Multiple horizontal lines for writing.

Date _____



Do you think that parents should still have access to everything on their kid's cell phone once the kid turns 13 years old? Why or why not?



A series of horizontal lines for writing, starting from the first line below the dotted line and continuing down to the bottom of the page.