



APRIL 01ST | 12-1 PM

PREPARING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

LIVE STREAMING ON FACEBOOK

BROWN BAG LEARNING LUNCH

Preparing for Middle School

Tips from a Special Education Teacher and a Parent

MAY

COVID-19

None of us know exactly how Middle School will look this fall

We've compiled some tips to help families prepare based on the best information we have now

What is reasonable considering COVID-19?

The schools are closed to teachers as well, so know that your student's case manager may not have access to everything they usually do

What is reasonable considering COVID-19 cont.

If your student doesn't get a chance to meet their case manager before school starts, email them and ask for a virtual meeting so the student can see what their go-to person looks like

Teachers and Special Education Case Managers are also navigating uncertain times

Try to give everyone some grace during this time- including yourself!

Transition ARD

This usually happens before school ends

This year, it may be an online conference

Usually your child's current Case Manager and the new Middle School Case Manager will attend

Your child will usually attend at least part of the meeting so they can practice self advocacy and so they can meet their Case Manager

Transition ARD cont.

These meetings tend to be short and are typically looking at how to adjust accommodations so they fit a middle school model

Middle school is so different, some accommodations work differently

Consider asking for a Pre-ARD so you have more time to give input and ask questions

During the Transition ARD, identify a safe space or chill zone for your child in Middle School

Tour the School virtually!

Since you can not tour the school this year, search for virtual tour opportunities to help familiarize your child with the school

Check out the school's website for pictures of the school

The school may have a newsletter with pictures

Look for Facebook pages for pictures of activities like band, sports, theater, etc

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SUMMER

Middle School Camp or Orientation

Go to the 6th grade Transition Camp or Orientation if your child's school offers one this year

Go to the school as much as possible to get used to it!

Walk around the outside of the school- walk the track, exercise, play basketball there (follow social distancing if still in place!)

Look for opportunities to familiarize your child with the school

If the middle school hosts any sports, arts or other camps or activities, register for something so your future middle schooler has familiarity

Clubs/ Activities

Look at the school website for club ideas and find some social opportunities your future middle schooler is interested in

Prep for Lockers

If your child will have a locker or a PE locker, get a combination lock and practice using it and memorizing the code

There are different types of locks, some work with numbers and others with directions

Memorize Student ID

If your child doesn't know their student ID, help them memorize it this summer

Student IDs are often used in Middle School to buy lunch and participate in programs

School Supplies

If your child will have a block schedule, which means they will go to each class every other day, consider having 2 backpacks or 2 binders for 4 classes each, and pocket dividers with folders

Having 2 backpacks or 2 binders for block days cuts down on papers going in the wrong place

Social Story

Make a social story about middle school basics & what's new/different

Autism Society of Texas will have Middle School Social Stories on our website

Preparing for Middle School

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**SUMMER
CONT.**

Prep for MS Halls

Middle School hallways are very different from Elementary School

Find movies that have passing periods in Middle or High School to show your child and talk about what the hallways will look and feel like- they may be crowded and loud

Talk with your future middle schooler about the possibility of someone bumping into them in the hallway

What would this mean? Would it mean the person was mad at them or were they in a hurry to get to class?

Lunch Room Prep

The lunch room in middle school is different

It is not a quiet space with assigned tables as it was in Elementary school

The lunchroom can be crowded and noisy

The lines can be long

Send your child with lunch for the first couple of weeks

Help your student think about events like: What happens if someone cuts in front of you?

Lunch Room Prep cont.

Alternate cafeteria options: Are there other options with kids eating elsewhere, who is the host? The host may not be the Case Manager

Homeroom/Advisory will usually explain how to get lunch

Practice asking for help with getting lunch: How does it work?

Have the child email their Case Manager & request help about how to buy lunch

Locker Room Prep

Talk about changing in the locker room for PE

Teach your future middle schooler not to take off all of their clothes at one time

Take off a shirt, put on a shirt. Take off shorts, put on shorts

Introducing Yourself

Help your child practice how to introduce themselves to new people

Role play how to introduce themselves to a student and to an adult

Safe Space

Most Important-how to ask for help if they need their "safe" spot

Make sure your child knows where their safe spot or chill zone is located

If the school is large with several stories, your middle schooler might need a safe spot on each floor

Help your future middle schooler practice asking to go to their safe zone

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**EARLY
AUGUST**

Before School Starts

If possible go to the school, meet the Case Manager and tour

Identify and meet some "helpers" - Administrators, Aides, Special Ed Teachers, & Counselors

Make sure your child knows where there is a safe place to go & how to ask for help if they get lost, overwhelmed or confused

Have your child practice asking to go to their safe space and asking to see their Case Manager

Meet Your Case Manager/Get Your Schedule Day

Get your child's schedule and walk your child's schedule in the order of their regular day

Make notes about where classes are on a map or notepad

Take photos or video the classrooms, the doors with room numbers, etc, as you're walking around (get permission and avoid pics of other kids!)

Have your Student narrate the walk with directional cues they will remember

Schedule Prep

Make a mini-schedule for each day

Add tips in between class listings, like "get PE clothes from locker" or "get your lunch before you head to the cafeteria"

Make the schedule physically accessible

Write schedule on index card- laminate it or use packing tape on either side to laminate it

Attach to backpack or whatever they're carrying around with ziptie or carabiner

What should parents and students expect from Middle School Case Managers?

In middle school, your case manager is the go-to person

Keep in mind, your child may not have any classes with their case manager, so the student knowing where to find their Case Manager and how to get in contact with them is important

What should parents and students expect from Middle School Case Managers? cont

It can be useful for the student to have a short weekly meeting with their Case Manager to touch base about any academic or social problems at school

Some Case Managers will meet with students before school, during lunch, after school, and during advisory

Text Books

Make sure you know where your child's text books are. and how to access them- they are often online!

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Teacher and a Parent*

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If the student doesn't get a chance to meet the case manager before school starts, email them and ask for a virtual meeting so the student can see what their go-to person looks like. Teachers and Special Education Case Managers are also navigating uncertain times
Try to give everyone some grace during this time- including yourself!

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This usually happens before school ends. This year, it may be an online conference. Usually your child's current Case Manager and the new Middle School Case Manager will attend. Your child will usually attend at least part of the meeting so they can practice self advocacy and so they can meet their Case Manager. These meetings tend to be short and are typically looking at how to adjust accommodations so they fit a middle school model. Since middle school is big change, some accommodations will work differently. Consider asking for a Pre-ARD so you have more time to give input and ask questions. During the Transition ARD, identify a safe space or chill zone (different schools have various names).

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**SUMMER
CONT.**

School Supplies

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SOCIAL STORY

Staying Organized in Middle School Sample Social Story

Make sure you talk with your Middle schoolers Case Manager and edit the details!

In Middle School I will have____(8)different classes but I will only go to___ (4) of them each day. I will have my homeroom every day. Because there are so many teachers & classes, all the students, including me, have to work hard to keep all of our papers, schoolwork and homework organized.

To help with this, I will have___(2) big binders with folders inside for each class. We are not allowed to carry our backpacks around. I will put my backpack (and my lunchbox) in my locker in the morning. I can get my backpack and lunchbox at the end of the day after my last class. During the school day, I will carry my binder around, and it will have everything in it that I need: papers, pencils, pens and my folders for my classes.

On A Days, I will use my black and grey zipper bag (Gray for A).

On B Days, I will use my blue & black binder. (B for Blue).

The zipper binders are where I will keep my homework & schoolwork, There are a few things that will help me keep track of everything:

- When I am in class, I will put my papers and worksheets in the correct folder for the class.
- Everyday at home I will look at my binders with _____(Mom, Dad or Caregiver) & put papers in the right place and organize and put away any loose papers. We can all look to see what assignments I have to turn in or work on for homework.
- At school, my Case Manager, _____ (Ms. Smith) will help me learn to keep track of my work.

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SOCIAL STORY

Agenda/ Planner/ Google Calendar

When teachers tell us assignments or assignments are written somewhere, I need to write it in my agenda (or put in my google calendar- or whichever format your child's school uses). It will help remind me that I need to do it for homework or remind me to turn it in.

If I can work on keeping things organized, it will help me do well in school and make things a little easier!

First Week of School

On Monday, _____ (Mom, Dad or Caregiver) will _____(drop me off at the front door, say bye to me before I go outside to get on the bus, etc).When I get to school, I will go to My Case Manager's room _____, (Ms. Smith's) room. Ms. Smith will help us get our supplies organized! I will need to bring pens, pencils and papers to class on the first day so they will need to go in my binder in the zipper part. The first day of school is going to be a different schedule for all the 6th graders since we are all getting used to being at a new school and having new teachers! If I have questions or I am confused, I can talk to_____ (Ms. Smith) or _____(Mr. Roberts.) They will tell me where to go.

This is my first day schedule

- Homeroom class
- Assembly
- Lunch

- After lunch, I go to all my A day classes but only for a short time. When I get to my classes, my teacher might tell the kids where to sit, or they may tell me just to choose a seat and sit anywhere

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SOCIAL STORY

First Week of School Cont.

- At 3:30, It will be time to go home! _____ (Mom, Dad, Caregiver) will pick me up or (I will take _____ bus home)!

Tuesday will be a regular day and I will follow my B day schedule. My B day schedule is:

- Theatre
- World Cultures with _____(Mr. Wilson) in room _____(202.) (We eat a snack in this class).
- P.E. with _____ Mr. Green in the GYM
- LUNCH- CAFETERIA
- Advisory with _____ (Mrs. Smith), room _____ (101)
- English/Language Arts with _____ (Mrs. Williams), room _____ (115)
- Time to go home! Meet _____ (Mom, Dad or caregiver) outside. OR get on _____ bus.

Middle School is going to be pretty cool! I get to learn interesting things and meet lots of new people!