

IN THE MIDDLE: Transition to middle school can be tough

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Change. Does this word come to mind when you think of your seventh-grader? The truth is, the change from elementary school to middle school has a bigger impact on your child than you may realize.

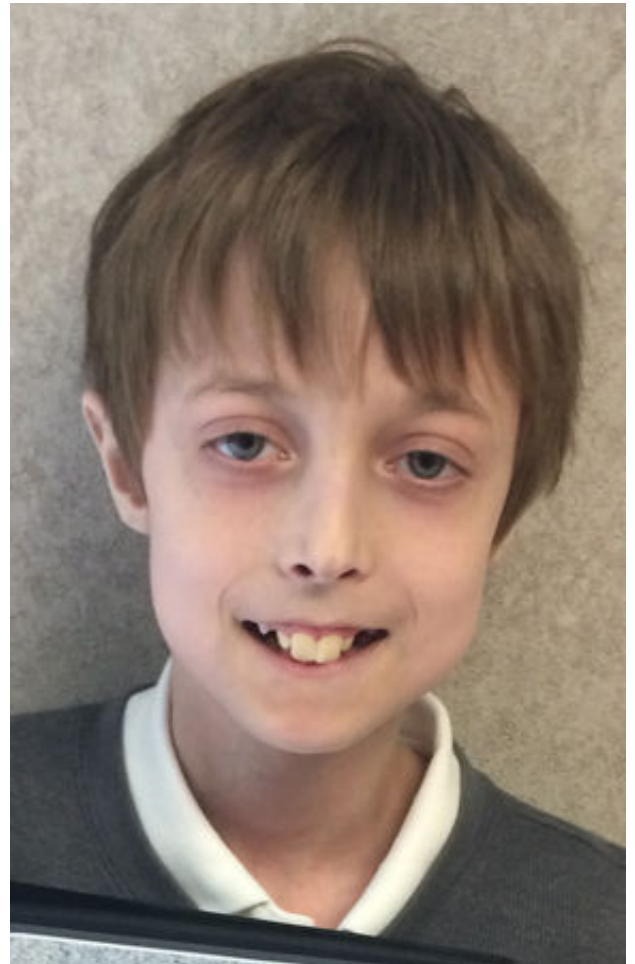
Often times, middle school kids are forced to wake up a lot earlier due to buses also being used for elementary routes shortly after they are used on the middle school routes. This can change how students act, their grades or how much energy they have throughout the day. This generally also puts a lot of stress on your kid, as they are tired and tend to forget things more.

Another thing us middle schoolers experience is puberty: voice cracks, sudden growth spurts, acne and other gross things. Puberty generally happens in eighth grade, but it can also happen in seventh, and this change can be very stressful. For boys, it often affects the voice, which can cause their social life to change a lot.

People probably don't even consider most of the things happening in their child's life around middle school. Immaturity is very common in middle school, as well. Middle schoolers probably hide it when they get home, but are often profane in classes.

Another problem is drugs. Middle schoolers going through puberty are sometimes tempted to fit in with their friends, so sometimes they take illegal drugs to fit in. Other times, they can just be curious — or they are bored. This can cause them to become addicted, as these drugs can cause their body to become so used to it that they can not operate without it. The problem then would be trying to stop. They could go through withdrawal symptoms. Not only would drugs be bad for middle schoolers, but if they quit, their friends might think they aren't cool anymore and ditch them.

Middle school can also be a prime time for bullies, kids picking on others who aren't quite the same as them or do things differently. For kids with learning disabilities it can be a major problem, as they



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are often times experiencing a different level of bullying in middle school.

One other thing kids can find stressful is having seven different teachers. During the school year, middle school students have work in every single class, plus a lot of homework — generally homework from every class. This can be stressful, as you have to stay organized, and it is hard with having a locker break only every so often throughout the day. Most kids carry a binder around with all of their work in it, and if they don't, they will have a bad time in middle school.

One other thing that can be stressful for kids in middle school is the credit system. Instead of receiving a grade for the four major subjects, they receive one for every single class they attend. If they fail more than three classes, they are sent to credit recovery and sometimes to summer school to try and catch up. This puts a lot of stress on middle schoolers, so it's important for them to stay organized.

Let all of these things that change from elementary school to middle school sink in for you. If you see your child going through any of these changes, be sure to help them. Life as a middle schooler can be stressful!

Grant Wyness is a student at Barker Middle School. In the Middle is a regular column produced by MCAS middle school students.