



Transition to Middle School- Mentoring Tips

Give your mentee opportunities to express his feelings about middle school

If your mentee isn't bringing up the topic but you notice he is more distracted or stressed out than usual, initiate a conversation. Acknowledge the change that is coming and ask open-ended questions to see if anything is concerning him.

Listen to fears and concerns

It's tempting to try to downplay them or respond with a blanket statement like "you'll be fine." Sometimes just listening and empathizing is enough. Listen to what he has to say and offer practical suggestions if it appears he wants your input.

Talk about your own transitions, during middle school or any time in your life

Strategic self-disclosure may be a useful tool to help your mentee see that his worries are normal and expected. You may even get a laugh or two as you describe your own experiences and how you handled them.

Help with goal setting and getting involved in new things

Look at elective class offerings together and check out extracurricular activities. Talk about how an after-school activity can help her make new friends, and how elective classes allow her to follow her own interests with students who share them.

Point out your mentee's strengths and abilities

Early adolescence is a time of plummeting self-esteem and self-confidence. Find ways to remind your mentee about her abilities and how they will help her be successful in her new school. Be specific in your praise. For example, "you've really gotten organized with your schoolwork this year. That will be helpful when you start middle school."

Talk about friendships

Changing schools doesn't have to mean losing friends. See if your mentee can name some students he wants to get to know better who are going to the new school. Talk about how he has made new friends in the past. Remind him he has friends in other settings, too- in the neighborhood, place of worship, or sports activities.

Support your mentee throughout the first year of middle school

Your mentee's worries won't disappear when she enters middle school for the first time. Adjusting to the new school and finding her place there will take time, and she is bound to feel discouraged at times. As she comes to you with problems and concerns listen and use open questions to help her problem-solve on her own. You can't fix her problems for her, but you can offer your own perspectives.