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## WHEN YOUR CHILD GETS LOST IN JUNIOR HIGH

*By Diane Trautman*

When children enter junior high school, they often seem to slip off track. They start out well, but their grades decline with each report card. Their backpacks fall into disarray. They forget assignments or fail to turn them in on time. They goof off in class instead of taking notes. Each time you start to discuss grades, your child promises she'll work harder. They just seem to be lost.

We parents are left wondering how the boy who was an 'A' student in primary grades is struggling to maintain 'C's in 7th grade. How is it that our daughter is scoring so poorly on her tests when she spends four hours everyday doing homework?

There might be issues with the teacher, or laziness could be part of the problem. Nascent adolescence certainly complicates things. But a recurring theme with junior high students is the lack of effective study skills, including time management, organization, note taking, and test-taking.

What can parents do to help their sons and daughters find their way through the junior high years?

Set aside study time each day regardless of the homework load. Daily review and practice help to reinforce lessons. Even brief periods of study will pay off when the essay is assigned and the tests roll around.

Read books or articles together. Talk about the message, the characters, and the story structure. They'll be better prepared to organize their own writing and pick out key elements.

Teach your child to assume responsibility for her work and behavior. Resist the urge to do their work for them or rescue them. They need to experience consequences and learn from their mistakes.

Encourage your children to speak with trusted adults about things that are troubling them. Students need to learn how to ask for help when they need it and feel comfortable doing so.

Recognize that poor performance or bad behavior may mean your child is overwhelmed. Don't assume that it's a phase they'll grow out of. Instead, seek timely help from the teacher or a professional tutor. Before you know it, your child will find their way successfully to high school and beyond.

*Diane Trautman owns and operates StudyPros In-Home Tutoring at 661-296-9206 and [studypros.com](http://studypros.com).*