



Joe Bruzzese, MA

Throughout the past 20 years Joe Bruzzese has successfully guided children, parents and educators through the challenges of the childhood years. As a nationally recognized author and teacher, Joe brings innovation, energy, recognition and high standards to both his presentations and his instructional practice. Joe's work has been reported across numerous media outlets, including the Dr. Laura Show, the ABC Morning Show, Momster.com, and a collection of print and online parenting publications across the nation including Independent School.

Joe's background as a teacher and coach paved the way to his book , *A Parents' Guide to the Middle School Years*, published by Random House, and two DVDs, "50 Days and 50 Ways to Thrive During the Middle School Years" and "Confident, Connected and Challenged – The 3 C's to Thriving During the Middle School Years". His energetic, content-rich presentations draw interest from schools and businesses around the nation.

Joe's background in education includes a Master's degree in addition to his former tenure as teacher in the middle school grades. Joe brings years of educational theory and practical experience to his work with families, schools and businesses.

In addition to the speaking events and seminars he facilitates, Joe instructs future teachers in the Graduate School of Education, at UC Santa Barbara and at Azusa Pacific University where he teaches courses focused on the development of relationships among children, parents and schools.

Presentation and Workshop Reviews

"Middle School is not the time to step back, but the time to step forward. Thank you for introducing us to the path for building closer communication with our kids." ~ Jackie, elementary school parent, New York, NY

"Wonderful words of wisdom delivered in a very practical way. I appreciate the survival tips for all!" ~ Colleen, middle school parent, San Francisco, CA

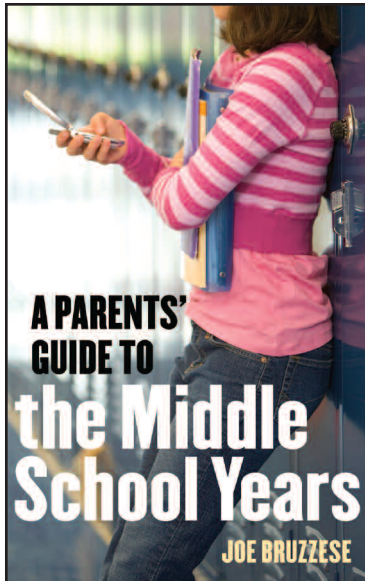
"In this day and age it is refreshing to see someone tune into teens other than their parents. All of these woes & worries of our teens of course become the parents as well! Thank you for the life lines!" ~ Cindy, middle school parent, Las Vegas, NV

"Loved the idea that we can make connections with teachers and other team members. We don't have to dump our kids off at the curb and cross our fingers" ~ Marie, elementary school parent, Goleta, CA

"Thank you for last night's meeting "Confident, Connected and Challenged". Joe was an engaging speaker. I enjoyed this presentation, found new tips and even validation on the things that we are already doing! It's so encouraging to know as well that there is practical help & support out there!" ~ Lisa, elementary school parent, Santa Barbara, CA

"We had our first check in meeting last Sunday with my daughter and wife. Frankly, I wasn't looking forward to it. It seemed a bit artificial, contrived. It turns out that it was an overwhelming success. In fact, my daughter wants to do more than one a week." ~ Jeff, middle school parent, Chicago, IL

"Thank you so much for being my coach. It has been invaluable and I am so grateful."
~ Marianne, middle school parent, San Diego, CA



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A PARENTS' GUIDE TO the Middle School Years

JOE BRUZZESE

Because today's children seem to grow up so fast, middle school has become the new high school. Concerns about homework, social issues, sexuality, technology, and emotional health confront parents earlier than they would like or expect, leaving many of them feeling lost and overwhelmed. Yet middle school can (and should) be a time of positive transformation—an exciting opportunity where children gain independence, parents become supportive coaches, and a rewarding new bond is formed.

In *A Parents' Guide to the Middle School Years*, educator and parent Joe Bruzese offers parents and their children empowering support to face the critical years from sixth to eighth grade with confidence. Filled with valuable advice, its proactive plan of action enhances communication and helps parents find workable solutions for their most pressing concerns, such as the following:

- Keeping kids safe online.
- Identifying the signs of bullying, cyberbullying, and depression.
- Confronting drug and alcohol abuse.
- Understanding a child's emotional shifts, academic challenges, and social stressors.
- Achieving balance between school and extracurricular activities and more.

Helpful hints—including rules for cell phone use, tips for productive parent-teacher relationships, and strategies for academic achievement—allow parents, children, educators (and other mentors) to work together as a team.

With Bruzese's clear take-away advice, families can foster an environment that gives children love, support, and room to grow—ensuring a smooth transition into adulthood and a happy and healthy relationship between parent and child.

JOE BRUZZESE, MA, is a professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has taught at the elementary and middle school levels and coached club soccer for twenty years. He is a featured writer on middle school information websites and frequently speaks at national educators' events. He lives with his wife and two children in **Santa Barbara, California**, and is available for interviews.

Visit www.thinking-forward.com.

A Parents' Guide to the Middle School Years by Joe Bruzese
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Parent Education Presentation Topics

Each topic can be structured as a 2 hour presentation or as part of an interactive, half-day seminar. To inquire about scheduling a presentation or seminar, email us or call Joe directly.

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Topic: Book Talk - A Parents' Guide to the Middle School Years

Audience: Parents

Would your parent community benefit from a practical set of strategies for navigating the middle school years? During the 90-minute book Joe takes the audience on a journey through the middle school years, highlighting each of the book's six essential chapters. Ideal for a middle school transition night in the spring or a welcome back evening in the fall. Parents attending the book talk will leave with answers to their most common questions about the middle school years and strategies for helping their children overcome obstacles. Peer issues, building positive teacher relationships, and staying ahead in school are among the topics Joe discusses.

Topic: "Bullying and Cyberbullying Safety – Strategies for changing the culture and mindset around bullying

Audience: Parents

Bullying has become the number one topic on the minds of parents and school administrators alike. Changing the way children treat each other requires a cultural change. By empowering kids with the tools to change the way think about bullying and what is perceived to be “cool” behavior, schools can begin to move toward a culture of kindness and respect.

Topic: Drive – Rethinking the way we motivate today’s teens
Audience: Parents

Children possess the tools to focus and engage in activities that they choose and value. The challenge is to use this same level of engagement and excitement for, as one parent said, “Getting them to do the things they don’t want to do.” Based on the work from Daniel Pink’s bestselling book, “Drive” this presentation leave parents feeling equipped with the knowledge and skills to strengthen their child’s sense of ambition and passion.

Topic: Confident, Connected and Challenged – The 3 C’s to Thriving During the Childhood Years
Audience: Parents

Progressing through the childhood years can leave parents wondering how to best support their child. Staying connected with your child, amidst the weekly homework load and a full slate of afterschool activities, can become a daily struggle. Inspiring confidence and the pursuit of challenging goals can be a difficult balance to achieve. Learn strategies for building a team of supportive teachers, coaches and mentors, inspiring confidence in your child's day and bringing balance to your child's academic and extracurricular schedule.

Topic: Helicopters to Hummingbirds – The Changing Role of Parents During the Childhood Years
Audience: Parents and Educators

Oprah’s O Magazine brought the plight of helicopter parents to the forefront of teen parenting in a recent feature article. The message to parents, “Hovering too close negates a child’s ability to take responsibility for everyday activities, and leaves them unprepared to meet the challenges of life as an independent adult.” The transition to adolescence remains one of life’s greatest challenges for both kids and parents. As children struggle to achieve independence and a unique identity, parents meet an equally daunting task. Acknowledging a child’s need for independence often leaves parents feeling alone and detached from their child’s life. Learning how to stay connected with your child while encouraging independence takes a new set of parenting skills. Presented as a positive, light-hearted look at how parents can support a child's move to independence, this presentation resonates clearly with parents and educators alike.

Topic: OMG POS G2G - Navigating the gauntlet of sexting and social networking

Audience: Parents and Educators

Born into the world of cell phones and cyberspace, children of today's millennial generation live seamlessly with technology. A parent's knowledge of the internet is often far less than their child's, a position that leaves children vulnerable and parents in the dark about how to best guide their children in safe internet use. Learn strategies for setting realistic expectations about your child's use of MySpace or Facebook as well as how to decode the language of today's tech savvy kids.

Topic: Getting Organized for Middle School - The Basics of Organization and Time Management

Audience: Parents and Educators

Middle school marks the start of a transition toward independence for children and their parents. Rigorous class schedules, an increased homework load and the addition of a bevy of afterschool activities can throw kids (and parents) into a tailspin. A new set of strategies for managing activities and time can reduce the stress kids feel, allowing for a fun and rewarding middle school experience.

Staff Development Workshops

Topic: Bridging the gap between parents and teachers

Audience: Educators

Each parent comes to the classroom with a unique experience of what it means to have been a student. Unfortunately, parental expectations about what a teacher *should be* can lead to strained relationships between parents and teacher throughout the year; ultimately affecting a child's ability to learn. Recognizing a parent's role in the learning process while acknowledging the importance of a teacher's expertise can be a difficult balance to achieve.

Do conversations with parents leave your teachers feeling anxious?

Have parents expressed an increased desire to partner in their child's education?

Have teachers become resistant to parent comments or suggestions?

Learn strategies for:

Building relationships that recognize both parents and teachers for their role in learning.

Negotiating difficult parent-teacher conversations

Staying connected with unresponsive or overly responsive parents

Rethinking the traditional parent-teacher conference

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