

Newsletter



October tends to be the month when **life really gets busy**. If you're thinking, "We are already busy!" then strap on your seatbelt. This month's article, "How busy are you?" is designed to offer quick, practical tips for identifying busy spots in your schedule and what you can do to lessen the stress that often accompanies a busy schedule.

I

New to this month's newsletter: 2 videos, one for parents and the other for middle schoolers. Over the past months leading up to the start of school I received hundreds of requests for new videos from middle schoolers. Stress was atop the list of requests. Feel free to share the second video listed at the end of the newsletter with your child.

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[4-Minute Video](#)

Listen in - Live Call with Joe



Wednesday, October 20th at 10:00 AM PST/12:00 PM CST/1:00 PM EST. I will host a live, 15-minute call with special guest and parent education expert, Kathy Masarie. Learn more about Kathy and her work here: www.family-empower.com.

There are two ways to hear the call. Listen over the internet at <http://www.MiddleSchoolYears.com> on Wednesday, October 20th at 10:00 AM PST/12:00 PM CST/1:00 PM EST and click the "Listen Live" button. Listening via your internet connection has the added option of asking questions in the chat room. The other option is to call in to (646) 716-7230.



It's easy for kids (and parents) to become too busy. A recent study conducted by researchers at Columbia University found that seven out of ten **kids experienced stress on a daily basis**. For many kids, middle school marks a shift toward becoming more socially active. But keep in mind that it's essential for a

child's growth and well-being to leave room in his weekly schedule for unstructured time with friends.

"My daughter is the classic overachiever. She wants to be involved in everything. Helping her find a healthy balance where she could feel successful in school as well as in her extracurricular life was a real challenge." -Sarah, middle school mom, Las Vegas, NV

Does your child's current after school schedule inspire enthusiasm and excitement or does the weekly calendar leave her feeling exhausted and short-tempered by week's end?

Kids depend on parents to accurately gauge their ability to meet the academic demands of middle school while leaving them time to pursue new and interesting extracurricular interests.

Kids don't like struggling through week after week trying to fulfill an endless slate of responsibilities; and neither do parents.

Coaching tip #1 from Joe's book (*A Parents' Guide to the Middle School Years*): If your child's after-school schedule has her moving somewhere different every day, consider plotting events on a desktop calendar. Events laid out on a calendar can be a vivid representation of just how busy your child's life has become. One family, frazzled from their continued scheduling conflicts, decided to use color-coded sticky notes to denote each family member's activities. Conflicting events were immediately visible, as was the very graphic image of how busy their family had become.

Coaching tip #2: Most schools offer a smorgasbord of after-school activities for kids to pursue. Some kids, however, need or want a change of venue after the school bell rings. Consider looking for activities in the community. Try checking the city's recreation calendar or a newspaper listing for local volunteering opportunities.

Ideas to try this month:

1. Opt instead for a "win-win" plan whereby both you and your child feel excited, but not overwhelmed, about the year ahead.

2. Start by creating an accurate picture of your child's current commitment by plotting all of her commitments on a desktop calendar. This gives you a baseline for the planning process. Include sports practices, art classes, volunteering, or hobbies that occur on a regular basis.

3. **Prioritize.** If your child needed to give up one activity what would it be? If his academic achievement begins to dip, consider dropping the lowest priority activity until the next progress report arrives.

Coaching tip #3: Parents have the power to guide the exploration of new interests that grow into lifelong passionate pursuits. Yet you should take care not to push your child to take on an auxiliary list of activities that you believe to be wonderful but your child couldn't care less about. Guide, but leave room to be guided by your child as he explores the world and its many opportunities.

4-Minute Video for parents- "Is my middle schooler overscheduled?"



Watch out for overscheduled days and nights in middle school. Four tips for identifying a busy child and what you can do to help. [Watch the video here.](#)

4-Minute Video for kids- "Middle school stress and busy schedules"