



Some kids get this in school, some don't. All the more important then, that they have a chance to be the best caretaker, the best car washer, the best pet owner, best choir member, or simply the best at *something*. ***Everyone, but everyone, needs to be seen as good at something in order to feel good about themselves.***

Parents are the best at helping their children identify their interests. How? By watching what they love to do. Notice when they are really excited about something or love doing something so much that they want to do it again and again. Those are the moments that point to your child's inborn talents and skills. When they do something that stands out, tell them: *Hey, you have a talent for singing! or storytelling, building things, fixing things, etc. This is a talent you can use later in life.* Your devotion to your children and their interests is the first step in the education and career planning process.

### **Making a good transition**

Getting to grade 5 was easy. Now for grade 6.

First, don't think you can cut and run. Your children need you more than ever. Don't try to hold hands with them in the hallway or give them a kiss when you drop them at school. Instead, think more about being your child's backup, support, and audience. The authors of *The Rollercoaster Years* suggest: *Parents should be seen but not heard.*

There is no reason to be afraid of the 6th grade, but there is a real need to prepare. Here's how:

- Be positive about the new school.
- Be sure to attend school orientation.
- Help your children know how to find their lockers, the bathrooms, and the lunchroom.
- Make sure they know their bus route.

Help your children practice being responsible. Let them pack their own backpacks, make their own lunches, and work out a plan for doing their homework. Listen to their fears, take them seriously, and then help them figure out how to cope.

Middle school is a big change for all of you. Patience, love, and humor will go a long way.

### **Educational planning for the 6th grade**

Okay. Your Middle schooler has found their locker, can manage the bus route, and makes it from English to Math on time. Now, how about school success? How can parents help?

First, talk up school! Talk about the strong link between good academic skills and a good life. Math rules!

Next, help them organize! Incomplete brains have a very hard time organizing anything. You can help them by asking them questions such as:

- *What homework assignments do you have?*
- *When are they due?*
- *What does each assignment need to include?*
- *How long do you think it will take?*
- *What supplies do you need?*

By asking these questions and helping your children organize their time, their homework space, and their supplies, you will help them know what to do first, second, and third.

Keep stressing the importance of reading, writing, and ***math!*** Good skills help children feel good about themselves. Good skills prepare children to go to college. ***Math skills*** are the key to good jobs, and good incomes. You can help your children succeed by working with them to develop strong skills. Did you know that more than 70% of children who take algebra and geometry in middle school go on to college? And good readers can learn to do anything, their whole lives long.

Take heart. Loving and listening to your child is half the battle. Right now, your child's job is to grow and change. Your jobs are to be their cheering section, coach them in taking responsibility and getting organized, and to stress the importance of school. These are the first step toward success.

***Two magic ingredients needed to raise happy, successful kids? Love and Math!***

#### **Ask your child—**

What are you good at? What are you ***best*** at?  
What do you love to do on your own?