



CREATING A NEW BACK TO SCHOOL RHYTHM

MIDDLE SCHOOL

The transition from summertime to back-to-school can happen so quickly that we're already in our new routine before we even realize it. Below are some suggestions for how to create an intentional and meaningful back-to-school rhythm for a middle schooler in this phase*:

*(*Please note that many of these are transferable to other phases. Feel free to look through each list for additional ideas!)*

BUY A "COMMUNICATION JOURNAL" FOR YOU AND YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER TO SHARE THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR. Start it off by writing them a note that tells them how proud you are of them, being specific and detailed. Invite them to use the journal to talk to you about anything they want during the upcoming year. Assure them of confidentiality, and set up a place you two can leave the journal when a new issue arises.

MIDDLE SCHOOL IS A PHASE THAT'S ALL ABOUT HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS. You'll spend lots of time in the car driving them to the next friend-function—you may even feel like a chauffeur! Choose one drive a day and take advantage of the time by turning off the radio, tablets, and devices and ask questions. Keep it lighthearted—What's hot? What's not? What was the best thing that happened today? The worst?

IDENTIFY ONE WAY YOU CAN MAKE BEDTIME MORE SIGNIFICANT FOR YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER. Whether it's reading a chapter together out of their favorite book, reviewing their homework together, or sharing funny memes or videos, those five minutes, invested over time, will create a rhythm of warmth and connection between you and your teen.

For fresh ideas on connecting with your child every week, download the Parent Cue App, available on iTunes and Google Play.