A Roadmap to Help Guide You & Your Child For  
Middle School & High School Transitions  

Brought to you by GO Project PALs (Parent Advocate Leaders)

1) MIDDLE SCHOOL CHECKLIST

***IMPORTANT: Begin preparing in Grade 4 & start applying in Grade 5***

☐ Explore your child’s interests
  ✓ Strengths/Weaknesses
  ✓ What they like to do
  ✓ Extracurricular activities
  ✓ Have your child pick 3 choices and explain why
  ✓ Learning style

☐ Program placement and related services
  ✓ Make sure the schools have appropriate related services and classroom settings for your child’s needs (Counseling, Occupational/Physical/Speech Therapy, Vision & Hearing Education Services, Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), etc.)
  ✓ After submitting a Middle School Choice Application by the deadline in the fall (see calendar below), the application will be customized for your child and will include all of the MS choices for which your child is eligible. On the application, you will rank all middle schools your child is interested in attending in order of preference. Most students will be offered admission to one program ranked on their Middle School Choice Application.

☐ Research and learn about the schools that match your child’s interests, skills & needs.
  ✓ Possible Resources: GO Projects, PALs, School’s Guides, DOE, Insideschools website (http://insideschools.org/)
  ✓ Visit open houses, school tours (for reviewing schools and classes for students with special needs)
  ✓ Things to Consider:
    ☐ Eligibility: Read each school’s qualifications to be sure your child is eligible for a program because some schools require certain test scores for admission.
    ☐ Direct Application (NOT Middle School Choice Application): For all schools that do not participate in the Middle School Choice Application process, you will need to submit the school-specific application and all other materials.
    ☐ Starting Times: Students’ biological clock change when entering adolescence, which means they need more sleep, but have difficulty sleeping in early evening hours. So, early morning starts may be a challenge.
    ☐ Location: Be sure to make a trial run of the commute to ensure that it is doable for you and your child.
School Culture: If your child works better in a structured environment, choose a school that is more routine-based. If your child rebels against structure, look into schools with more flexibility and variety.

School's Supportive Services: After school, extracurricular and service learning programs, school and community prevention and intervention services, Speech/Physical/Occupational Therapy, Counseling Services.

Application Deadline

Sample Timeline for Middle School Choice (Calendar Year of 2014-2015)
(Per NYCDOE: Dates may change; check online for up to date information:)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>Directories Distributed to Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>Request for Testing (RFT) Forms for District 24 OLSAT Testing and District 21 &amp; Mark Twain Talent Test Programs Distributed to Families by Elementary Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October–December 2014</td>
<td>Open House Events at Middle Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1-17, 2014</td>
<td>District Middle School Fairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9, 2014</td>
<td>Deadline for Families to Return Request for Testing for: District 24 OLSAT Testing &amp; Talent Test Programs (District 21 &amp; Mark Twain for the Gifted &amp; Talented (I.S. 239) Citywide Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2014</td>
<td>Middle School Applications Distributed to Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>District 24 Middle School OLSAT Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>Deadline for Families to Return Middle School Choice Applications in All Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2014 – February 2015</td>
<td>Student Interviews and Testing at Selected Middle Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>New Middle School Packets Distributed to Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>New Middle School Application Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2015</td>
<td>Decision Letter Distributed to Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>Appeal Decision Letters Distributed to Families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) HIGH SCHOOL CHECKLIST

- Explore your child’s interests
  - Strengths/Weaknesses
  - Listen to your child
  - What they like to do
  - Learning Style
  - Have your school

- Research and review High School Guide/See qualifications.

According to NYC Department of Education, you and your child should begin to attend these fairs when your child is in seventh grade
See if your middle school has a high school. It is most likely for the current middle school students to have priorities.

- Visit school tours & open houses
- See and understand supportive services.
- Sign-up for text or email updates to stay connected with important dates and deadlines.
- Understand what a screened and unscreened school is.

**Sample Timeline for High School Choice**
(Per Insideschools: Dates may change; check online for up to date information:)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June–August</td>
<td>Attend admissions workshops, prepare for specialized high school exam, plan fall schedule for fairs, open houses, auditions and school visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September–October</td>
<td>Register for specialized high school exam or audition for LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts. Attend open houses. Go on school visits. Attend citywide high school fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October–November</td>
<td>Attend borough high school fairs. Take the specialized high school exam. Continue to attend open houses and school visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Submit high school application to your 8th-grade guidance counselor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February – March</td>
<td>Learn where you have been admitted. Apply in the second round if you were not matched in the first one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Spring</td>
<td>Appeal if you are unsatisfied with your placement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESOURCES**

- **GO Project** ([www.goprojectnyc.org](http://www.goprojectnyc.org))
  - GO Bridges workshops for 5th graders
  - Parent Advocacy Leaders
  - Parent tables during GO Saturdays
  - Contact Christine Tangel (347-377-2316 or ctangel@goprojectnyc.org) if you would like to contact one of the PALs

  - Tip sheets: [http://www.resourcesnyc.org/parents/tip-sheets](http://www.resourcesnyc.org/parents/tip-sheets)
  - Free Resources Line (Línea de recursos):
    - 212-677-4660 (English) Monday – Thursday 9am - 4pm
    - 212-677-4668 (Español) Lunes – Jueves 9am - 4pm
  - Workshop Calendar
    - [http://www.resourcesnyc.org/parents/calendar](http://www.resourcesnyc.org/parents/calendar)
  - Connect (Blogs, Youtube Videos, Weekly News, etc)
    - [http://www.resourcesnyc.org/connect/](http://www.resourcesnyc.org/connect/)
● Advocates for Children (AFC) (www.advocatesforchildren.org/)
  ○ AFC Education Helpline:
    • 1-866-427-6033 (English) Monday - Thursday 10am - 4pm
  ○ Guides and resources: http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/get_help/guides_and_resources
  ○ Trainings & Workshops: http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/get_help/trainings_and_workshops
  ○ Newsfeed http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/news_and_media/newsfeed

● Department of Education (DOE) (http://schools.nyc.gov/default.htm)
  Contact: Middle School Admissions Team
  Phone: 718-935-2398/Email: MS_Enrollment@schools.nyc.gov
  ○ Middle Schools: http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/Middle/default.htm
  ○ General MS choice website: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/9E4D8B44-7A5D-49C9-815C-26AD4E0E83F0/0/MSEnrollmentOnePager.pdf
  ○ Charter School Information: www.nyc.gov/schools/charters
  ○ High Schools: http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/default.htm
  ○ Newsletter subscription page: http://schools.nyc.gov/Subscribe/default.htm
  ○ District-Specific Middle School Fairs and Open Houses: http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/Middle/events/default.htm
  ○ School Directory:

● Inside Schools (http://insideschools.org/)
  ○ Elementary Schools: http://insideschools.org/elementary
  ○ Middle Schools: http://insideschools.org/middle
High Schools:  
http://insideschools.org/high

Free Programs:  
http://insideschools.org/free-programs

Special Education:  
http://insideschools.org/special-education

- http://kidshealth.org (*Spanish translation available)
- http://www.pbs.org/parents/itsmylife/resources/middleschool.html
- About.com: Parenting of Adolescents Parent will find interesting resources on parenting, including the section called Parenting of Adolescents.
- http://parentingteens.about.com/

Fiction Books:

Middle School Blues by Lou Kassem  
Despite a terrible beginning, twelve year-old Cindy discovers that seventh grade isn’t nearly as awful as she expected. Before the year is over Cindy manages to reestablish some old friendships, make new ones, win a creative writing contest, and …you’ll have to read the book to learn the rest of the story!

Flying Solo by Ralph Fletcher  
Find out what happens when the substitute teacher never shows up and Mr. Fabiano’s sixth-grade class is left unsupervised for a whole day.

Lizzie at Last by Claudia Mills  
As seventh grade begins, Lizzie Archer decides that she wants Ethan Winfield to like her, and that she can’t handle another year of being the class nerd. See what happens when Lizzie tries to drop her old image!

Spider Boy by Ralph Fletcher  
Bobby Ballenger, an expert in spiders, enters seventh-grade in a new school and a new town and must overcome obstacles such as teasing classmates and the school bully.

Non-Fiction Books

Too Old for This, Too Young for That!: Your Survival Guide for the Middle-School Years  
By Harriet Mosatche, Ph. D. and Karen M. Unger  
A comprehensive guide for preteens filled with information and advice to help you make the jump from a kid to a teenager. Topics include self-esteem, family relationships, friendships, school and extracurricular activities.

Middle School: The Real Deal: From Cafeteria Food to Combination Locks  
By Juliana Farrell and Beth Mayall  
You’ll find all the info you need to deal with middle school right here in this handy guidebook. From classes to cliques, from locker life to lunchrooms, you’ll be prepared for anything your new school throws at you!