

3 Signs Your Son is Too Smart for His Middle School

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When are good grades not good enough? When your son is bored in school.

When the material is too easy, doesn't challenge or engage them, gifted middle school boys tend to coast on their smarts. They may slack off on their homework, put the minimum amount of effort into class projects, and stay silent during class discussions.

In other words, for the bored middle schooler, learning just isn't that fun. And at the middle school level, that can translate into long-term consequences.

"During the middle school years, students are building the habits of the mind that will last them a lifetime," says Lulu Kellogg, Middle School Head at [The Fessenden School](#). "These are the years when the universe is presenting itself to boys. They should be getting super excited about the world. If a boy becomes bored in the middle school years, it doesn't bode well for [high school](#) and college."

The report card doesn't tell the whole story. How can you tell if your academically-gifted son is bored in middle school? According to Lulu, here are four telltale signs:

1. Your son has stopped talking about school.

When your son no longer comes home with stories about what he did in school, what he worked on and what he learned, it may be a sign he's not engaged with the material.

Granted, Lulu concedes, middle school boys are not known to be the most communicative bunch in the best of circumstances. But, “When you notice you’re not getting much when you ask, ‘What did you do at school? How did your project go? What do you think of your teacher? How is your homework coming along?’ it’s usually a sign of one of two things. Either school has gotten extremely hard or school has gotten way too easy and is boring.”

2. Your son is racing through his homework.

If a middle schooler is getting good grades but he’s racing through his homework, or claiming, “I got it done at school,” it could be he’s simply trying to get through it so he can move on to more interesting things. His work may eventually become sloppy and turned in past due dates. And though he may continue to do well on tests, his grades will slip.

“The work is not engaging him. He’s not invested in it,” Lulu explains. “That’s often a sign a boy is bored by his school program.”

3. Your son’s schoolwork doesn’t align with his passions.

“For a boy that’s bored at school, there’s a disconnect between his true interests, his true intellectual life, and what he’s being presented with at school,” Lulu says. “The school somehow is not plugging into the things that really motivate him.”

Most middle school boys—gifted and otherwise—have a keen curiosity and a wide range of interests that spark their enthusiasm, everything from the natural world, to music and art, to [technology](#).



But if a school doesn't tap into those natural passions, boys can get bored. The academic material seems dry and unimportant.

"I think it's important for parents to know what really gets their son excited," Lulu says. "A boy will always be interested in something. It may be something he saw in a museum. It may be something in sports. It may be something physically active. If parents can access those, they can light a lot of intellectual interests."

What can you do when your son is bored at school?

Identifying the signs of academic disinterest is only half the battle. How can you reignite your son's enthusiasm for his studies? Here are [a few tips](#) from [educators](#) and [parenting experts](#) online.

In future articles, we'll share some pointers from middle school education expert Lulu Kellogg. So you don't miss them (and all our expert parenting advice) [click here to subscribe](#) to weekly blog updates.

What are the telltale behaviors that *your* son exhibits when he is finding school boring? Share your thoughts in the comments section below.