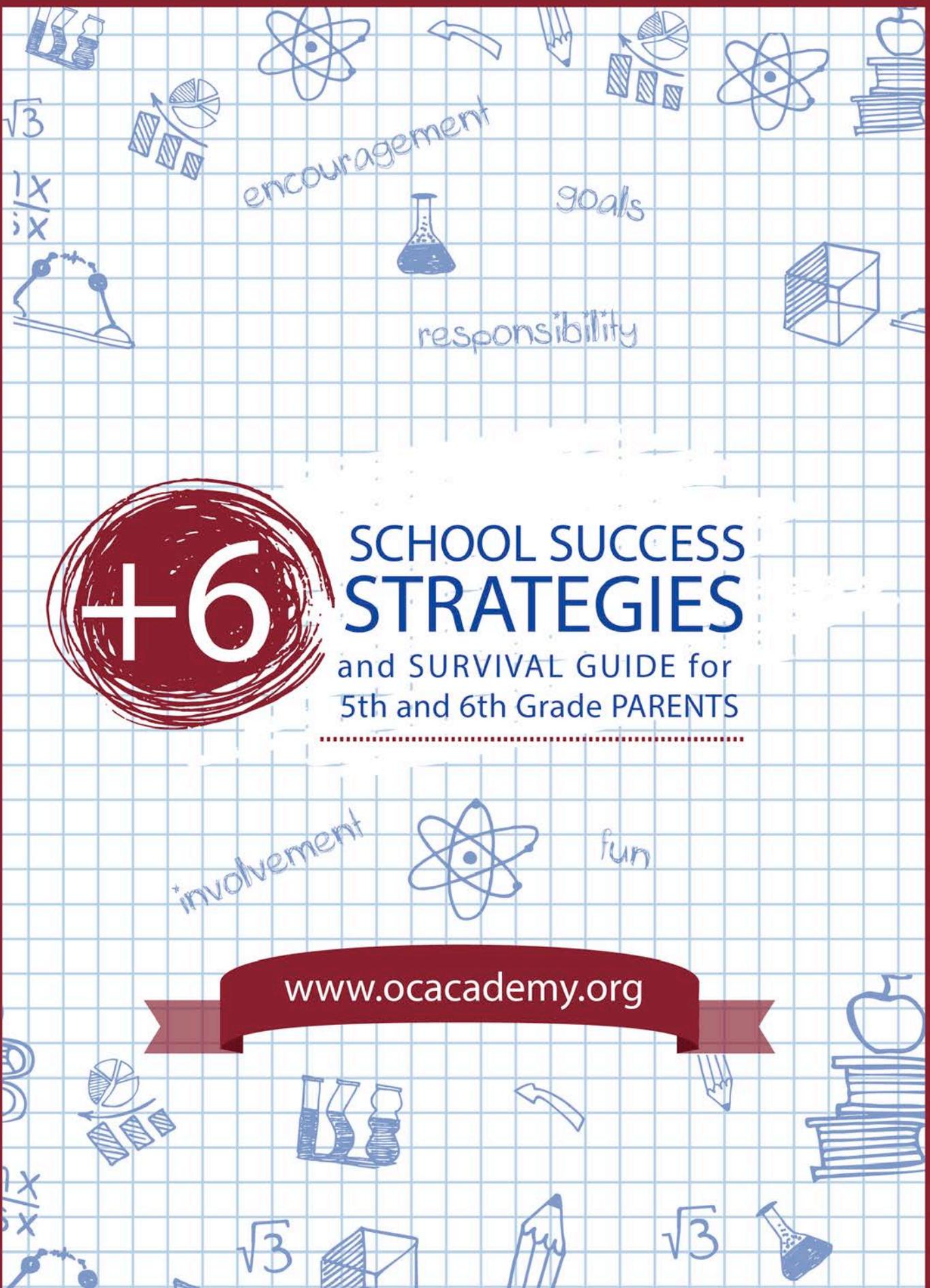




SCHOOL SUCCESS STRATEGIES

and SURVIVAL GUIDE for
5th and 6th Grade PARENTS

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Parents, you'll love watching your preteen develop into his or her "own person"!

In many ways, the pre-adolescent years are a time of transition and contradiction. At this age, your child craves independence, yet self-motivation and organization can be a real challenge! Having friends and belonging to a group are the most important things in life. Yet, this very desire to "fit in" is often sabotaged by peer pressure, bullying, cliques, and complex (often daily-changing!) social rules. Confidence in his "self-identity" - who he is, what he believes, what is important to him - is the key to helping your preteen to not only survive, but thrive in the 5th and 6th grades!

Six strategies that will help you navigate these exciting and challenging preteen years include:

#1 Strategy: Help your child identify his strength, talent, or gift.

Self-esteem and self-assurance often plummets at this age (especially in girls) as preteens begin to compare themselves with their peers, question their abilities, and doubt their self worth. Our job as parents and educators is to provide the tools that a child needs to "compensate": to identify and develop the unique strength, talent, or gift that allows him to value who he is as his "own person". A child's strong sense of "identity" ("I'm first chair flute in the band", or "My thing is theater", "I'm the starting pitcher on our baseball team", etc.) will provide a crucial foundation of confidence and emotional energy.

#2 Strategy: Teach kindness and empathy. It takes courage and strength to be kind! Again, this is an age of contradictions: while your child is developing an understanding of other viewpoints and the empathy necessary for building relationships, she very naturally thinks that the world revolves around her. This is also the age of cliques and bullies. What a precious gift we'll give our children if we can teach them that *all* people deserve to be included and treated with dignity and respect.

#3 Strategy: Encourage your child to read, read, read! By these middle grades, your child is expected to have consolidated his reading, writing, and research (information gathering) skills. Reading for pleasure reinforces the 5th and 6th grades' curriculum focus on comprehension and critical analysis: a key, contributing factor for your child's academic success.

#4 Strategy: Help your child develop a proactive organizational plan. Preteens' [lack of] organization can be a real frustration for both parents and teachers! When organizational challenges are linked with little confidence, you may notice that your child puts off getting started, or "forgets" to do or turn in an assignment.

- First, rest assured that this is a common, developmentally natural challenge for your child.
- Second, organization is a skill that *can* (and will) be taught! (**SEE** #4 in School Success Strategies for Kids.)

#5 Strategy: Guide your child in developing personal goals. We all want our children to be self motivated to live up to their potential. Allowing a young person the independence to struggle, overcome mistakes, and successfully accomplish a few, significant social, academic, athletic, or spiritual goals validates to your child that he is resilient, persistent, and capable of doing hard things!

#6 Strategy: Be involved and informed! Be our guest at *Eagle Beat* assemblies, volunteer to help with school field trips, come to the ball games. You have access to what's going on in your child's school life through your child's agenda, RenWeb (our online academic service), and email announcements.

We are honored to partner with you in your young person's social, spiritual, academic, and emotional development. You and your child belong to our **OCA** family!

Here are some wonderful **Resources** with additional, helpful information about raising preteens:

- ï ***Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and the New Realities of Girl World*** (Oct 13, 2009), by Rosalind Wiseman
- ï ***Masterminds and Wingmen: Helping Our Boys Cope with Schoolyard Power, Locker-Room Tests, Girlfriends, and the New Rules of Boy World*** (Jul 29, 2014), by Rosalind Wiseman
- ï ***Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids*** (Sept. 28, 2014), by Kara E. Powell and Chap Clark
- ï ***Preparing for Adolescence: How to Survive the Coming Years of Change*** (Dec. 1, 2005), by Dr. James Dobson
- ï ***The New Hide or Seek: Building Confidence in Your Child*** (Feb 1, 2001), by Dr. James Dobson
- ï ***How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*** (February 7, 2012), by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish