

THE SCHOLAR'S ASCENT

# The Coach's Playbook

Your Grades 7-8 Parent Partnership Handbook  
Balancing support and independence as your scholar  
takes ownership of their education.

**\$4.99 PARENT RESOURCE**

[thescholarsascent.org](https://thescholarsascent.org)

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Reminiscent Road Media LLC · Founded by Dr. Ijezie-Desbois, PharmD

## THE COACH'S ROLE

### You Are the Coach

A great coach doesn't play the game -- they prepare the player. In grades 7-8, your child is developing the skills, strategies, and confidence they need to eventually play independently. Your role shifts from directing to advising, from managing to mentoring.

**The best coaches** know when to call a timeout, when to let the player make mistakes on the court, and when to celebrate the hustle -- not just the score.

### The Coach's Mindset

#### Sideline, Not Field

You're no longer on the field with them. You observe, strategize, and advise from the sideline. They execute.

#### Practice Over Perfection

These years are practice for high school. Better to struggle now with a safety net than later without one.

#### Trust the Training

You've been building their foundation for years. Now trust it. Step back and let them show what they've learned.

*"I prepare them for the game. They play it."*

## LETTING GO PROGRESSIVELY

### Knowing What to Manage and What to Hand Off

The key to 7th-8th grade parenting is knowing what to still manage and what to hand off. Here's your guide:

Still Your Job	Shared Responsibility	Their Job Now
Setting bedtime boundaries	Planning long-term projects	Daily homework management
Monitoring screen time limits	Study schedules for tests	Tracking assignments in a planner
Knowing their friends and activities	Communicating with teachers	Organizing their materials
Attending parent conferences	Navigating social conflicts	Asking for help when stuck
Ensuring safety and well-being	Choosing electives and activities	Packing their own bag each night

**The Handoff Test:** Ask yourself -- "If I don't do this, what's the worst that happens?" If the answer is a low grade or mild inconvenience (not safety), let them handle it. These small failures now prevent catastrophic ones later.

## ORGANIZATION COACHING

### Organization Coaching Techniques

#### The Weekly Game Plan (Sunday Night, 15 min)

Sit down together -- but let THEM drive the conversation:

- "What tests or projects are coming up this week?"
- "What activities or practices do you have?"
- "Where do you think you'll need the most study time?"
- "Is there anything you need from me this week?"
- "What's your plan for getting everything done?"

## The Backward Planning Method

Teach this essential skill for long-term projects:

1. Start with the due date and work backward
2. Break the project into 4-5 smaller tasks
3. Assign each task a deadline (with buffer days)
4. Put each mini-deadline in their planner
5. Check in at midpoint -- "How's the project going?"

## Study Skills Reinforcement at Home

Teach Them To	Support Them By
Use active recall (quiz themselves, not re-read)	Quizzing them when asked (use their study guide)
Space out study sessions (no cramming)	Providing a quiet study environment
Create their own study guides from notes	Helping them identify their best study times
Use the Pomodoro technique (25 min focus blocks)	Modeling your own learning (read, take courses)
Teach material to someone else (the best test of knowledge)	Celebrating improved study habits, not just grades

# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NAVIGATION

## Navigating Social-Emotional Challenges

7th and 8th grade are peak years for social complexity. Here's what your teen is dealing with and how to help:

### Peer Pressure & Identity

Your child is asking "Who am I?" and often looking to peers for the answer. Stay curious, not controlling. Ask open-ended questions. Share your own experiences of figuring out who you

were at their age. Make home a place where they can be themselves without judgment.

## Academic Anxiety

As coursework gets harder, some students develop test anxiety or perfectionism. Watch for signs: avoidance, procrastination, physical symptoms before tests, or catastrophic thinking ("If I fail this test, my life is over"). Normalize struggle. Share that you still face challenges too.

## Digital Drama

Group chats, social media, and online gaming create a 24/7 social environment. Set clear tech boundaries: devices out of bedrooms at night, regular "unplugged" family time, and ongoing conversations about what they see online. The goal is not to spy -- it's to stay connected.

## Extracurricular Balance

### Healthy Balance

- 1-2 activities they love
- Free time to decompress
- Consistent sleep schedule
- Excited about activities

### Overloaded

- 4+ activities to "look good"
- Every hour scheduled
- Up late finishing homework
- Dreading the schedule

# HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION

## Early High School Preparation

8th grade is the on-ramp to high school. Here's what to start thinking about together:

### 8th Grade To-Do List

- Attend the high school open house or orientation together
- Discuss course selection for 9th grade (honors? electives?)
- Talk about what high school will be like (more freedom + more responsibility)
- Help them identify 1-2 extracurriculars they want to pursue

- Begin conversations about post-secondary goals (not decisions -- just conversations)
- Ensure they have strong independent study habits before high school
- Practice self-advocacy: "Can you email your teacher about this?"

## **The Self-Advocacy Conversation**

In high school, your child needs to speak up for themselves. Start practicing now:

- Role-play asking a teacher for help or clarification
- Let them email teachers with questions (you can review before sending)
- Encourage them to attend office hours or ask questions in class
- Celebrate every time they advocate for themselves

## The Coach's Greatest Play

The best thing a coach can do is prepare their player to no longer need a coach. Every skill you're building in your 7th and 8th grader -- organization, self-advocacy, resilience, time management -- is a gift they'll carry into high school and beyond.

### The Scholar's Ascent Parent Guide Series

The Gardener's Guide (K-5) -- Nurturing the seedling years

The Guide's Handbook (Grade 6) -- Navigating middle school transition

#### **The Coach's Playbook (Grades 7-8) -- You are here**

The Launch Pad Manual (Grades 9-12) -- Preparing for takeoff

Scholar Family Vocabulary Guide (Free) -- 30+ growth mindset phrase swaps

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