

5 Keys for Supporting Middle Schoolers Plus the Sunshine Ratio!

Recently, Vocal Music Teacher Katie Silcott joined Teaching Channel's Chief Academic Officer Wendy Amato to [talk about vocal music](#). Their conversation evolved into a lovely discussion about how precious Middle Schoolers are and how to support them. Mrs. Silcott offered Dr. Amato the following five pieces of advice to share:

1. Encourage Involvement in an Activity That is Team-Oriented

- It will come as no surprise that choir, band, and orchestra came to mind!
- Think about school activities, neighborhood interests, and community opportunities

2. Ensure Open Communication

- Establish habits for checking in with one another
- Push beyond shoulder shrugs or half-hearted engagement to get to meaningful interactions
- Accept students where and how they are

3. Lead with Kindness

- Model for students what it means to think of others
- Role play scenarios that help students visualize positive responses, patience, consideration for the feelings of others

4. Promote a feeling of school ownership and pride

- Remind students that they are an ingredient in their own environment and that they can be a positive influence
- Show opportunities for making a positive impact
- Help students to identify with the community and to feel positive about the connections

5. Seek input from students who are a step ahead

- Recognize students for their experience and perspective
- Seek input from young people who have recent experiences
- Ask for lessons learned, 20-20 hindsight, and recommendations

Bonus! Embrace the Sunshine Ratio

When faced with a challenge, bad moment, or problem, work to identify at least two positives to keep in mind that can help provide context. Sometimes a little perspective can make all the difference! Even when the negative is significant, a few rays of sunshine can remind each of us that there are good things to keep in mind, too!