



Level Up Your Finances: A Parent's Guide to Empowering Middle Schoolers (5th-8th Grade)

Welcome parents! As your kids navigate the exciting (and sometimes turbulent) years of middle school, it's the perfect time to level up their financial skills. They're becoming more independent, making more purchasing decisions, and starting to think about their future. This guide provides fun, practical strategies to equip them with the knowledge and confidence they need to manage money wisely.

Mastering the Basics (5th-6th Grade):

- **The Allowance Audit:**

- **The Idea:** Transition from basic allowance to a performance-based system linked to responsibilities.
- **How To:** Work with your child to create a list of household tasks they are expected to do and those that earn extra money. Negotiate fair rates for each. This teaches the direct connection between work and reward. Track income and expenses together using a simple spreadsheet or budgeting app.

- **Savings Account Showdown:**

- **The Idea:** Open a real savings account (or high-yield savings account) and actively manage it together.
- **How To:** Visit a local credit union and let your child participate in the account opening process. Explain how interest works and set realistic savings goals (e.g., a new phone, concert tickets). Monitor the account's growth online and celebrate milestones.

- **Needs vs. Wants: The Advanced Edition:**

- **The Idea:** Dive deeper into the concept of opportunity cost and delayed gratification.
- **How To:** When your child wants to buy something, ask them to consider what else they could purchase with that money. Discuss the long-term benefits of saving versus the immediate satisfaction of spending. Introduce the 24-hour (or 72-hour) rule: wait before making a non-essential purchase.



Budgeting Like a Boss (7th-8th Grade):

- **The 50/30/20 Budget:**
 - **The Idea:** Introduce a popular budgeting method that allocates income to needs, wants, and savings/debt repayment.
 - **How To:** Explain the 50/30/20 rule: 50% of income goes to needs (essentials), 30% to wants (non-essentials), and 20% to savings and debt repayment. Help your child categorize their expenses and create a budget that aligns with this framework.
- **Budgeting App Battle:**
 - **The Idea:** Explore different budgeting apps and find one that works for your child's needs and preferences.
 - **How To:** Research budgeting apps together (Mint, YNAB, Personal Capital). Compare features, user interfaces, and costs. Let your child choose the app they want to use and help them set it up and track their spending.
- **The "Debt-Free" Challenge:**
 - **The Idea:** Explain the concept of debt and encourage your child to avoid unnecessary borrowing.
 - **How To:** **Discuss the potential pitfalls of credit cards and loans. Challenge your child to save up for purchases instead of relying on debt. If they do borrow money (from you, for example), create a repayment plan with interest to simulate a real-world loan.**

Set your child up for financial success by opening an account at Aeroquip Credit Union! We offer a range of services tailored to young members, starting with a \$20 deposit to kickstart their savings journey. Aeroquip Credit Union provides ongoing support for your child's financial education, from access to expert financial advice to yearly scholarship opportunities that can ease the burden of higher education costs. As they mature, we offer student Visa credit cards designed to help them build credit responsibly, ensuring they're well-prepared for a bright financial future.

Word Search

P X E T M M C A S H
A L L O W A N C E M
H S Q B U D G E T L
G D P S K B S I D A
G S C E Q M O N E Y
S A V I N G I A B T
K S F A Z D V W T K
D O L L A R I H C A
K S A C C O U N T S
N Y P W Q H K O G X

Allowance
Budget
Dollar

Spending
Money

Saving
Accounts

Cash
Debt

Create your own comic!

Your friend wants you to go to the movies, but you're saving for a new bike. What do you do?

