

# Daily Learning Planner

*Ideas families can use to help students  
do well in school*

Gadsden City Schools



THE  
**PARENT**  
INSTITUTE®

December • January • February

2023-2024

## December 2023

- 1. Get some exercise with your child today.
- 2. Don't try to do everything yourself this month. Ask your child to take the responsibility for one or two seasonal traditions.
- 3. Encourage your child to take photos during a family outing or event.
- 4. Look online or in the newspaper for a list of local free events. Plan to attend one this month as a family.
- 5. Don't let holiday plans derail your child's study routine.
- 6. What is the coldest place in the nation today? The warmest? Have your child calculate the difference between the two temperatures.
- 7. Review goals for the school year. Is your child making progress?
- 8. Ask your child to teach you something about a school subject—even if you already know the material.
- 9. Talk about your expectations with your child. Ask if there is a new responsibility your child feels ready to take on.
- 10. Books are great gifts for middle schoolers. Ask a librarian to recommend a popular series for your child.
- 11. Have your child choose a recipe to follow from a cookbook.
- 12. After dinner, have family members take photos of each other. Vote on who made the funniest face.
- 13. Help your child brainstorm fun things to do inside. Write each idea on an index card. When bad weather strikes, have your child pick a card.
- 14. Play Alphabet Mixup. Choose a word; rearrange the letters in alphabetical order. Can your child figure out the word?
- 15. Ask to see your child's most recent math assignment. Did your child think it was easy? Challenging?
- 16. Have dinner by flashlight tonight.

## Daily Learning Planner: Ideas Families Can Use to Help Students Do Well in School—Try a New Idea Every Day!

- 17. Before your child buys something, suggest comparing prices and return policies.
- 18. Be on the lookout for things your child does right. Praise effort and positive behavior.
- 19. Talk with your child about things you both could do to conserve energy and natural resources.
- 20. Remain positive when helping your child with schoolwork, even if your student is discouraged. "I know you can learn this."
- 21. One evening over winter break, watch your child's favorite show together and discuss it.
- 22. Encourage your child to talk to older relatives about their childhoods.
- 23. Ask each family member to put two items that have special meaning into a family time capsule. Plan to open it in 10 years.
- 24. Think your child is too old for reading aloud? Try it. Or try listening to audiobooks together.
- 25. Take turns telling about the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you.
- 26. Plan an indoor campout. Make a tent from a blanket. Eat s'mores and read scary stories.
- 27. Start a jigsaw puzzle with your child.
- 28. Keep the lines of communication open now with your middle schooler. It will help you both through the teen years.
- 29. Ask your child to look up a few new words in the dictionary and explain their meanings to you.
- 30. Play a screen-free game together tonight—a board game, cards, dominoes, charades—whatever your child would like.
- 31. Review the year with your child. Highlight accomplishments.

# January 2024

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1. Help your child set and write down goals for the coming year. Set some goals for yourself, as well.
2. Ask your child to name a few favorite family activities from last year. Make a plan to do them again this year, if possible.
3. Share a poem. How does your child interpret it?
4. How many *homophones* (words that sound alike, but mean different things) can your child think of? For example, *course* and *coarse*.
5. Ask to hear about one thing your child is looking forward to right now.
6. Encourage your child to jot down unfamiliar words while reading to look up later.
7. Leave sports coaching to the coach. Sideline coaching from families is distracting and will embarrass your child.
8. Today, talk to your child as you would to a friend or coworker.
9. Discuss what life was like 25 years ago. What was the same? What was different?
10. Encourage your child to read during quiet times at home. Before bed is a perfect time to read.
11. Ask what your child likes most about this year's classes.
12. Have your child select and read a news article to you, then share an opinion about it. Listen, then share your opinion.
13. Plan to attend as many school events for families as possible in the rest of the school year.
14. Ask your child to figure out the average of something: family members' ages, number of pairs of socks owned by family members, etc.
15. Have your child write frequently-used, hard-to-spell words in alphabetical order in an old address book. They'll be easy to look up.
16. Play Math Jeopardy. Say a number. Can your child come up with a problem for which it is the answer?
17. Look for a CPR class to take with your child.
18. Think of *synonyms* for words with your child. For example, a synonym for tired is fatigued.
19. Ask, "What one thing do you wish our family would do differently at home?" Be open to your child's suggestion.
20. Take turns making statements with your child. Identify each one as either *fact* or *opinion*.
21. Get up early this morning and take a walk around your neighborhood with your child. Does it seem different early in the morning?
22. Tell your child a story that teaches an important lesson.
23. Ask family members to describe ways they used math today.
24. Teach your child to ask *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* when doing research.
25. Talk together about your child's plans for the day.
26. Ask what conditions make it easier for your child to do assignments. Knowing how they learn helps students do better.
27. Play a math fact game. Get a deck of cards. Each player turns over one card. The player who correctly multiplies the cards first wins them.
28. Discuss a controversial issue with your child. Ask, "What do you think?"
29. Work on a hobby with your child.
30. Name a location anywhere in the world. Take turns with your child telling one thing you would like to see there.
31. Make pizza as a family tonight. Get creative with toppings.

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# February 2024

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1. Watch a TV commercial with your child. Talk about the techniques advertisers use to influence people.
2. Encourage your child to combine fitness and reading by listening to an audiobook while exercising.
3. Help your child set priorities when studying. Which assignment is most important? Due first? Most difficult?
4. Tell your child about something you did in middle school that you would do differently now.
5. If you hear a compliment about your child, be sure to pass it on. Middle schoolers need positive feedback.
6. Talk with your child about some ways people can learn from their mistakes.
7. Help your child see the good in others. Focus more on people's strengths than their weaknesses.
8. Have your child write a Valentine's Day message to someone who is sick or lonely and mail it to that person.
9. Does your child have assignments to do over the weekend? Make sure your student schedules time to complete them.
10. Visit a new place with your child, such as a marina or town hall.
11. Help your child research careers of interest. What skills or education are required for each?
12. Have your child estimate how many bowls of cereal can be poured from one box. Keep track until the box is empty.
13. Teach your child how to read a road map.
14. Serve your child's favorite breakfast today just to say, "I love you."
15. Ask your child to organize the books in your home.
16. Talk about stereotypes with your child. Discuss why they're unfair.
17. Ask your child to make a graph of family habits. How many hours does each person sleep in a week? Who reads the most?
18. Talk about a familiar place. Can your middle schooler figure out which direction it is from your home?
19. Exercise your child's memory. Ask, "Do you remember what you ate yesterday? The day before?"
20. Remind your child never to share passwords with friends.
21. Ask your child, "Is there anything you wish you understood?" Then, research the topic together.
22. Challenge your child to create an original cartoon character. What would it look like?
23. Set aside some time to spend one-on-one with your child today.
24. Enjoy an outdoor activity with the whole family today. Then, come inside for a cup of hot chocolate.
25. Ask about a book or article your child read recently.
26. If your child gets headaches when reading or holds books too close, schedule a vision check-up.
27. With your child, think of as many city nicknames as you can: Windy City (Chicago), Mile High City (Denver). Then, look up some more.
28. Listen to a piece of music that has no lyrics. Challenge your child to write some.
29. Let your child make a decision for the family today.

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