

Daily Learning Planner

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

Gadsden City Schools



THE
PARENT
INSTITUTE®

December • January • February 2025-2026

December 2025

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

- 1. Make cookies with your child, and decorate them creatively.
- 2. Discuss stereotypes. Talk with your child about why they're unfair.
- 3. Ask about a book your child is reading. Are the characters realistic?
- 4. If your child is having trouble starting to write a paper, suggest writing just one sentence and then taking a short break.
- 5. Check on your child's goals for the school year. Is your student making progress?
- 6. Look online for free family-friendly events in your area. Plan to attend one this month.
- 7. Ask your child to create a menu of healthy breakfasts for the week.
- 8. Tell your child that effort matters as much as ability when it comes to success.
- 9. Suggest that your child volunteer in the community over winter break. Look for activities you can do together.
- 10. Play Alphabet Mix-Up. Choose a word, and rearrange the letters in alphabetical order. Can your child figure out the word?
- 11. Meet the families of your child's friends. Work as a team to keep the children safe.
- 12. Explain that your child can't control others, but *can* control how to react to others.
- 13. If your child doesn't know how to do laundry, demonstrate the steps involved. Feeling capable boosts middle schoolers' self-confidence.
- 14. Include your middle schooler in holiday preparations. Ask your child to take responsibility for one or two family traditions.
- 15. Review morning routines together. Make needed improvements, like setting the alarm for five minutes earlier.
- 16. Social media makes it easy to hurt someone. Tell your child not to post anything that wouldn't be OK to say to someone's face.
- 17. Discuss the importance of regular school attendance with your child.
- 18. Talk together about a choice you have made. Then, talk about the consequences.
- 19. Teach your child stress-relief tips, such as taking deep breaths.
- 20. Give your child a hug today.
- 21. Learn a magic trick with your child.
- 22. Do something the "old-fashioned" way with your child.
- 23. Ask your child, "What do you think is the most important thing you have learned at school so far this year?"
- 24. Remind your child to use you as a scapegoat if necessary to avoid peer pressure: "My mom wants me home tonight. Sorry."
- 25. Give your child the gift of time. Time with family is more important to kids than material things.
- 26. Ask everyone to write down two positive things about each member of the family. Remember to include yourself.
- 27. Take turns calling out names of famous people and guessing what the people accomplished. Then, look them up.
- 28. Enjoy some physical activity with your child. You'll both get exercise, and it may lead to interesting conversation.
- 29. Offer to drive your child and friends somewhere. In the car, listen.
- 30. Choose a number between 1 and 12, then have your child list as many things as possible that come in that number.
- 31. Help your child create a timeline of the past year.

January 2026

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

- 1. Have your child write down learning resolutions for the coming year. Make some for yourself, too, and share them with your child.
- 2. Look over the school calendar. Choose one event to attend as a family.
- 3. Take a walk with your child today.
- 4. Listen to a song that has no lyrics. Have your child write words for it.
- 5. Challenge your child to find as many household items as possible that can replace smartphone apps, such as a flashlight and a calculator.
- 6. Talk with your child about how each of you could improve your listening skills.
- 7. Learn a tongue twister. At dinner, challenge everyone to repeat it three times fast.
- 8. Exercise your child's memory. Ask, "What did you eat two days ago?"
- 9. Does your child hate to lose? Explain that trying is more important than winning.
- 10. Visit the public library as a family. Ask your child to recommend a book for you to read.
- 11. Write a letter to your student. Talk about how wonderful your child is.
- 12. Establish times when digital device use is not allowed, such as during mealtimes and in the car.
- 13. Look through some job listings together. Have your child read aloud descriptions that look interesting. Discuss the requirements.
- 14. Good report card? High test grade? Celebrate with your child's favorite meal or one-on-one time together.
- 15. Tell your child a story that teaches an important lesson.
- 16. Ask your child to help you with a household chore today. Say "thank you" afterward.
- 17. Notice the states on license plates. Challenge your child to name something about each state you see.
- 18. Bring up a sticky situation before it occurs. Ask how your child might handle it. Listen and ask questions.
- 19. Watch a show about nature with your child. Discuss what you learn.
- 20. Encourage your child to seek out someone who seems shy or lonely, and then smile and start up a conversation.
- 21. Tell your child about what middle school was like for you.
- 22. Before your child buys something, suggest comparing prices and looking up return policies.
- 23. Encourage your child to get to know at least three new people outside the usual group of friends.
- 24. Has it been a busy or challenging week at school for your child? Go out together for a snack after school.
- 25. Ensure there is adult supervision when your child visits a friend.
- 26. Memorize something with your child today, such as a poem.
- 27. Ask your child, "If you could change one thing in the entire world, what would it be?" Listen carefully to the answer.
- 28. Help your child research a topic of interest. Teach your child to ask *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* and look for answers.
- 29. Choose a number between 1 and 10. Have your child double it, then you double that number. Keep going until someone gets stuck.
- 30. Every day, ask what your child is doing and thinking about in school.
- 31. Hold a family karaoke night. Open YouTube, take turns typing in a song title followed by the word "karaoke," and sing along!

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February 2026

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

- 1. Do a taste test with your child. Try different brands of a food you like. Which one tastes better?
- 2. Celebrate Groundhog Day by having your child trace items' shadows at different times of day. Compare the shadows.
- 3. Ask your child, "If you had to name your three best qualities, what would you say?"
- 4. Remind your child how important it is to turn in schoolwork. Just one zero can bring a grade down an entire letter.
- 5. Teach your child symbols that speed up note-taking, such as *w/* for *with*.
- 6. Have your child write a Valentine's message to someone who is sick or lonely and mail it to that person.
- 7. Make up trivia questions about your family. Quiz each other at dinner.
- 8. Review the school's safety and security procedures with your child.
- 9. Challenge your child to figure out how many square feet of carpet it would take to cover the living room floor.
- 10. Play a board game or card game together. Let your middle schooler choose what to play.
- 11. Pick a category, such as birds or desserts. Together, think of as many examples as possible that fit into it.
- 12. Show your love for your child by giving a genuine and specific compliment.
- 13. Help your child schedule enough time to complete assignments or work on a school project over the weekend.
- 14. Have each family member create a collage from magazine pictures. Can everyone guess who made each one?
- 15. Look for a product label written in several different languages. Can your child guess what languages they are?
- 16. It's Presidents' Day. At dinner, study the list of U.S. presidents. Who can memorize the most, in order?
- 17. Check on your child's supply of paper, pencils and other school supplies. Replace needed items.
- 18. Write an encouraging note and tuck it in your child's school bag.
- 19. Look at a map of the U.S. or Canada with your child. Point to a region your family has never visited. What does your child know about it?
- 20. Help your child think about the snacks your family eats. Could you make some healthier choices?
- 21. Challenge your child to list all the planets in our solar system in order of distance from the sun. Can your student name any of their moons?
- 22. Notice whether your middle schooler is finishing schoolwork on time. If so, praise your child for being responsible.
- 23. Start a long-term project with your child, such as a jigsaw puzzle. Return to it from time to time and don't give up.
- 24. Watch a movie based on a play or a book with your child.
- 25. Ask your child, "What do you think would happen if everyone ignored laws for a day?"
- 26. Help your child use small chunks of time as opportunities to start on assignments or review.
- 27. Watch your child's favorite TV show together. Ask questions, such as "Who is your favorite character?"
- 28. Ask your child to do mental math, such as estimating the cost per serving of a meal based on the price of ingredients.

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