

Daily Learning Planner

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

Gadsden City Schools



THE
PARENT
INSTITUTE®

September • October • November 2026

September 2026

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

- Find out about back-to-school night and other events for families at school. Plan to attend.
- Help your teen establish a regular study schedule. High school students should set aside time every day for schoolwork and studying.
- Encourage your teen to set three or four learning goals for this school year and identify steps to take to meet them.
- Ask your teen to play a favorite song. Talk about the lyrics. Share one of your favorite songs with your teen.
- Give your teen a planner or a small notebook for writing down all assignments and school commitments.
- Review school safety rules with your teen.
- Keep important school phone numbers (the office, the attendance line, etc.) in your phone and posted in a handy place at home.
- Today is International Literacy Day. Does everyone in your family have a library card? If not, visit the library this month to sign up.
- Ask your teen to suggest nutritious snacks to keep on hand.
- Does your teen need school supplies? Look for them early in the year. If providing them is a problem, let your teen's counselor know.
- Talk with your teen about what makes a good friendship.
- Join the school's parent-teacher group. These organizations help schools, students and their families in many ways.
- Ask your teen to show you a favorite app or social media channel.
- Make mornings easier. Encourage your teen to spend 10 minutes at night getting ready for the next day.
- Teach your teen to use positive self-talk, such as "I can do this." It helps students stay motivated.
- Stop by your teen's room at bedtime for a chat. Start the conversation by talking about things your teen has done well lately.
- Learn a new skill with your teen, such as bread making. Look for how-to videos online.
- Pick your battles with your teen. On some subjects, such as safety, don't budge. Look for compromises on others.
- Remind your teen to use you as a scapegoat if necessary: "Sorry, but my family needs me at home tonight."
- Most students have some long-term assignments. Help your teen break them down into small steps and set deadlines for each.
- Challenge your teen to design a simple piece of furniture.
- Ask to see your teen's assignments. Talk about the useful knowledge and skills your student is acquiring, such as thinking and problem-solving.
- Share a funny cartoon or meme with your teen over breakfast.
- Let your teen's teachers know how to get in touch with you. Send them your email address and phone numbers.
- Play a board game with your teen.
- Teach your teen how to change a tire, or brush up on the skill together.
- Talk with your teen about a mistake you've made and what you learned from it.
- Choose a letter from an advice column. Read it aloud at dinner. Ask family members to take turns being the columnist.
- With your teen, start a family scrapbook with pictures and mementos.
- Teens who take part in school-based extracurricular activities tend to feel more connected to school. Is there an activity that interests your teen?

October 2026

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1. Ask your teen, "What do you think are your three best qualities?"
2. Talk about respectful behavior at school. Your teen can show respect for teachers by coming to classes on time and being prepared to learn.
3. Challenge your teen to run a 30-yard dash. Time the run. Ask your teen to keep practicing to improve the time.
4. Remind your teen that many short study sessions work better than one long cram session.
5. In many schools, teachers post assignments online. Ask your teen to show you the posts for each class.
6. Talk about world events at dinner.
7. If your teen hopes to play sports in college, research together what high school classes and grades are required.
8. Teens aren't too old to be read to. Try it—you may be surprised. Or, try listening to audiobooks together.
9. When your teen overreacts, it's important for you to remain calm. Set a time to talk later when you both are in control.
10. Take your teen out for breakfast, or make your teen's favorite at home. Make this a monthly tradition.
11. Encourage your teen to research the history of a favorite band.
12. Use your calendar to block out time for family events. Make sure these times are untouchable.
13. Ask your teen to add two four-digit numbers. Can your student figure it out on paper before you can with a calculator?
14. Breakfast helps students stay alert in school. Stock up on healthy foods your teen can easily grab and eat on the way out the door.
15. Suggest that your teen read a biography of a role model.
16. Look for ways to give your teen more responsibility, such as getting up independently, making doctor's appointments, etc.
17. Go for a bike ride or walk with your teenager today.
18. Teach your teen to trust gut instincts. If a situation feels like it might get out of hand, your teen should avoid it.
19. Ask your teen to tell you what characteristics are important in a leader.
20. Plan a reading dinner. Let each family member bring a book to the table and share a favorite passage.
21. Success leads to success. Find things your teen can succeed in—activities, sports, volunteering.
22. Show support for teen by doing your "homework" during study time—pay bills, organize papers, read etc.
23. See if your teen can shadow or talk with someone in a career field of interest.
24. Take your teen out for a special snack tonight.
25. Teach your teen to keep a record of spending—the item, the cost, whether it was a want or a need, etc.
26. Remind your teen to divide long lists of facts to learn into chunks. It's easier to memorize a few short lists than one long list.
27. Avoid criticizing or correcting your teen in front of others. Wait for a private moment.
28. Keep some short reading material by the microwave to encourage reading.
29. Suggest that your teen make sketches of things that are inspiring.
30. Have a family night tonight. Pop some popcorn. Curl up with a book, a movie or a game. Enjoy being together.
31. If your teen objects to a rule, offer a chance to make a case for changing it.

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November 2026

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1. Help your teen make a budget for the month, including plans for unexpected expenses.
2. When you hear your teen's wake-up alarm, walk past the bedroom and say a cheerful "Good morning." An upbeat mood is contagious.
3. Check in with the school about your teen's attendance. Make sure your student is showing up to all classes.
4. Say "no" to unchaperoned parties, even if "everyone is doing it."
5. Memorize something with your teen today. Try a poem or a quotation.
6. Hear a compliment about your teen? Be sure to pass it on. Teens need positive reinforcement.
7. Model fairness. Judge your teen's friends by their actions, not their clothes.
8. Encourage your teen to visit the school's college and career center this week and explore the resources available.
9. Remind your teen that mistakes are not the end of the world. They are the beginning of learning.
10. Help your teen make the connection between rights and responsibilities—rights come with responsibilities attached.
11. Is your home "teen friendly"? Ask your teen what you could do to make it a place where friends would like to come.
12. Work on a number or logic puzzle with your teen.
13. When your teen is upset and you aren't connecting, say, "Help me understand."
14. Is your teen a reluctant reader? Ask a librarian to suggest a book that ties in with a popular movie.
15. Make a to-do list with your teen and put tasks in order of priority.
16. With your teen, check out the "front page" stories of a variety of local and national news outlets. Compare and contrast the coverage.
17. Encourage your teen to use graph paper when working with columns of numbers. It reduces careless math errors.
18. Make flash cards with your teen. They are an effective tool for studying vocabulary words, science concepts, etc.
19. Encourage your teen to use small chunks of free time to study or review.
20. Is your teen's room messy? Set the timer for a 15-minute pick-up blitz before your student goes out with friends.
21. Find an interesting word in the dictionary. Challenge the entire family to use it as often as possible today.
22. Teens can prepare for success in the workplace while in high school. Check out the school's career and technical training classes.
23. Look at ads with your teen. Which statements about the products are facts? Which ones are opinions?
24. Ask your teen, "How is your life outside of school?"
25. Declare this an Acts of Kindness Day. Make a special effort to be kind to one another. It may become a habit!
26. Have family members make gratitude lists. Share your lists at dinner.
27. Give family members marshmallows and uncooked spaghetti. See who can build the tallest tower.
28. Make tonight Teens' Night in the Kitchen. Your teen will learn to cook, communicate and cooperate!
29. Remind your teen of the long-term benefits of achieving in school.
30. Avoid giving your teen compliments that really aren't—"You'd be great if only ..."

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