

# Daily Learning Planner

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

Linden Public Schools



THE  
**PARENT**  
INSTITUTE®

December • January • February

2023-2024

## December 2023

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

- 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.
- 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

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

- 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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