Middle School

Daily Learning Planner

Ideas families can use to help students do well in school



THE PARENT INSTITUTE®

September • October • November 2021

September 2021

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

- ❍ 1. Talk about things your child is looking forward to learning in the coming year.
- ❍ 2. Discuss a controversial issue with your child. Ask, "What do you think?"
- ❍ 3. Ask your child a specific question about school, such as "What do you think will be your most challenging class?"
- ❍ 4. Help your child decide how he'll organize his school notebooks and folders this school year.
- ❍ 5. Play a game with your child—cards, charades, a board game—whatever she'd like.
- ❍ 6. Take advantage of time in the car with your child. You can talk privately without interruption.
- ❍ 7. Teach your child a useful new skill, such as how to do laundry.
- ❍ 8. Keeping track of assignments is very important in middle school. Give your child a planner, or help him make an assignment notebook.
- ❍ 9. Learn about your state flag with your child. What does it represent?
- ❍ 10. Keep a world map or globe visible in your home. Encourage your child to use it to locate places in the news.
- ❍ 11. Watch your child's favorite TV show with her. Ask questions, such as "Who is your favorite character? Why?"
- ❍ 12. Help your child find a sport or another physical activity he enjoys. Physical fitness supports learning.
- ❍ 13. Expect your child to study every day, even when there's nothing due the next day.
- ❍ 14. Ask to see a copy of each class syllabus so you know what your child will be learning this year.
- ❍ 15. Help your child make a specific plan for reaching a goal.
- ❍ 16. Does your child forget to bring home needed materials for assignments? Have her post a take-home checklist in her planner.
- ❍ 17. Have your child practice saying hello and making eye contact. It will make social situations easier.
- ❍ 18. List three of your child's most recent successes. List three of your own. Post the lists where you can see them.
- ❍ 19. Have your child start a "strong emotions" diary. He can write down when and why he gets upset or angry and how he handles it.
- ❍ 20. If the sky is clear, take a walk together after dark and look at the sky. Can your child pick out any constellations?
- ❍ 21. Solve a crossword puzzle with your child.
- ❍ 22. Emphasize the importance of attending every class. Point out that attendance is also vital in the working world.
- ❍ 23. Have your child play you her favorite song. Play one for her that you loved at her age.
- ❍ 24. Focus on setting a good example. Children learn from your actions more than your words.
- ❍ 25. Start a project with your child, such as repairing or building something.
- ❍ 26. Teach your child to make a daily to-do list and check off finished tasks.
- ❍ 27. Think of synonyms with your child, such as *examine/inspect* and *run/jog.*
- ❍ 28. Honor Good Neighbor Day by encouraging your child to do a helpful deed for a neighbor or teacher.
- ❍ 29. Before making a big purchase, let your child help you do research to find the best deal.
- ❍ 30. Set aside time to listen as your child tells you about each of his teachers and classes.

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October 2021

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- ❍ 1. Ask your child, "If you could change one thing in the entire world, what would it be and why?" Listen carefully to her answer.
- ❍ 2. Talk about honesty and why it is so important. Find examples of people who demonstrate honesty.
- ❍ 3. How would your child handle peer pressure to drink, take a pill or vape? Use role-playing to practice ways to say *no*.
- ❍ 4. Encourage your child to talk to at least three new people outside of his normal group of friends this week.
- ❍ 5. Test observation skills with your child. Challenge each other to describe someone you just passed on the street.
- ❍ 6. Read your child's reading assignment together. Then ask her to tell you about it in her own words.
- ❍ 7. Help your child make a savings plan for a special purchase.
- ❍ 8. Tell your child that you believe he can learn and succeed academically. He'll be more likely to do so.
- ❍ 9. Watch a TV show together. Notice how men and women are portrayed. Are the characters realistic?
- ❍ 10. It's Computer Learning Month. Can your child teach you something about computers?
- ❍ 11. Encourage your child to read a newspaper every day this week. Have her choose a cover story to discuss.
- ❍ 12. Learn about upcoming school events for families. Make plans to attend at least one, in person or online.
- ❍ 13. Think of something you and your child would like to learn. Check out a how-to book from the library.
- ❍ 14. Set consequences for misbehavior that teach rather than punish.
- ❍ 15. Let your child take over a new responsibility. Present it as a positive step in growing up.
- ❍ 16. Tell your child you love him.
- ❍ 17. Discuss different ways to ease stress. Your child could exercise or listen to relaxing music.
- ❍ 18. Teach your child how to do a household task, such as tracking expenses. Competence makes kids feel good.
- ❍ 19. Read a story aloud as a family.
- ❍ 20. When you are having a conversation with your child, don't talk for more than 30 seconds at a time before letting her have a turn.
- ❍ 21. Ask your child a thought-provoking question, such as "What do you think life will be like in 50 years?"
- ❍ 22. Help your child set priorities when studying. Which assignment is most important? Due first? Most difficult?
- ❍ 23. Discuss a TV ad with your child. How did it try to convince you to buy?
- ❍ 24. Review your house rules. Do they still fit your child's age and maturity?
- ❍ 25. Make a recreational screen time schedule for the week. Help each other stick to it.
- ❍ 26. Tell your child a joke today.
- ❍ 27. Share an article that might interest your child. Discuss it together.
- ❍ 28. Just for fun, serve a "backwards dinner." Eat dessert first.
- ❍ 29. Notice whether your child is giving schoolwork his best effort. If so, praise his responsibility.
- ❍ 30. Ask your child to plan a fun family night.
- ❍ 31. Do something you've never done before with your child. Try a new food. Visit a new place.

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November 2021

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- ❍ 1. Suggest that you and your child exchange "special surprises." Do something unexpected and nice for one another.
- ❍ 2. Talk with your child about mistakes. What are some ways people can learn from their mistakes?
- ❍ 3. Select a book the whole family might enjoy. Pass it around until everyone has read it. Afterwards, discuss it together.
- ❍ 4. Play Alphabet Mix-Up. Choose a word; rearrange the letters in alphabetical order. Can your child figure out the word?
- ❍ 5. Make a list of healthy, fast and easy breakfast foods your child can grab before school.
- ❍ 6. Plan an indoor "camp out." Make a tent from a blanket. Eat s'mores and read scary stories.
- ❍ 7. Exchange persuasive letters with your child. Try to convince each other of something.
- ❍ 8. Ask your child to brainstorm dinner ideas for the week.
- ❍ 9. Ask your child a specific question about school, such as, "What are the biggest changes you've noticed about classes this year?"
- ❍ 10. Discuss world events in the news with your child at dinner.
- ❍ 11. Show your child photographs of herself when she was younger.
- ❍ 12. Start a conversation by noticing your child's nonverbal messages. If you see a smile, say, "You seem happy."
- ❍ 13. Ask your child to record "A day in the life of our family." He can write about things as they happen, draw or take pictures, or make videos.
- ❍ 14. Middle schoolers need time alone with their thoughts and feelings. Suggest activities your child can do alone.
- ❍ 15. Give your child a test-taking tip: Answer all the easiest questions first.
- ❍ 16. It's Geography Awareness Week. Quiz each other on state, provincial and world capitals at dinner tonight.
- ❍ 17. See how many words you and your child can use to describe the day's weather. For example, *foggy*, *overcast*, *muggy*, *wet*, *dreary*.
- ❍ 18. Have your child teach you something she needs to learn for an assignment.
- ❍ 19. Ask your child to pretend he's mayor for the day. Have him list three ideas that would improve your community.
- ❍ 20. Play a game that builds math skills, such as cards, dominoes or chess.
- ❍ 21. Think of someone you and your child admire. Post that person's picture in your home.
- ❍ 22. Have breakfast with your child today. Talk about what she likes best about her friends. What does she think makes her a good friend?
- ❍ 23. Have your child write a compliment or complaint letter to a company.
- ❍ 24. Power struggles don't work with middle schoolers. Too much parental control causes rebellion.
- ❍ 25. During dinner, have each family member share something they're thankful for.
- ❍ 26. Go on a nature walk with your child.
- ❍ 27. Write your child a thank-you note about something helpful she did.
- ❍ 28. Have your child read aloud to a younger sibling, a neighbor or you.
- ❍ 29. Take turns with your child making statements. Decide whether each is fact or opinion.
- ❍ 30. Be encouraging when your child faces challenges. Say "You can do it!"

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