

# Daily Learning Planner

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



THE  
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INSTITUTE®

December • January • February 2023-2024

## December 2023

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

- 1. Read a book of folktales with your child today.
- 2. Set aside time to work on craft projects together. Perhaps your child can give these as gifts.
- 3. Talk with your child about what it means to be courageous. Look for examples of people who demonstrate courage.
- 4. Make your own seasonal greeting cards. With your child, read some cards in stores for ideas, then write your own messages.
- 5. Make a paper chain to count down the number of days left until January 1. Have your child count the links and remove one each day.
- 6. Recreate a tradition from your own childhood. Share it with your child.
- 7. Put several items in a bag. Have your child and a friend or sibling reach in and choose three to use as props for a five-minute skit.
- 8. Plan a screen-free evening. Play Simon Says together instead.
- 9. Talk with your child about a choice you've made and the consequence of that choice.
- 10. Have your child replace the adjectives on a printed ad with their opposites.
- 11. Ask what your child would do if friends suggested stealing a candy bar.
- 12. Many people celebrate holidays in December. What holidays can your child name? Talk about why they are special.
- 13. Show your child which direction is *north*, *south*, *east* and *west*.
- 14. What is the coldest place in the nation today? The warmest? What's the difference between the two temperatures? Find out together.
- 15. Look through family photos together. Tell stories about the pictures.
- 16. Bake cookies with your child. If you're doubling a recipe, have your child do the math.
- 17. At dinner, ask family members to pick five words to describe themselves.
- 18. Talk with your child about how animals survive the winter months. What do bears do? How about birds?
- 19. Have your child make a list of things to do when there's nothing to do.
- 20. Take a walk with your child. Look for things you only see in December.
- 21. Ask your child to write your shopping list before you go to the market.
- 22. Have a family sing-along. Ask family members to share their favorite songs.
- 23. Have your child make a snowman picture using cotton balls and glue.
- 24. Ask what your child's favorite winter activity is. If possible, make plans to do it together.
- 25. Tuck a loving note under a pillow for your child to find at bedtime.
- 26. Talk to your child about the importance of writing thank-you notes for gifts.
- 27. Begin telling a story. When you get to an exciting part, stop talking and let your child make up the rest.
- 28. Ask about the very best present your child ever received. What made it special?
- 29. With your child, listen to music in the dark. Concentrate on the sounds.
- 30. Post a vocabulary word and its definition on the bathroom mirror. Change it every three or four days.
- 31. Measure your child. How much did your student grow this year?

# January 2024

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

- 1. Plan to spend some one-on-one time with your child this month. Write your “appointment” on the family calendar.
- 2. After you read aloud, ask your child to retell the story from memory.
- 3. Ask your child to help you organize something, such as a closet.
- 4. Create a family logbook. Everyone can jot down and read thoughts, reminders and accomplishments.
- 5. Teach your child a life skill, such as preparing a simple meal, washing clothes or washing dishes.
- 6. Take the family to the library. Have everyone check out some books.
- 7. Play a board game that involves math with your child.
- 8. It's National Clean Off Your Desk Day. Make it Clean Up Your Study Area Day, too!
- 9. If you don't have time to read to your child at night, read in the morning. It's a real “power breakfast.”
- 10. Have your child draw a picture of something that happened in school. Talk about it.
- 11. Ask your child, “Why do you think we have laws in our society? What would happen if we didn't?”
- 12. Make a pretend clock using a paper plate and two strips of paper. Help your child practice telling time.
- 13. Ask your child to name places where water is found.
- 14. Play I Spy with your child. Say “I spy something orange.” Let your child guess what it is.
- 15. With your child, try to name an animal that starts with every letter of the alphabet. (You can leave out X.)
- 16. Pick a category. Ask your child to pick a letter. How many items from the category begin with that letter?
- 17. Help your child set up dominos in a row and then knock them down. How long a trail can your child make?
- 18. Watch a TV show or video with the sound muted. Ask family members to make up the dialogue.
- 19. Make a list of three new things you'd like to do or try as a family. Then make plans to do them!
- 20. Sometime today, exchange notes with your child instead of talking.
- 21. Compliment your child on a recent accomplishment.
- 22. Ask your child to use a ruler or measuring tape to measure and record the dimensions of six objects in your home.
- 23. In the car, have your child add the numbers on license plates you see.
- 24. Let your child help you with a chore today. Be sure to say thank you.
- 25. Ask your child to spell the names of favorite foods.
- 26. Play a card game with your child that reinforces number sense, such as Crazy Eights or Go Fish.
- 27. Have your child look for certain letters or words on a cereal box or soup can.
- 28. Teach your child how to sew on a button today.
- 29. Help your child set a goal for this week.
- 30. Watch the news on TV with your child. Choose one story and have your child compare it with a news article on the same topic.
- 31. Talk about new words that your elementary schooler thinks should be in the dictionary. Have your child write the definitions.

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# February 2024

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

- 1. Ask your child, “What would you do with a million dollars?”
- 2. It's International Friendship Month. Have your child plan to do a good deed for a friend.
- 3. Talk together about what your child does right. List as many things as you can.
- 4. Help your child make a bookmark. On a piece of thin cardboard, have your child draw a scene or write a quotation from a favorite book.
- 5. Ask your child to read to you while you make dinner.
- 6. Be creative in the kitchen. See who can invent the greatest-tasting new pizza topping.
- 7. Create a board game with your child. Use poster board, markers, index cards, dice and coins for game pieces.
- 8. Have your child write a Valentine's message to someone who is sick or lonely. Mail it to that person.
- 9. Help your child plan ahead. Talk about the weekend. What needs to be done to prepare for a family activity?
- 10. February is Great American Pie Month. Celebrate by reading a children's book about pies, such as *Pie* by Sarah Weeks.
- 11. With your child, spend a half hour writing about a special day.
- 12. Ask if your child has ever seen or experienced bullying in school. If so, alert the school.
- 13. Challenge your child to create a comic strip of a familiar story.
- 14. Show and tell family members that you love them.
- 15. Let your child pick what to wear and where to read today.
- 16. Have a Predictions Day. Predict how long it will take to get to the store, to fill the bathtub, etc.
- 17. Discuss ways you work with numbers at home—for example, when setting an alarm clock or the oven timer.
- 18. Dissolve some salt and water in a glass. Watch for a few days. Talk about what happens.
- 19. Improved report card? High grade on a test? Make your achiever Head of the House for the day.
- 20. Make a crossword puzzle to help your child review vocabulary words.
- 21. Talk with your child about what it means to be a responsible member of a community.
- 22. It's the birthday of George Washington. Take a virtual tour together of his home, Mount Vernon, at <https://virtualltour.mountvernon.org/>.
- 23. Look in the books and articles for interesting words. Help your child look them up in a dictionary.
- 24. Challenge your child to look through the house and make a list of everything that comes from plants.
- 25. Let your child clean some dirty pennies with ketchup. Research together why this works.
- 26. Have your child write a poem or story from the point of view of a family pet.
- 27. Ask about people your elementary schooler admires. Why does your child admire them?
- 28. Put on music and spend 15 minutes drawing or writing with your child. Let the music be your inspiration.
- 29. Explain that people learn when they try new things. Today, try a new food with your child or take a new route home together.

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