

# Helping Children Learn®

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School  
Lemmon Elementary School



September 2022

## Put simple ideas to work now to support learning all year long

Schools and families share a common goal: helping students learn, grow and thrive. And it takes both schools and families to achieve it.

At school, the start of a new year is a time to establish routines and priorities. To do the same at home and set your child up for a productive year of learning:

- **Create a study space** that is comfortable for your student. It can be at a bedroom desk, at the kitchen table or on the couch. It just needs to have plenty of light and few distractions when your child is working.
- **Make a weekly schedule.** Plan time for schoolwork, play, activities and relaxing. Be sure to include a family reading time. Reading together regularly shows your child that reading is important.
- **Keep a family calendar.** You can use a different color for each family member's activities.
- **Set up a folder** for school notices so they won't get misplaced.
- **Cut back on recreational screen time.** Set a weekly limit on time spent passively watching screen media.
- **Update contact information.** Provide your work and emergency numbers to the school. Collect teacher and attendance office contacts.



## Make reading an activity your child will enjoy doing every day

Even after elementary schoolers learn to read, they must practice regularly to develop their skills. Strong reading skills will make learning every subject easier for your child. To encourage frequent reading:

- **Give your child choices.** Offer a wide variety of reading material—books, age-appropriate news articles, graphic novels etc. Let your child choose what to bring home from the library.
- **Connect reading to life.** Read together about historical events that happened near your home. Look for books related to things your child likes to do.
- **Set a timer.** If your child resists reading, say "Read to me for three minutes." Add another minute every few days.
- **Act out stories.** Help your child stage a family play or make a video of a current favorite book.
- **Read aloud.** When children listen to books, they can enjoy more challenging words and stories.

## Establish a key partnership

You and the teacher are at the center of your child's daily life. Teamwork between you benefits your student. To foster it:

- **Participate** in Back-to-School Night to find out about teacher expectations.
- **Update the teacher** about changes and challenges your child is facing.
- **Show your child** you respect the teacher.

## Encourage cooperation

Leadership is a positive quality in a student. But *bossiness*—being demanding, not listening, not cooperating—just makes working with classmates and teachers harder. To help your child learn to contribute in a group:

- **Have family members take turns** making some decisions for everyone, such as what vegetable to eat for dinner.
- **Set house rules.** If one person divides the cookie, the other person gets to choose which piece they want.
- **Teach fair ways** to make decisions, like flipping a coin to see who goes first.



## Have your student teach

One of the most effective ways to reinforce learning is to ask your child to teach the material to you. Try these three strategies with your "student teacher":

1. **Show interest** in what your child is learning in school. Ask your student to explain concepts and read texts aloud.
2. **Take a quiz.** Let your child ask you questions about the material.
3. **Ask for help.** How does your child think you should solve a problem? What should you do first?





# Helping Children Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

September 2022



## How can I help my child make up for lost learning?

**Q:** My third grader lost ground academically during the pandemic and struggled with grade level work last spring. How can I help my child get back on track this year?

**A:** Your student is not alone! Studies show widespread drops in math and reading test scores since 2019. But there's also good news: There are many ways you can work with the school and your child to help recover that lost ground. Here are some ways to get started:

- **Meet with your child's teacher** as early as possible this fall. Talk about subject areas that give your student trouble. Ask what you can do at home and about school resources that can help. Many schools and districts are using relief funds to implement tutoring programs, for example.
- **Prioritize school attendance.** Don't let your child miss out on class instruction, discussions and demonstrations.
- **Help your child set learning goals** and plan steps to meet them. Every time your student completes a step, recognize the effort.
- **Plan for out-of-school learning.** Visit a historic site together. Get a book on minerals from the library and spend an afternoon rock-hunting. Building your child's base of knowledge helps with learning in school.



## Parent Quiz

### Are you establishing healthy habits?

Families play a vital role in helping students do their best in school. One key way to do this is by ensuring that your child gets needed rest, nutrition and exercise. Are you promoting healthy choices? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

- \_\_\_ **1. Do you maintain** a regular bedtime for your child? Elementary schoolers need at least nine hours of sleep daily.
- \_\_\_ **2. Do you feed** your child breakfast each day? Food fuels kids' brains for learning.
- \_\_\_ **3. Do you find** fun ways for your child to get moving? Daily exercise improves memory and focus.
- \_\_\_ **4. Do you review** the rules often about safely interacting with others, and make sure your child understands them?

- \_\_\_ **5. Do you teach** your child to wash or sanitize hands frequently throughout the day?

#### How well are you doing?

*More yes answers mean you are helping your child establish habits that support learning. For each no, try that idea.*

*"The habits we form from childhood make no small difference, but rather they make all the difference."* —Aristotle

## Mistakes are good teachers

The way your child responds after making a mistake in schoolwork makes the difference between learning and being stuck. When you see that your student has made an error:

- 1. Ask,** "Do you understand why this is wrong?" If the answer is *yes*, have your child correct the mistake. If the answer is *no*, offer guidance or suggest asking the teacher for help.
- 2. Explain** that fixing mistakes helps kids understand them, so they can avoid making them again.
- 3. Recognize** progress and remind your child that people get smarter when they learn from mistakes.

Source: H.S. Schroder and others, "Neural evidence for enhanced attention to mistakes among school-aged children with a growth mindset," *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, Elsevier B.V.

## Concentrate on listening

Listening and learning go hand in hand. To build your child's listening skills, be a good role model. When your elementary schooler is telling you something, stop what you are doing. Offer your full attention. If your child asks a question, repeat the question and then respond.



## Enjoy the fun of writing

To encourage your child's interest in writing, have some fun doing it together. Set a timer for five minutes then spend the time writing about one of these ideas:

- **The best birthday** I can imagine.
- **Something I'd like to try** and why.
- **The most exciting thing** I've ever done and how I did it.

Afterward, share what you each wrote.

## Helping Children Learn®

Published in English and Spanish, September through May.

Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.

Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.

Editor: Alison McLean.

Translations Editor: Victoria Gaviola.

Copyright © 2022, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc.

P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474

1-800-756-5525 • www.parent-institute.com • ISSN 1527-1013



# Daily Learning Planner

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

Lemmon Elementary School



THE  
**PARENT**  
INSTITUTE

September • October • November 2022

## September 2022

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

- ☐ 1. This is Library Card Sign-Up Month. Make sure everyone in your family has a library card—and knows how to use it.
- ☐ 2. Think of a meaningful quotation you love. Post it where your child will see it.
- ☐ 3. Establish a regular place to display your child's best schoolwork. Change the display often.
- ☐ 4. Tonight, talk with your child about the week ahead. Plan to do this every Sunday night.
- ☐ 5. A calendar is important for organization. Buy or make one with your child. Together, mark important dates with stickers.
- ☐ 6. Ask your child to guess how many times each of you blinks in a minute. Then check: Count blinks for 15 seconds and multiply by 4.
- ☐ 7. Establish a regular time for your child to do schoolwork. Choose the time together.
- ☐ 8. When your child is unsuccessful, ask, "How would you do it differently next time?"
- ☐ 9. Review the school rules together. Post the rules on your refrigerator.
- ☐ 10. Turn chores into a game. Give each task a number and have your child roll a die to get an assignment.
- ☐ 11. If you haven't met your child's teacher yet, make plans to do so, either in person or online.
- ☐ 12. At dinner, have each family member say something nice about every person at the table.
- ☐ 13. Play math "Jeopardy." Give a number. Who can come up with an equation for which it is the answer?
- ☐ 14. When your child asks a question you can't answer, write it down. Keep a list of questions to look up later.
- ☐ 15. Have your child list ways family members read and write at home.
- ☐ 16. What foods make your child think of autumn? Apples, pears, squash? Choose one and prepare a healthy dish together.
- ☐ 17. Today is Constitution Day in the United States. Explain that a constitution is a framework for governing a country and its people.
- ☐ 18. Ask what your child is most looking forward to this school year.
- ☐ 19. Have your child name five jobs that might be interesting to do. Try to help your child interview someone in one of these jobs or fields.
- ☐ 20. Tonight at dinner, put a "price" on each item you serve. Have your child figure out the total cost of the meal.
- ☐ 21. When your child has a problem, offer two possible solutions. Let your child decide which one to choose.
- ☐ 22. It's the Autumnal Equinox. Help your child look up the word *equinox*. What does it mean?
- ☐ 23. Write down five of your child's successes this week and five of your own. Post the list where you can both see it.
- ☐ 24. Check out some new books from the library today. Sit in a cozy chair with your child and read a few together.
- ☐ 25. Help your child research the answer to a question.
- ☐ 26. Have your child write down a weekly goal. Make one for yourself, too.
- ☐ 27. Ask your child, "What is your favorite animal? Why do you like it?"
- ☐ 28. Praise something your child did well today. Make your praise as specific as possible.
- ☐ 29. Have your child write or dictate a short story about a favorite teacher.
- ☐ 30. Talk with your child about honesty and why it is important.

# October 2022

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

- 1. Pick a word of the day. Challenge family members to use it in a sentence. Make this a daily habit.
- 2. Take a walk with your child and use all five senses to observe the world around you.
- 3. Play math facts baseball. Quiz each other. A correct answer is a "base" hit.
- 4. Start a made-up story. "A man went down the road and he met a ... ." Let your child finish the story.
- 5. How many words can your child make from the letters in OCTOBER?
- 6. Does your child know who to call in an emergency? Make a list and post it on your refrigerator. Practice what to say.
- 7. When your child shows you schoolwork, talk about things that are correct before noting what is wrong.
- 8. Download an audiobook from the library to listen to with your child.
- 9. Help your child find out what's inside a seed. Soak a dry bean overnight. Let your child remove its coat and pull the halves apart.
- 10. Have family members make a list of their strengths. Read them aloud. Add to one another's lists.
- 11. Ask your child, "What was the most interesting thing you learned today?"
- 12. Talk about fire safety. What should your child do in case of a fire?
- 13. Have a jump rope contest. See how many jumps you and your child can do in a row.
- 14. Let your child stay up 30 minutes past bedtime as a treat. The catch? The time must be spent reading!
- 15. Share family stories with your child. Ask relatives to share some, too.
- 16. Go for a walk or bike ride with your child today. Challenge each other to spot something you haven't seen before.
- 17. Help your child do something nice for someone else.
- 18. Talk with your child about why students who keep up with their schoolwork earn better grades.
- 19. Teach your child to defend against bullying by saying *no*, walking away from fights and telling an adult.
- 20. Watch the news with your child. Locate one place mentioned on a world map.
- 21. Talk about one of your favorite books. Ask about one of your child's.
- 22. Look for signs of fall: changing daylight, colored leaves, pumpkins, etc.
- 23. Review math facts with your child tonight.
- 24. Put on music and spend 15 minutes drawing or writing with your child. Let the music be your inspiration.
- 25. Turn off the lights and read books by flashlight with your child.
- 26. Let your child see you keep your temper when you are upset. Instead of yelling, calmly talk about how you feel.
- 27. It's Theodore Roosevelt's birthday. Help your child look up interesting facts about this president and protector of the environment.
- 28. Pick an interesting news article. Ask your child to read it to you while you prepare dinner.
- 29. Write an encouraging note to your child. Tuck it in a school notebook.
- 30. Encourage your child to draw a self-portrait.
- 31. Celebrate National Popcorn Poppin' Month. Pop some popcorn and curl up with some mystery books.

Copyright © 2022 The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. • May be reproduced only as licensed by *Parents make the difference!*® and *Helping Children Learn*® newsletters • 1-800-756-5525

# November 2022

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

- 1. Set aside some time this month to do something with your child that you enjoyed at the same age.
- 2. Talk with your child about ways to handle stress. Getting enough sleep, exercising and talking to someone are helpful options.
- 3. Play Concentration with fractions. Try to make pairs of equivalent fractions:  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{5}$  and  $\frac{6}{10}$  and so on.
- 4. Start a family savings jar. Everyone can decide what the goal will be and how they will contribute.
- 5. Have everyone bring an interesting science fact to share at dinner.
- 6. Make up a secret code with your child. Use it to write notes this week.
- 7. Hug your child, for no reason other than to show your love.
- 8. Ask your child, "If you could be a famous person from history, who would you be? Why?"
- 9. Play charades with your child. Use hand gestures to act out words.
- 10. Pick a category (such as animals) and a letter. How many items can your child name that fit in that category and start with that letter?
- 11. Talk about service. Discuss ways your family can do something for others in the coming holiday season.
- 12. When you read aloud to your child, choose an exciting place to stop. Ask, "What do you think will happen next?"
- 13. Learn a tongue twister together. At dinner, challenge everyone to repeat it three times fast.
- 14. Ask what actions or accomplishments your child is proud of.
- 15. To encourage a beginning reader, look for books with "read-along" audiobooks. Your child can listen and read at the same time.
- 16. Put together a jigsaw puzzle with your child.
- 17. Have a reading dinner. Ask everyone to bring a book they like to share. Talk about the books at the table.
- 18. Help your child make puppets by drawing faces on the bottom flaps of small paper bags.
- 19. If you have already said "No," avoid giving in to repeated demands from your child.
- 20. Enjoy some outdoor exercise as a family today.
- 21. Hold a "guess that number" contest: "How many noodles are in this bag?" "How many cookies are in that box?"
- 22. Allow a few minutes after the light is off at bedtime for a quiet conversation with your child.
- 23. Never let your child forget that you are on the same team.
- 24. Make a list of all the things that make your family members thankful.
- 25. Write three one-digit numbers on a card. How many equations can your child make and solve with those numbers?
- 26. Take a "counting walk" together. Pick something to count (cars, signs, flowers, birds, bikes) and keep track.
- 27. Have your child write new or difficult words on index cards. Review them together regularly until your child can read and spell them.
- 28. Choose a Person of the Week. Help your child learn more about that person.
- 29. When you watch TV with your child, ask questions: "Why do you think that person did that?" "Would you do that?"
- 30. Learn the sign language alphabet with your child. Use it to help practice spelling words.

Copyright © 2022 The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. • May be reproduced only as licensed by *Parents make the difference!*® and *Helping Children Learn*® newsletters • 1-800-756-5525