

# Helping Children Learn<sup>®</sup>

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

Hornell City School District



December 2014

## Time management gives students the structure to get things done

Many children are bright and capable, but never seem to accomplish anything. They don't finish homework, or they forget to turn it in. They are always late getting out the door in the morning.

Children with these problems aren't lazy. They just don't know how to set priorities and manage their time. Here are some ways you can help if your child has trouble completing tasks on time:



- **Focus on productivity, not grades.** Reward your child for getting all her homework finished and turned in. Praise her for the time she spends reading. Once she develops better work habits, her grades will improve.
- **Enforce a consistent homework time.** Set a schedule that lets your child relax a little after school. But once homework time comes, it's time to get to work.
- **Set priorities.** Talk about assignments that are due tomorrow and later in the week. What's most important? Make sure those things get done first.
- **Help with time management.** At least once a week, look over her schedule. If there's a big project due on Friday, don't let her wait until Thursday to start.
- **Have your child track the time she spends on homework.** How many hours did she study math this week? When her math grade starts to improve, she will see the connection between effort and results.

Source: M. Levine, *The Myth of Laziness*, Simon & Schuster.



## Teach your child to give responsibly

At its best, gift giving strengthens bonds between people. When your child gives a gift of time, it also develops his sense of responsibility for others. Here are some ideas your child might try:

- **Run errands** for an elderly neighbor.
- **Make a recording** of a book so a younger sibling can listen and read along.
- **Teach an adult** (perhaps you!) how to download and use an app or computer program.
- **Bake cookies** or other treats for someone who will not receive many homemade gifts.
- **Play a favorite game** with a family member or neighbor who is home-bound.
- **Create a 2015 calendar** for a teacher or coach. Decorate with a different artwork for each month.
- **Make a list.** Write "My 100 Best Memories With Grandpa."

Source: B. Taylor, *What Kids Really Want That Money Can't Buy: Tips for Parenting in a Commercial World*, Warner Books.

## Encourage self-control

You want your child to thrive in school, both academically and socially. Help by teaching her that we are all accountable for what we do.

Encourage your child to repeat to herself, "I can't control others. But I can control my choices and my actions."



## Do an attendance checkup

Researchers in Oregon studied students who missed as little as one day of school every two weeks. They found that:

- **Absence has an impact on learning.**
- **Missing school becomes a habit.** Children who miss a lot of kindergarten are still frequently absent in fifth grade.
- **Early attendance affects later achievement.**

Has your child missed some days? It's not too late to get him back on track for a successful school year ... and school career.

Source: M. Buehler, J. Tapogna and H.N. Chang, "Why Being in School Matters: Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon Schools," Attendance Works, [niswc.com/on-track](http://niswc.com/on-track).

## Listen now, correct later

"Ashley came to school today in these weird clothes. I think she called them cougots ..."

"Actually," you chime in, "those pants are called *culottes*."



So now your child knows the correct name for the pants. But she's stopped talking and you don't know what she was going to say. To keep the lines of communication open so you can support your child as she goes through school:

- **Listen to her** without interrupting.
- **Save corrections** until she's through talking.

Source: A.E. Wolf, *I'd Listen to My Parents if They'd Just Shut Up*, HarperCollins.

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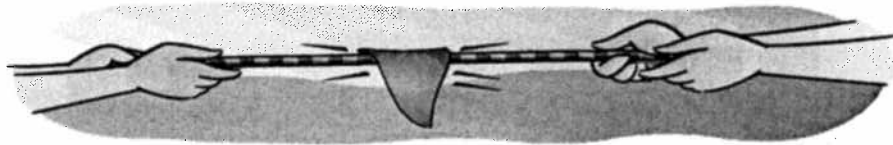
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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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## How do I stop having power struggles with my child?



**Q:** Perhaps my son will grow up to be a lawyer. For now, I'd like to stop feeling like I'm in court every time I want him to do something. He argues with me. I argue back. How do I avoid feeling like every conversation with my son is a negotiation?

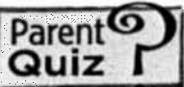
**A:** It's certainly important for your son to learn how to express his ideas. You want to raise a child who knows how to advocate for himself. (That's what will help him say *no* when he's facing peer pressure.)

Still, there are some things that really should not be negotiated. You know when it's time for him to go to bed. And homework is just one of those things that's part of the daily routine.

When your son starts to argue over something that is not open to debate, just smile and stay firm. "Sorry, sweetie, it's bedtime." Then don't say anything else.

Other times, you may be willing to listen. Let your son know what he can negotiate and what he can't. "I'm happy to talk about what you want to do this weekend. Let's see if we can visit Grandma and still have time for you to do what you want."

The key is not to get sucked into an argument. As you've learned, no one really wins in a power struggle!



## Do you encourage a sense of family?

It's said that the greatest gifts we give our children are roots and wings. The holiday season is a great time to share the family time, stories and traditions that will feed your child's roots and make her feel she belongs. Are you helping your child learn about family? Answer *yes* or *no*:

1. **Do you share** old family photos and stories with your child?
2. **Do you prepare** family recipes together?
3. **Do you encourage** your child to ask older family members about their memories of childhood?
4. **Have you looked** at a map with your child for the countries her ancestors came from?
5. **Does your family keep** a scrapbook or journal to save

memories, photos and letters from older generations?

### How well are you doing?

*Each yes helps root your child in family history. For each no, try that idea from the quiz.*

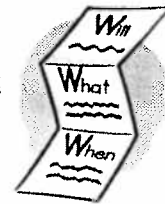
"Tell me and I forget,  
teach me and I may  
remember, involve me  
and I learn."

—attributed to Benjamin Franklin

## Achieve goals with 3 W's

Children don't always know how to reach their goals. Making goal strips can help them plan. Here's how:

1. **Cut a paper strip** about 3" wide and 12" long. Fold it into three sections.
2. **On section one**, your child writes "I will ..."



3. **On section two**, he writes *what* his goal is. "Read for 20 minutes."
4. **On section three**, he writes *when* he is going to do it. "Every day."

This 3W formula, *will + what + when*, is a key to staying motivated. Have your child post his strips where he can see them.

Source: T. Lickona, *Character Matters*, Touchstone Books, Simon & Schuster.

## Start a 'word bank' account

When writing, students often use the same few words over and over. To help your child enlarge her "word bank," have her make lists of words she knows that have the same meaning as common words. For example, *said* (*shouted, whispered, yelled, cried*).

Keep her lists in a binder she can pull out whenever she has a writing assignment.

## Turn reading into thinking

When young readers go beyond sounding out words to understanding and using information, reading becomes learning! To reinforce your child's comprehension skills:

- **Talk about the material.** What problems did the characters face? Why did things turn out the way they did?
- **Make connections.** How is the story like or unlike others he's read?
- **Sum up.** What was the message of the story? Can he apply it to real life?

Source: P. Marshall, "Reading Comprehension and Higher Order Thinking Skills," K12 Reader, [niswc.com/comp](http://niswc.com/comp).

## Helping Children Learn®

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# Daily Learning Planner

Ideas parents can use to help children  
do well in school.

Hornell City School District



THE  
**PARENT**  
INSTITUTE™

December • January • February 2014–2015

## December 2014

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

- 1. Talk about the activities your family enjoyed most during this past year. Make plans to do them again.
- 2. Help your child learn the sign language alphabet. Use it to practice spelling words today.
- 3. Ask your child, "If you could go anywhere, where would you go and why?" Together, learn more about this location.
- 4. Make and send your own family greeting cards.
- 5. Begin telling a story, and when you get to an exciting part, stop. Let your child make up the rest.
- 6. Visit the library. Get a book about holiday traditions around the world.
- 7. Pay your child a compliment today.
- 8. Talk about how your family can do something for others this month.
- 9. Let your child help make dinner.
- 10. Today is Human Rights Day. Talk with your child about rights and responsibilities.
- 11. Plan a "no-TV" day. Let your child choose an alternative activity.
- 12. Make a puzzle with your child. Glue a picture onto cardboard. Cut it into pieces.
- 13. Challenge family members to write, eat or do other activities with the hand they don't favor.
- 14. Hug your child for no reason other than you love him.
- 15. Enjoy some physical activity with your child.
- 16. Ask your child about the qualities she values most in friendships. Talk about why values are important.
- 17. Ask your child to guess how many times he blinks in a minute.
- 18. Write fractions on index cards. Mix them up. Help your child put them in order from smallest to greatest.
- 19. With your child, think of words that sound like what they mean, such as *buzz*, *smash*, *hiss* and *thump*.
- 20. Ask a librarian to recommend some award-winning books.
- 21. Cut a lime in half. Your child can dip it in paint and "print" on paper.
- 22. Name a state, province or country. Who can call out the capital first?
- 23. Cut apart the segments of a comic strip and ask your child to arrange the pieces in the right order.
- 24. When your child asks a question you can't answer, write it down. Keep a list of questions to look up later.
- 25. Use math to give your child instructions. For example, ask your child to pick up  $3 + 2 + 1$  toys.
- 26. Ask your child what made the very best present she ever received special.
- 27. During breakfast, find an interesting word in the dictionary. Challenge your child to use it three times during the day.
- 28. If your child is learning to read, try books with "read-along" audio.
- 29. Let your child pick a word. Together, put its letters in alphabetical order.
- 30. Keep a book handy to read when you and your child are waiting in line.
- 31. Find pictures of people. Ask your child to write captions.



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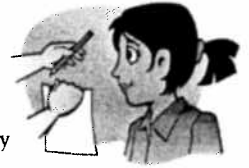
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# January 2015

- 1. Have your child replace adjectives on a printed ad with their opposites.
- 2. Help your child set a goal and write a plan to achieve it this year.
- 3. Think of something you and your child would like to learn, such as how to knit. Check out a how-to book.
- 4. Make an "I am special" scrapbook with your child. Use photographs of special events in your child's life.
- 5. Teach your child to take her pulse. Have her jump up and down 15 times and take it again. Has it changed?
- 6. Pretend you are your child's mirror. Do everything he does—in reverse.
- 7. Send your child on a treasure hunt. Make a map that will lead her to a small treat.
- 8. Challenge your child to invent a drink, such as "orange hot chocolate."
- 9. How many farm animals can your child name?
- 10. Visit the library with your child. Check out a book about outer space.
- 11. Together, plan your child's TV viewing this week.
- 12. Start a family savings plan for something special that you have already spoken about with your child.
- 13. Ask your child to close his eyes and describe sounds that he hears.
- 14. With your child, sing songs that you learned as a child. Have your child teach you a song.
- 15. Ask your child what she thinks she is good at and why.
- 16. Tonight, take a walk with your child. Look at the stars. Can you see any planets?
- 17. Trace your child's outline on a sheet of paper. Later, have him research and "map" the inside of his body.

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

- 18. Try a new kind of transportation with your child.
- 19. Explain to your child how people reach compromises. Give an example.
- 20. Suggest that your child write to her favorite author.
- 21. Role-play a difficult situation your child may face.
- 22. Think of several words that start with the same letter. Challenge your child to use them in a sentence that makes sense.
- 23. Try eating with chopsticks tonight.
- 24. Teach your child a skill he'll need later in life—cooking, laundry, etc.
- 25. Hold a family meeting. Discuss your family's goals and successes.
- 26. Pick a category (cities, sports) and a letter. How many items from that category can your child name that begin with that letter?
- 27. Make a chore chart with your child. List chores she's responsible for and when they should be completed.
- 28. At dinner tonight, have everyone tell how they used math today.
- 29. Ask your child to notice things that come from plants.
- 30. Choose a poem to read aloud to your child. With your feet, stamp syllables as you read.
- 31. Let our child read the label on a food your family eats. What vitamins does it contain? How much fat is in it?



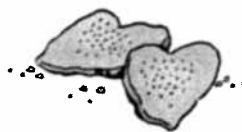
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# February 2015

- 1. Have a silent supper. During dessert, have family members share what they were thinking about.
- 2. Plan to attend an event marking African-American History month.
- 3. Turn chores into a game. Assign each chore a number and have your child roll a die to see which one he gets.
- 4. Talk with your child about what she does right. List as many things as you can.
- 5. Share a favorite quote with your child.
- 6. If you don't have time to read to your child at night, read in the morning. It's a real "power breakfast."
- 7. Ask your child to name his favorite sport, and say why he likes it.
- 8. Visit an art museum in your town or online and talk with your child about the paintings.
- 9. See how many words your child can use to describe the sky.
- 10. Have your child write a special Valentine's message to someone who is sick or lonely. Mail it to them.
- 11. Write a nice note and tuck it into your child's backpack.
- 12. Talk with your child about a choice you have made. Then talk about the consequences.
- 13. Do a crossword puzzle with your child. Or make up your own to review spelling words.
- 14. See how many red, pink or heart-shaped foods you can serve today.
- 15. At dinner, ask everyone to share something that made them happy this week.



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

- 16. Show your child learning is a lifelong activity by learning a new sport or other subject together.
- 17. Give your child weekly tickets worth a half-hour of TV time each. Let her cash in unused tickets for special treats.
- 18. Test your child's knowledge of some facts, such as who is vice president of the United States.
- 19. Look at a calendar and discuss how many days are in each month.
- 20. Plan a "read in bed" evening. Serve a healthful snack if you wish.
- 21. Visit the library. Help your child choose a book of poetry.
- 22. It's George Washington's birthday. How many facts can your child list about this famous president?
- 23. Don't watch TV tonight. Read, play games or put together a puzzle instead.
- 24. At bedtime, allow a few minutes after the light is off for a quiet conversation with your child.
- 25. Look at a map with your child. Where is your state? Which states are nearby?
- 26. Can your child name an animal that starts with every letter of the alphabet? (It's okay to leave out the letter X.)
- 27. Have family members write reviews of books they've read.
- 28. Go on a "fraction search" through today's newspaper. Which sections have the most fractions?

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