

Day by Day

Ideas parents can use to help students do better in school.

**Lakeside Middle School
Dr. Kay Marsh and Ms. Norma Holder**



THE
PARENT
INSTITUTE®

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December 2005

- 1. Start a good habit with your child.
- 2. Does your child ride a bike? Review the rules of bicycle safety today.
- 3. Ask your child to go through her room and pick out items she can donate to a charity.
- 4. Allow your child to subscribe to a magazine he'd enjoy, as long as it's age-appropriate and high quality.
- 5. Ask your child to make greeting cards for nursing home residents.
- 6. Ask your child what she likes most about her classes.
- 7. Tell a story with your child. Take turns adding sentences.
- 8. Play a memory game with your child. Try to remember things you each did the day before yesterday.
- 9. Test your child's observation skills. Can he describe someone that just passed you on the street? Challenge each other.
- 10. Do a taste test with your child. Try different brands of a food you like. Which one tastes better?
- 11. Suggest you and your child exchange "special surprises." Do something unexpected for one another.
- 12. Watch a TV show with your child. Notice how men and women are portrayed. Are the characters realistic?
- 13. If your child brings home a bad grade, react calmly.
- 14. Teach your child a memory trick, such as "Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492."
- 15. Give your child stress-relieving tips, such as counting to 10 silently when angry.
- 16. Have one person call out names of famous people. Another person can guess what that person did. Then look it up.
- 17. Bake cookies with your child. Decorate them creatively.
- 18. Start a family book club. Give each person a turn selecting a book. After everyone reads the same book, talk about it.

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- 19. Give your child a camera and ask her to record "A day in the life of our family."
- 20. When you're with your child, don't feel the need to fill every minute with talk. Silence can speak louder than words.
- 21. Provide some "personal space" for your child.
- 22. Take your child to the library and research his dream career.
- 23. Teach your child to read the utility meters and help determine the amount of water, gas and/or electricity you use.
- 24. See if your child can list the planets other than Earth.
- 25. Write your child a letter about how wonderful you think she is.
- 26. Play a game of Scrabble® with your child to build word skills.
- 27. Talk with your child about his priorities.
- 28. Let your child "overhear" you talking positively about him.
- 29. Help your child organize her room.
- 30. Review the first half of the school year with your child.
- 31. Help your child set—and write down—goals for the coming year. Set some goals for yourself, as well.



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- 1. Give your child a calendar. Encourage him to keep track of school assignments and events.
- 2. Ask your child's opinion on something.
- 3. Ask your child to name two ways she can be a better friend.
- 4. Let your child choose from a list of chores.
- 5. Talk with your child about an abstract concept—one that you can think about, but not see—such as justice.
- 6. Try doing something the “old-fashioned” way with your child. Hand wash a piece of clothing.
- 7. Have your child estimate how long an assignment will take. Write it down. Then see how long it really takes.
- 8. Watch a weather report with your child. Can he find your town on the map? What should the temperature be today?
- 9. Do the newspaper crossword puzzle with your child.
- 10. Review your family rules against drug use. Explain them clearly to your child.
- 11. Talk about your family's ethnic background with your child.
- 12. Ask your child to recommend a book for you to read.
- 13. Practice estimating with your child. How many popcorn kernels will fit in your hand? How many cookies are in a jar?
- 14. Ask your librarian for a list of events for young people.
- 15. Keep a basket on your table. Fill it with newspaper clippings and other conversation starters. Choose one at dinner.
- 16. Make a homework drawer and fill it with study supplies.
- 17. While your child does homework, do some quiet work yourself, such as pay bills.
- 18. Let your child see you reading for pleasure.
- 19. Share a poem with your child. How does she interpret it?
- 20. Teach your child how to deal with a kitchen fire.

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- 21. Keep credit card offers you receive in the mail. Ask your child to figure out the interest on a \$100 purchase for each card.
- 22. Encourage your child to make lists to help him remember things. He can make homework lists, to-do lists, etc.
- 23. Ask your child about her hardest school subject. Together, brainstorm about ways to make it easier.
- 24. Visit a restaurant with your child. When you get home, have him write a review of the food and the service.
- 25. Pick a subject and together think of as many things as possible that are connected to it.
- 26. Say a sentence and ask your child to classify it as fact or opinion.
- 27. Get a deck of cards. Each player turns over one card. The player who correctly multiplies the cards wins them.
- 28. Take your child with you as you run errands today. You'll come across things that will spark conversations.
- 29. A palindrome is a word that reads the same way forwards and backwards, like mom and eye. Can you think of others?
- 30. Explain to your child how success depends more on effort than on intelligence.
- 31. Comment on one specific task your child did well today.



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- 1. Set a TV schedule with your child.
- 2. Is your child overwhelmed by a task? Have him commit just five minutes to it. He may realize it's not so bad.
- 3. Encourage your child to eat breakfast every day.
- 4. Think of ways you and your child waste time. Together, find ways to improve.
- 5. Watch a TV commercial with your child. Notice the techniques it uses to influence people.
- 6. Offer to drive your child and her friends somewhere.
- 7. Learn a magic trick with your child.
- 8. Plan to attend as many school events as possible.
- 9. Ask your child about his teachers.
- 10. Ask your child to make a graph of family habits. How long does each person sleep? Who reads the most?
- 11. With your child, look for ways to add peace to your lives.
- 12. Look through the newspaper with your child. Have him circle jobs that look interesting. Notice the requirements.
- 13. Cut out small hearts. Write a reason you love your child on each one. Tape them together to make a chain of hearts.
- 14. Tell your child one specific thing you love about her.
- 15. Practice active listening with your child. Listen carefully while he talks. Repeat what you heard in your own words.
- 16. Work on a hobby with your child.
- 17. Let your child practice writing on a chalkboard at home.
- 18. Patiently explain the reason for a rule your child doesn't like.



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- 19. Work a crossword puzzle with your child.
- 20. Make a “one-a-day” rule: Family members will eat one meal together every day. Turn off the TV and really communicate.
- 21. Make up trivia questions about your family. Quiz each other at the dinner table.
- 22. Teach your child symbols that speed up note-taking, such as “w/” for with and “@” for at.
- 23. Give your child a cereal box. If she eats one serving a day for 25 days, how many calories will she take in?
- 24. Let your child be an archeologist. What might he say about the people in your house, based on what he finds there?
- 25. Ask your child, “If you got new carpet in your room, how many square feet would it take?”
- 26. Write your child a note of thanks for a time she helped you.
- 27. Look for a food label written in several different languages. Can your child guess what languages they are?
- 28. Read a story aloud to your child.

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