The Central Valley Chronicle

September 2026

CENTRAL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

COUGAR CONNECTION

Welcome Back, Central Valley!

The 2026–2027 school year got started a little differently than most! When our first day of school was called off due to thunderstorms and inclement weather, Mother Nature gave us one more unexpected day of summer. Thankfully, we are now back on track, our hallways are full again, and we are excited for the year ahead. As we welcomed students back, we spent some time talking about a few simple expectations that can make a big difference in the experience our students have at Central Valley.

Come Prepared.
Being prepared starts with being here at school, on time, and ready to learn. It also means coming to class with what you need, following our school expectations, and being ready to make the most of each day.

Show Respect.
Respect is more than simply following the rules. It is reflected in how we speak to and about one another. Our words, tone, and actions matter, whether we are talking with classmates, teachers, family members, teammates, opponents, or community members. We want our students to understand that how we treat people is an important reflection of who we are.

Limit Distractions.
There are plenty of things competing for our attention every day. During instructional time, we are asking students to put phones and other distractions away and focus on what matters in that classroom. Those small choices help create an environment where everyone has a better opportunity to learn.

Be Engaged.
We want our students to be active participants in their education and in our school community. Whether they are in the classroom, hallway, gym, field, stage, or somewhere else representing Central Valley, being engaged means doing their part to create an environment in which all students can thrive.

We kicked off our first day together with an all-school assembly centered around these expectations and our shared purpose as a school. Students also took part in a CV Mission Race, with each class working together to put the words of our district mission statement in the correct order:

"Central Valley Public Schools' mission is to provide academic and social opportunities for all individuals to experience, explore, and expand to become successful citizens." Living out the motto that reminds us who we want to be:

CENTRAL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

And, because bragging rights matter—the **7th graders were our Mission Race champions!**

More important than who finished first was the reminder behind the activity. Our mission isn't meant to simply be words on a wall. It represents what we want Central Valley to provide for every student who walks through our doors.

As we begin another school year, we are excited about the opportunities ahead and thankful for the families, staff, students, and communities who make Central Valley what it is. We know there will be challenges, celebrations, busy weeks, and plenty of learning along the way. Through it all, we will continue working toward our mission and living out the motto that reminds us who we want to be:

Instilling Pride. Inspiring Others.
Here's to a great 2026–2027 school year. **Go Cougars!**











CENTRAL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

INSTILLING PRIDE, INSPIRING OTHERS



Henderson State Bank has graciously donated water and popcorn bags for the CV concession stand!!!





CENTRAL VALLEY ELEMENTARY

Strong Start, STRONGER TOGETHER!



TEAMWORK • CONNECTIONS • ENCOURAGEMENT

Our first day of school may not have been ideal due to the weather, but our beginning-of-year activities were *a hit!*

Students participated in activities with student teams. The purpose was to encourage everyone to build *connections* K–6 and instill *teamwork* and *encouragement.*

It was so fun to see our Cougars supporting, cheering for, and learning from one another. We are off to a great start!

















UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPT 9	4th Grade Conservation Celebration
SEPT 14	K–6th Grades Homecoming
SEPT 17	4th Grade Mudfest
SEPT 23	K–2nd Grades Helgoth's Pumpkin Patch
SEPT 28	Grandparent's Day (Details to come!)
SEPT 28 TO OCT 1	Book Fair is Open!
SEPT 29	All Preschool Trip to Helgoth's Pumpkin Patch 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
SEPT 30	PK–6th Grades Parent Teacher Conferences 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Mark your calendars!

WE ARE COUGARS!

Instilling Pride, Inspiring Others.

Some fun 1st Days in Mrs. Schimenti's Kindergarten class!



Everleigh's tile creation



Cup tower during rotations



Sorting in Math 2



Vehicle Building Center



Josie and Huxson tile creation



Toilet paper snake rotation

Early Development Network

Babies Can't Wait

The Early Development Network provides early intervention services for families with children birth to age three with developmental delays and/or health care needs. Our program connects families with needed services and provides ongoing support. EDN has caring and professional Services Coordinators to serve families with an individualized and strengths based focus. These services are free to families and we welcome anyone who may have questions or concerns.

If you are concerned about a child's development or know someone who is please call EDN (308)237-2280 at ESU 10 for services in Region 10 or 1(888)806-6287 for referrals throughout Nebraska. If you are unsure which EDN office serves your area please call (308)237-2280 and we are happy to assist you in finding your best contact person.

To learn more about our program please visit esu10.org and choose the EDN tab in English or Spanish or visit edn.ne.gov.





Please scan your receipts and support our school!

Email questions to Mrs. Schimenti
joleigh.schimenti@centralvps.org



As the school year begins, Whitney and I have never been more thankful to be back home. After spending the entire month of July and a few days in August in Omaha, we are thrilled to officially be a family of four!

Cougar Nation has welcomed us with open arms and made our transition so seamless. People often say "it takes a village," and while I've always believed that, the generosity our four communities have shown us has truly meant the world. I'm so proud that Central Valley is our village, and I'm deeply grateful that our family gets to be a part of this community.

Thank you again to everyone who supported us, and we wish you all a fantastic school year!



Central Valley Community,

I want to extend my deepest, most heart-felt thank you for the support, love, and prayers you shared with me so far in my cancer journey. Every card, thoughtful message, and kind gesture brought so much light during a challenging time and reminded me just how truly blessed I am to be surrounded by such a compassionate community. Your encouragement has kept my spirits high when I needed it most.

I have officially returned to school! Stepping back into the classroom and reconnecting with my students and colleagues has given me a renewed sense of purpose and excitement for the year ahead.

Thank you for walking alongside me, holding me in your thoughts, and helping me reach this point. I am so grateful for each and every one of you.

With immense gratitude and warmth,

Kathleen Kennedy (aka Mrs. K)

"One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say."

~ Bryant H. McGill

American Red Cross

HOW IT WORKS

1. Show up to donate blood at any blood drive or blood center in the U.S.
2. Starting August 26, submit your donation for your Big Ten® school at BigTen.org/Abbott or by texting **GIVEBLOOD to 222688 (ABBOTT)**
3. Check your email to claim your free T-shirt* and show off your team pride



bitly



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

September 24, 2025

- FCCLA Scholarship Blood Drive.

Donors may use the redcross.org app or call Kerry Luscomb 308-223-0537 or Mrs. Kennedy 308-383-7917. Qualified donations will add to the Central Valley scholarship funds.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
September 2026
Helping Children Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School
Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Students do better when families and schools communicate



Two-way communication between families and schools supports academic success. When you and the school work together, it is easier to for everyone to identify and address what your child needs to do well in class.

To keep this productive communication flowing:

- **Sign up to receive** communications from the school on all platforms—social media, parent portals, etc. If you aren't sure how, contact the office.
- **Reach out to your child's teachers** with questions or concerns about your child's learning. For questions about a school policy, ask the office who to contact.
- **Offer suggestions.** Explain factors that the teacher or the school may not know about and what you think would help your child most.
- **Keep an open mind.** A teacher's or staff member's view of a situation may be different from your child's or yours. Ask for clarification of anything that is confusing. Focus discussions on finding solutions.
- **Follow up** after meetings to see how things are going. If a plan of action for your child isn't working, discuss next steps for addressing the situation.

Make read-alouds an everyday thing

Elementary schoolers of every age benefit from hearing books read aloud. Reading aloud to your child not only supports literacy development—it also demonstrates that reading is an important and fun way to spend time.

For maximum results:

- **Create a daily routine.** Choose a read-aloud time when your child will be most receptive, such as after playing outside or before bed.
- **Preview books.** Reading aloud is performing. You'll do a better job if you are familiar with what you are going to read. Previewing a book can also prevent getting bogged down in a story neither you nor your child enjoys.
- **Get dramatic.** Emphasize the first line of the book to grab your child's attention. Use voices and facial expressions to bring characters and situations to life.
- **Prolong interest.** Stop reading for the day at a point where you and your child are both eager to hear what happens next.

Attendance is a foundation

One of the most important ways you can support school success is to make sure your child attends every day. Missing as few as six class days can harm academic performance. To keep attendance on track:

- **Prep for mornings** the night before—lay out clothes, pack schoolbags, etc.
- **Schedule appointments** and family trips for non-school times.
- **Reach out to school staff** for help finding solutions for attendance issues.

Source: E. Blad, "Absenteeism May Hurt Academics Long Before It Becomes 'Chronic'," EducationWeek.

Foster friendship skills



Friends can make school life better—and more dramatic. To help your child navigate the ups and downs of friendship:

- **Listen.** Sometimes, children need a sympathetic ear more than a solution.
- **Ask questions.** "What do you think you could do about that?"
- **Tell stories** about your own social challenges and how you faced them.

Reinforce online safety

Millions of children go online every day to learn, create and socialize. Ensuring their safety is vital. To help protect your child:

- **Monitor** your child's online activities. Keep devices where you can see them and use parental controls.
- **Establish** rules—no playing online games with people not also known in real life, no underage social media use, etc.
- **Tell** your child to alert you to inappropriate content, messages or experiences online.



Copyright © 2026, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. www.parent-institute.com

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Helping Children Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School September 2026

Q&A My child gives up too soon. What can I do to help?

Q: My eight-year-old has recently begun responding to new challenges by saying "I can't"—without even trying. How can I help my child feel capable of learning hard things?



A: Your elementary schooler seems to be exhibiting a lack of self-confidence. One or more of these factors may be at work:

- **Fear of making mistakes.** Both adults and children tend to point out things kids do wrong more than things they do right. Fault-finding can lead children to doubt their abilities.
- **Perfectionism.** Children who feel a need to be perfect may give up rather than attempt a task they aren't sure they can do perfectly the first time.
- **Comparisons to others.** When children observe and negatively compare their performance to that of others'—or have the comparison pointed out to them—they may stop trying.
- **Too much "help."** When adults do things for children that they can do for themselves, the children may get the message they aren't capable.

Reassure your child that mistakes are a normal part of learning. Everyone makes them and can learn from them how to improve. Show that you know your child is a capable person, and eventually your child will believe it.

Parent Quiz Will you give your child a boost this year?

The start of the school year is an ideal time to establish patterns of positive engagement in your child's education. Are you ready to set your child up for success in the new school year? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Will you explain** what you expect of your child in school—attendance, cooperation, effort, persistence etc.?
2. **Will you establish** routines for bedtime, schoolwork, reading and other family times?
3. **Will you express** your confidence that your child can handle any changes or challenges this year might bring, and that you will help?
4. **Will you contact** your child's teacher early in the year?
5. **Will you participate** in events for families at school?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are getting off to a great start. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach them to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning."
—Carol Dweck

Review schoolwork daily

Reviewing and talking about schoolwork together shows your child that you think learning matters. It also gives you a window into what your child is learning. Each day:

- **Look over classwork** and assignments. Ask your child to tell you about the work. Before your child turns schoolwork in, check that it is complete.
- **Praise genuine effort** and progress.
- **Discuss upcoming projects.** What is your child looking forward to doing? Will the projects be easy or challenging?

Don't skip this smart start!

Healthy food is fuel for learning. Research shows that students who eat breakfast before school are more able to concentrate, manage tasks, regulate emotions and remember things than those who go without it.



Make busy mornings easier by keeping a few grab and go options on hand, like peeled hard boiled eggs. In a pinch, even a piece of last night's pizza will do!

Source: K. Adolphus and others, "The Effects of Breakfast and Breakfast Composition on Cognition in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review," *Advances in Nutrition*, Elsevier.

Science skills apply to life

The science skills your child is learning—observing, asking questions, thinking and drawing conclusions—will also help in other school subjects and later in the workplace. To encourage interest in science:

- **Investigate together.** If your child has a question, say, "Let's find out!" Show how to look up answers. Help your child test an idea to learn if it is workable.
- **Watch science shows** for kids together and discuss them. "Wasn't it neat to see how fish breathe through their gills?"

Source: E. Finkel, "The scientific method: It's not just for science anymore," K-12 Dive.

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 © 2026, 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

Copyright © 2026, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. www.parent-institute.com

MIDDLE SCHOOL September 2026

Helping Students Learn®

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Help your child move forward on the path to independent learning



Middle school students are stepping up to the next level of education. In these years, they are expected to take increased responsibility for their own learning. This responsibility takes many forms.

To help your child meet the challenge, encourage your middle schooler to:

- **Be an active participant.** Asking and answering questions and expressing ideas in class will give your child a better understanding of the material.
- **Go beyond memorizing.** Knowing a list of facts won't help if your child doesn't understand why they matter. Help your child really think about the material. For example, your student should consider questions like, "How does this relate to something I have learned or experienced before?"
- **Ask for help as soon as difficulties occur.** This keeps small problems from growing into major struggles. Have your child find out about teachers' availability and other resources for extra help. Your student should think about what might help and ask for it.
- **Take challenging classes.** If all your middle schooler's classes are easy, they may not be the right ones for your child. Together, consult your child's counselor about options.

Encourage your child to read actively

Understanding complex reading material is a challenge for many middle schoolers. It involves reading and thinking about the meaning of individual words and also the ability to think about the meaning of the text as a whole.

Active reading strategies help students strengthen comprehension. Encourage your child to:

- **Take reading notes.** Taking notes helps students stay engaged with reading. Your child can also write brief sticky note summaries to mark key places in the text.
- **Think about vocabulary.** The fiction and nonfiction your child is assigned probably includes unfamiliar words. On hitting one, suggest that your child look up the definition and write it on an index card. Encourage your child to note *prefixes* (beginning parts of words) and *suffixes* (ending parts) that may appear in related words.
- **Build fluency** and a base of knowledge by reading for pleasure.

Source: "Middle School Reading: Improving Your Seventh and Eighth Grader's Reading Comprehension," American Library Association.

Get off to a strong start

Start the school year by expressing confidence in your child's ability to make this the best year yet. Then, help your child invest in success by setting goals in areas such as:

- **Reading.** Your child could plan to strengthen skills and start by reading for 15 minutes each night before bed.
- **Assignments.** Your child could aim for completing and turning in all work on time. Establishing a daily study time is a helpful first step.
- **Time management.** Eliminating procrastination is a worthy goal. Review upcoming tasks weekly and help your child schedule time to complete them.

Adapt to physical changes

Adolescents' bodies are going through a lot of changes. The impulses that accompany them can be distracting during study time. If your child often gets up to wiggle or snack:



- **Suggest standing up** while working.
- **Schedule "stretch"** breaks every 30 minutes.
- **Offer sliced veggies** your child can munch while working.

Pay attention to attendance



Students who attend every class have an advantage over those who don't. They benefit from explanations, demonstrations and chances to ask questions that absent students miss. To show that attendance matters:

1. **Don't allow** your child to stay home for vague complaints or to catch up on sleep.
2. **Find out why** if your child is avoiding school or a class.
3. **Seek help** from a school counselor to overcome attendance obstacles.

Copyright © 2026, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. www.parent-institute.com

Helping Students Learn®

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School — *September 2026*

Q&A My child is not a morning person. How can I help?

Q: Middle school starts early. We've set a bedtime, but my child is still waking up exhausted and cranky. This can't be good for learning. What should I do?



A: Lack of sleep night after night can add up to attitude and attention issues that make learning a struggle. But there are several things you can do to help your child get enough sleep:

- **Maximize bedtime effectiveness.** Middle schoolers need eight to 10 hours of sleep to function well. With your child, count backward eight hours from wake-up time. Then, make bedtime 20 minutes earlier to allow time to fall asleep. Adjust as needed until your child wakes up easily.
- **Help your child ease into "sleep mode."** Turn all digital devices off one hour before bedtime and store them outside your child's room at night. Help your child create a relaxing bedtime routine.
- **Check in.** Could anxiety be keeping your child awake? Stop by for a bedtime chat. Let your middle schooler unload, then finish the conversation by bringing up something your child did well that day.
- **Discourage long naps** and caffeinated drinks. Both can interfere with your child's ability to fall asleep at night.

Parent Quiz Are you setting the stage for success?

The habits middle schoolers establish and the choices they make can have positive or negative effects on academic outcomes. Are you helping your child make choices that support achievement? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

1. **Do you demonstrate** the importance of reading, and encourage your child to read often?
2. **Do you recommend** that your child choose challenging classes—especially in topics of interest?
3. **Do you share** news stories with your child and build awareness of current events and history?
4. **Do you encourage** your child to study a foreign language, starting in middle school if possible?
5. **Do you help** your child discover ways current interests might translate into a career?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are encouraging actions that lead to success. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"We start our journey to our dreams by wanting, but we arrive by focusing, planning, and learning."
—Christina Wodtke

Note-taking is a study aid

"The teacher provides outlines, so why should I take notes in class?" Share these two good reasons with your child:



1. **Taking class notes** helps students remember what the teacher said.
2. **Class notes become** a helpful study guide.

Then, remind your child to:

- **Take notes** by hand, not on a computer.
- **Listen for** and write down names, dates, times of events and other key details.
- **Review notes** daily and clarify them while the memory of class is fresh.

Put dislike into perspective

Students don't always like teachers who assign regular homework or give hard tests. If your child expresses dislike for a teacher:

- **Ask for specifics.** What does the teacher say or do that inspires this feeling?
- **Avoid taking sides.** If an issue needs addressing, contact the teacher. Hear the teacher out and work out a plan together.
- **Remind your child** that liking teachers isn't necessary to learn from them. It may just take determination and hard work.

Start a safety conversation

One important way families can bolster school safety is to talk often with their students about what's going on at school and in their lives. To get the ball rolling, talk with your child about:

- **School rules** and the reasons for them. Say you expect your child to follow them.
- **School safety** and security procedures. If you don't know what they are, ask.
- **The importance of telling** an adult if your child sees or experiences something that doesn't seem right.

Helping Students 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 © 2026, 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

Copyright ® 2026, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. www.parent-institute.com

HIGH SCHOOL
September 2026
Helping Students Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School
Title I-Educational Service Unit 10

Help your teen lay a foundation for success in the new school year



Whether your student is new to the school or simply entering a higher grade, the start of a new school year means adjusting to change. Classes may seem more challenging. Teachers may have different expectations. Friends may be in other classes, or even in other schools.

To make it easier to take new responsibilities in stride, encourage your teen to:

- **Create a schedule.** Have your teen write all assignments, commitments and responsibilities on a calendar. Then, work together to help your student block out enough time each week to fulfill all responsibilities.
- **Adopt effective study habits.** Have your teen set regular daily study times that allow enough time for sleep at night. Encourage a weekly check of grades on quizzes and assignments. If your teen begins to struggle or fall behind, recommend talking to the teacher right away.
- **Establish digital down times.** Students are using technology when doing schoolwork more than ever. Make sure your teen's day includes tech-free times for exercise, conversations and creative thinking. Charge all devices outside your teen's room at night to avoid interfering with sleep.
- **Talk about how the school day went.** Ask questions about social and academic aspects of school. How is your teen adjusting?

Key ways to support high schoolers

Helping a high schooler succeed academically is different from working with a younger child. Like many families, you may face two emerging challenges:

1. **Your teen's development.** Teens are often less likely to talk about classes and what they are learning in school than they were when they were younger.
2. **Advanced class topics.** You may not be familiar or feel able to help your teen with the material.

To stay engaged with your teen's education throughout these years:

- **Keep expectations high.** Make it clear that you expect your teen's best effort in school. Check often on your teen's progress.
- **Stay aware of schedules** for tests and assignments. Saying "Isn't your math test tomorrow?" tells your teen you are paying attention.
- **Attend school events.** Meet and connect with other families and school staff.

Source: S. Blaney, *Please Stop the Rollercoaster!* ChangeWorks Publishing.

Bolster reading fluency

The ability to read quickly, accurately and with understanding is called *fluency*. To foster fluency, ask your teen to:

- **Practice with pleasure reading.** Suggest reading light material on topics of interest as quickly as possible.
- **Read silently.** Whispering words slows reading and can hinder comprehension.
- **Read aloud with you.** Read a sentence or paragraph with expression. Then, have your student read it.
- **Read short material repeatedly,** such as poems.

Source: "Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9," U.S. Department of Education.

Model respect for teachers



Students who treat teachers respectfully improve the learning environment for everyone in class. Set an example for your teen. Contact this year's teachers and begin a working relationship. Then, when discussing teachers with your teen, refer to them by name. If your teen shares a minor complaint about a teacher, offer perspective: "Teaching is hard work. Mr. Smith may just have been tired."

Friends add to school life



School friends can help motivate students to do well and offer support when times are tough. To promote positive friendships:

- **Discuss qualities** that make a good friend. Do your teen's friends display them? Does your teen?
- **Explain that it's quality,** not quantity, that matters. Over time, teens who have a few close friends are less likely to be depressed than kids who seek popularity.

Source: R.K. Narr and others, "Close Friendship Strength and Broader Peer Group Desirability as Differential Predictors of Adult Mental Heath," *Child Development*.

Copyright © 2026, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. www.parent-institute.com

HIGH SCHOOL
Helping Students Learn®
Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School September 2026

Q&A How can I help my teen start thinking about the future?

Q: My teen is in 11th grade—the time to focus on planning for life after high school. But my student has no idea what that might look like. How can I help my teen find a path forward?



A: Many high school students are uncertain about their next steps in life—and that's OK. But it's not OK to avoid thinking about the possibilities.

To start your teen thinking, ask:

- **What school subjects interest you most?** Is there an area your teen feels is a strength? A type of assignment your teen enjoys doing?
- **What are your favorite things** to do in your free time? Does your teen like to read? Create or build things? Spend time outdoors?
- **Would you rather do activities** with friends or alone? Be part of a large groups or small ones? Lead or be part of a team?
- **How could you explore your options?** Could your teen interview or shadow someone in a career of interest? Are there career and technical training classes at school your teen could take?

Encourage your teen to ask a school counselor about available resources. There may be assessments that can help your teen make choices. The counselor can also help your teen find out what kind of further education will be needed to achieve career goals.

Parent Quiz Are you talking about tough situations?

Many situations high school students face involve dilemmas, like choosing between the fun or easy thing to do and the right thing. Are you preparing your teen to handle sticky situations? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

1. **Do you have** casual chats with your teen on a wide variety of topics? These can lead into more serious talks.
2. **Do you discuss** the values that are important to your family?
3. **Do you encourage** your teen to be honest with you, and then listen attentively and calmly?
4. **Do you bring up** difficult situations your teen might face before they occur?
5. **Do you role-play** situations together so your teen can rehearse ways to say *no* to things that feel wrong?

How well are you doing?

More yes *answers mean you are helping your teen learn handle tough situations in positive ways. For each* no, *try that idea.*

"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it."
—Norman Schwartzkopf

Review and reinforce rules

Students who don't know the school rules and policies can still face consequences for breaking them. Together, review the rules and consequences regarding:

- **Absences.** How should you report them? What makes them excused?
- **Technology.** Is phone use allowed? When? What are appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI?
- **Grading and schoolwork.** These may vary from class to class, so ask your teen to pay attention to teacher explanations and discuss them with you.
- **Security.** If you are unfamiliar with policies or procedures, ask the office.

Promote habits for learning



Nutritious food and regular physical activity help students stay alert and learn during the school day. Help your teen make time every day for:

- **Breakfast—**even if it is a piece of cheese or a banana on the way out the door.
- **Exercise.** Even a short walk after school can reduce stress and help your teen be ready to study and tackle assignments.

Say *no* to skipping classes

Students with consistent, strong attendance have better long-term outcomes and avoid issues that kids who skip class face. To make it clear to your teen that skipping is not OK:

- **Say that you expect** your teen to attend every class.
- **Maintain routines** at home that help your teen get to school rested and on time.
- **Remind your teen** that regular attendance helps students maintain positive relationships with peers and teachers.

Source: "Pay Attention to Attendance," AttendanceWorks.

Helping Students 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 © 2026, 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

Copyright © 2026, The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. www.parent-institute.com

Elementary School

Daily Learning Planner

Ideas families can use to help children do well in school

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10



THE PARENT INSTITUTE®

September 2026

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

1. Make an appointment to spend some one-on-one time with your child this month. Write it on your calendar.
2. Find out about upcoming school events for families. Plan to attend as many as you can.
3. Ask your child, "What one thing makes you feel really excited?"
4. Choose a place by the front door to keep items that go to school. Help your child get into the habit of putting things there each day.
5. Keep computers and other digital devices in common areas so you can monitor your child's activities.
6. Help your child plan ahead. Tonight, talk about the coming week. What does your child need to do to be ready?
7. Ask your child, "If you could go anywhere, where would you go?"
8. It's International Literacy Day. Talk with your child about why reading is important and schedule time for reading aloud.
9. A nutritious breakfast helps kids learn. Make sure your child starts the day with a healthy breakfast at home or at school.
10. Choose a place to display your child's best schoolwork. Change the display often.
11. Watch a funny video together. Then, have your child draw a comic strip showing what it was about.
12. Talk to your child about the importance of school attendance. Students should attend every day unless they are sick or there is an emergency.
13. Name different types of punctuation with your child. Then, have your elementary schooler find examples in a book or news article.
14. Create a special place to keep important papers and communications from school—a box or basket, or a folder on your computer.
15. Be sure you and your child know the school rules. Talk about one today.
16. Ask to hear about one thing your child learned in school today. Share one thing you learned today.
17. Invent a word with your child. Write a silly definition.
18. Find something small enough to fit in your child's pocket. Have your child write (or tell you) a story about it.
19. Take a walk together and look for signs of fall.
20. Teach your child positive ways to handle stress—exercise, get enough sleep, talk about problems.
21. Go outside. Show your child which way is *north*, *south*, *east* and *west*.
22. Today's news is history in the making. Watch the news together. Talk about current events at the dinner table.
23. "Adopt" a neighborhood tree. With your child, watch it throughout the year. Talk about how it looks, feels and even smells.
24. Look at a weather report with your child today. What are the highs and lows expected?
25. Make a jigsaw puzzle together. Glue a picture onto cardboard. Cut it into puzzle pieces and challenge your child to put it back together.
26. Apple tree planter Johnny Appleseed was born on this day in 1774. At the grocery store, have your child count the different types of apples you see.
27. Play Guess that Number with your child: How many grapes in a bunch?
28. At dinner, discuss the "best" and "worst" parts of everyone's day.
29. Discuss three things that you love about your child.
30. Talk with your child about the importance of doing one's best. Point out examples of people who are doing their best.

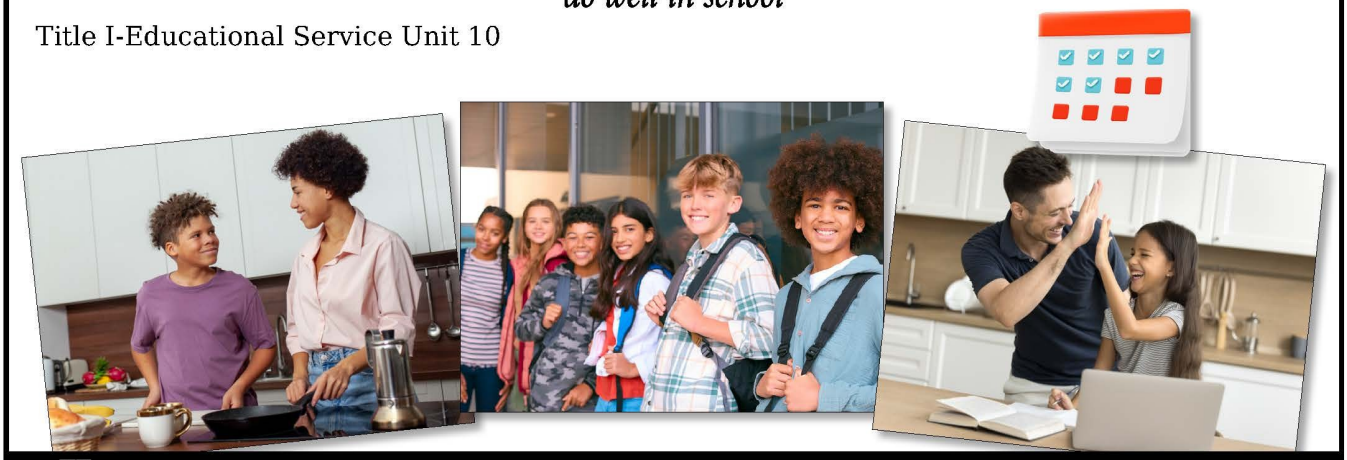
Copyright © 2026 The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. • May be reproduced only as licensed by *Parents make the difference!*® and *Helping Children Learn*® newsletters • 1-800-756-5525

Middle School

Daily Learning Planner

Ideas families can use to help students do well in school

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10



THE PARENT INSTITUTE®

September 2026

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

1. Have your child color code class materials by using a different color folder for each class. If the class has a textbook, your child can cover it to match.
2. It's Library Card Sign-Up Month. Does your child have a library card? If not, make a trip to the library soon to get one.
3. With your child, decide on a daily homework and study time.
4. Put a current picture of your child in a visible place. This says, "You're important to me!"
5. As a family, create a morning routine that will make mornings easier for everyone.
6. Help your elementary schooler get into the habit of cleaning out school bags every weekend. Your child will start the week organized.
7. Let your child choose what chore to do this week from a list of options.
8. It's International Literacy Day. Help your child find a book or article to read on a topic of interest.
9. Solve an real-world math problem with your child, such as how to double a recipe.
10. Make a "one-a-day" rule: Family members will eat at least one meal together every day.
11. Discuss the importance of education and make it clear you expect your child's best effort in school.
12. Find out about upcoming events for families at school and make plans to attend at least one.
13. Think of *synonyms* (words with the same or similar meanings) with your child, such as *walk/stroll* and *stop/halt.*
14. Expect your child to study or read every day, even if no assignments are due the next day.
15. Help your child practice estimating. How many popcorn kernels will fit in your hand? How many grains of rice will fit in a tablespoon?
16. Encourage your child to write an email or letter to a faraway friend or relative.
17. Solve a crossword puzzle with your child.
18. Take advantage of opportunities to talk with your child while doing chores or errands together.
19. Teach your child a new life skill, such as how to do laundry.
20. Suggest that your child keep a notebook handy when reading and jot down unknown words to look up later.
21. Ask who your child's role models are and why.
22. It's officially fall. Go for a walk together and look for seasonal changes.
23. Help your child make a monthly budget.
24. Ask about something your child is reading. What are the characters like?
25. Is your child turning assignments in on time? Praise this responsible behavior.
26. Try a new kind of exercise with your child.
27. Choose a recipe with your middle schooler. Shop for ingredients, cook and enjoy the results together.
28. Ask your child to tell you about one of tonight's assignments. Make this a daily habit.
29. Make an album or slideshow of family photos with your child. Tell stories about the people and occasions in them.
30. Find an unfamiliar word in the dictionary. Can your family use it three times today?

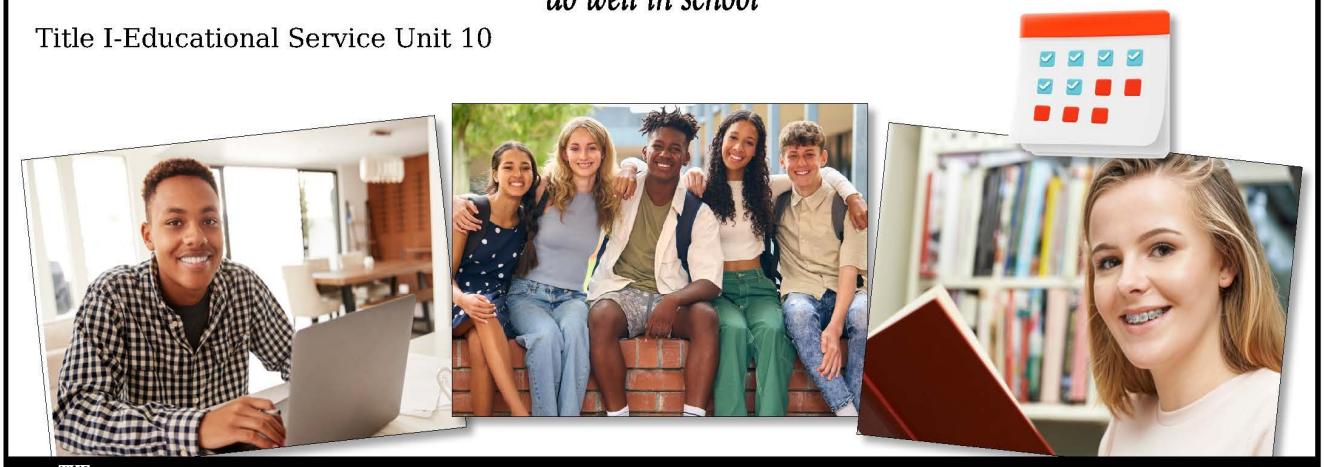
Copyright © 2026 The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. • May be reproduced only as licensed by *Parents still make the difference!*® and *Helping Students Learn*® newsletters • 1-800-756-5525

High School

Daily Learning Planner

Ideas parents can use to help students do well in school

Title I-Educational Service Unit 10



THE PARENT INSTITUTE®

September 2026

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

1. Find out about back-to-school night and other events for families at school. Plan to attend.
2. Help your teen establish a regular study schedule. High school students should set aside time every day for schoolwork and studying.
3. Encourage your teen to set three or four learning goals for this school year and identify steps to take to meet them.
4. Ask your teen to play a favorite song. Talk about the lyrics. Share one of your favorite songs with your teen.
5. Give your teen a planner or a small notebook for writing down all assignments and school commitments.
6. Review school safety rules with your teen.
7. Keep important school phone numbers (the office, the attendance line, etc.) in your phone and posted in a handy place at home.
8. Today is International Literacy Day. Does everyone in your family have a library card? If not, visit the library this month to sign up.
9. Ask your teen to suggest nutritious snacks to keep on hand.
10. Does your teen need school supplies? Look for them early in the year. If providing them is a problem, let your teen's counselor know.
11. Talk with your teen about what makes a good friendship.
12. Join the school's parent-teacher group. These organizations help schools, students and their families in many ways.
13. Ask your teen to show you a favorite app or social media channel.
14. Make mornings easier. Encourage your teen to spend 10 minutes at night getting ready for the next day.
15. Teach your teen to use positive self-talk, such as "I can do this." It helps students stay motivated.
16. Stop by your teen's room at bedtime for a chat. Start the conversation by talking about things your teen has done well lately.
17. Learn a new skill with your teen, such as bread making. Look for how-to videos online.
18. Pick your battles with your teen. On some subjects, such as safety, don't budge. Look for compromises on others.
19. Remind your teen to use you as a scapegoat if necessary: "Sorry, but my family needs me at home tonight."
20. Most students have some long-term assignments. Help your teen break them down into small steps and set deadlines for each.
21. Challenge your teen to design a simple piece of furniture.
22. Ask to see your teen's assignments. Talk about the useful knowledge and skills your student is acquiring, such as thinking and problem-solving.
23. Share a funny cartoon or meme with your teen over breakfast.
24. Let your teen's teachers know how to get in touch with you. Send them your email address and phone numbers.
25. Play a board game with your teen.
26. Teach your teen how to change a tire, or brush up on the skill together.
27. Talk with your teen about a mistake you've made and what you learned from it.
28. Choose a letter from an advice column. Read it aloud at dinner. Ask family members to take turns being the columnist.
29. With your teen, start a family scrapbook with pictures and mementos.
30. Teens who take part in school-based extracurricular activities tend to feel more connected to school. Is there an activity that interests your teen?

Copyright © 2026 The Parent Institute®, a division of PaperClip Media, Inc. • May be reproduced only as licensed by *Parents still make the difference!*® and *Helping Students Learn*® newsletters • 1-800-756-5525