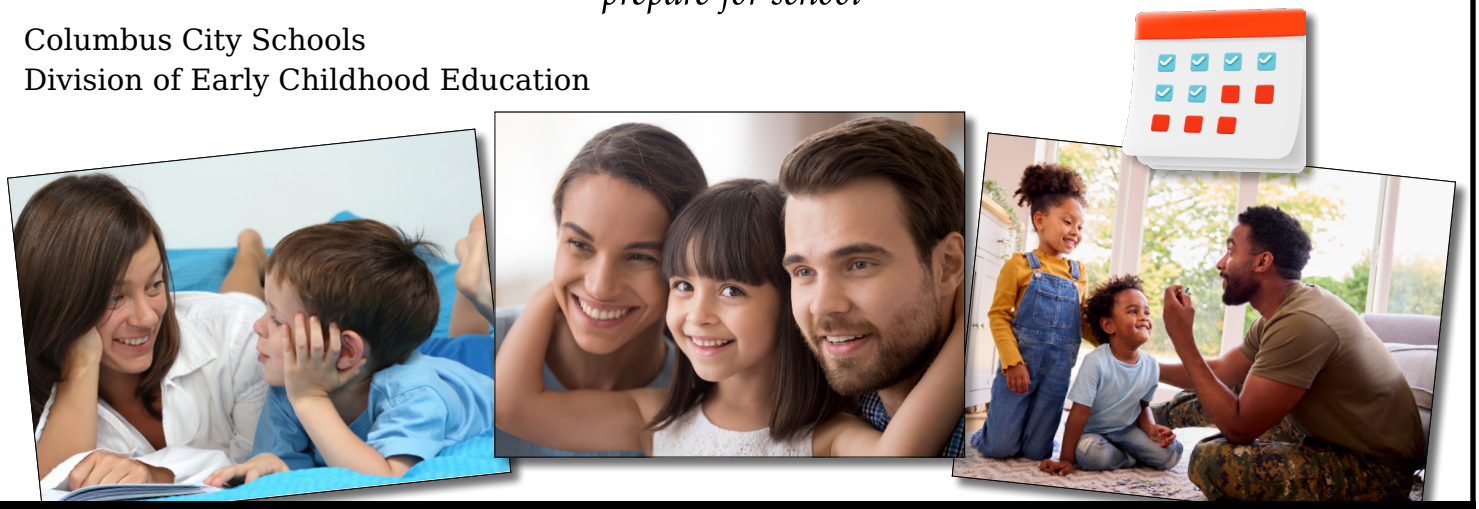
Early Childhood

Daily Learning Planner

Ideas families can use to help children prepare for school

Columbus City Schools
Division of Early Childhood Education



THE PARENT INSTITUTE®

June • July • August 2026

June 2026

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

1. Have a screen-free day today. Together, make a list of fun activities to do.
2. Start a collection with your child today.
3. Allow your child to use an adult tool with your supervision. A small flashlight is a great tool for preschoolers.
4. Have your child fill a tall, clear container with water. Pour it into a shorter, wider container. Does the amount of water look different?
5. Challenge your child to form lowercase letters with clay or play dough.
6. Visit the post office with your child. Call ahead to see if you can get a behind-the-scenes tour.
7. Help your child mix 1 cup cornstarch and ½ cup water in a bowl. Squish it and it becomes solid. Let it stand and it turns back into a liquid.
8. Make a simple pattern. Draw a circle, then a square, then a circle. Ask your child what comes next.
9. Take turns lying down on the sidewalk and tracing around each other's bodies with chalk. Let your child decorate the drawings.
10. Encourage your child to make predictions. "I see lots of dark clouds in the sky. What do you think is going to happen?"
11. Ask your child to string large beads or uncooked pasta tubes onto a piece of yarn.
12. Show your child an apple and an orange. Ask, "How they are the same? How they are different?"
13. Visit the library as a family. Check out books about nature.
14. Together, gather small items from nature, such as leaves and grass. Help your preschooler glue them on paper to make a "forest" picture.
15. While chatting with your child, change the topic. Can your child make the switch? Flexibility is important in social interactions.
16. Does your child have a favorite show? Read books about the characters.
17. Wrap a familiar item in paper and ask your child to guess what it is. Let your preschooler unwrap it to see if the guess was correct.
18. Teach your child to call 911 on your home and cell phones. Rehearse what to say to the operator.
19. Sing an action song, such as "The Wheels on the Bus," with your child.
20. Make bubble solution with ¼ cup dishwashing liquid and 2 cups water. To make wands, bend pipe cleaners into shapes and blow through them.
21. With your child, build something out of household materials, such as paper towel tubes and rubber bands.
22. Look at family photos together. How many relatives can your child name?
23. Have your child make a textured drawing by coloring on a piece of paper with sandpaper underneath it.
24. With your child, close your eyes and try to identify all the sounds you hear.
25. Tonight, ask your child to recall what your family ate at each meal today.
26. Create a costume box for your child. Add yard sale treasures such as gloves, scarves and shoes.
27. Visit a zoo or park as a family and observe some animals. Ask your child to move like they do.
28. Get a bucket of water and a paintbrush. Encourage your child to "paint" on the sidewalk.
29. Talk about the importance of fruits and vegetables for healthy bodies. Let your child help you prepare some for a family meal.
30. Ask your child to place a ball *on* the table, *under* the table, *next to* the table and *in front of* the table.

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July 2026

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1. Play a listening game, such as Simon Says, with your child today.
2. Fill an inexpensive squirt bottle with water. Let your child play with it outside to strengthen hand muscles.
3. Explain to your child that one color can have many shades. Use crayons or paint swatches from paint or hardware stores to demonstrate.
4. Talk about the word *independence* with your child. What does it mean?
5. Show your child how shadows move. Look at shadows at different times of the day and talk about what you observe.
6. Play catch with your child. Stand close and toss a large, lightweight ball back and forth.
7. Help your child to get comfortable with books. Set up a well-lit corner with pillows and favorite titles.
8. Take a board game outside and play it with your child.
9. Teach your child a tongue twister, like "She sells sea shells by the seashore."
10. Cut out different shapes from construction paper. Your child can glue them together in a pattern to make a "quilt."
11. Run through a sprinkler or visit a public spray park with your child.
12. Go on a picnic as a family. After you eat, stretch out on a blanket and read together.
13. Let your child try doing a task independently that you usually help with.
14. Help your child name the five senses and what people use them for.
15. Draw several items on paper. Ask your child to count them.
16. Call the local fire station and ask if you can schedule a visit with your child.
17. Have a Backward Day. With your child, count and walk backward.
18. Choose a book by an author whose name begins with the letter A. Read it with your child. Next, read a book by a B author.
19. Take a walk with your child and look for things you don't usually notice, such as patterns in tree bark.
20. Have fun in the tub! Float a plastic bowl on the water. How many small bath toys can your child put into it before it sinks?
21. Discuss shared memories of fun activities with your child.
22. Challenge your child to draw an upside-down picture today.
23. Brainstorm with your child. Take turns naming all the animals you can think of.
24. Play with stuffed animals. Have an animal "ask" your child's name, age and other information preschoolers should know.
25. Visit the library in the evening, if possible. While you are there, read an early bedtime story to your child, then check out books to take home.
26. Take your child to a park or playground. Swing, climb and slide together.
27. Have your child put an ice cube outside in the sun. What happens after five minutes? After 10?
28. Place a long piece of string in a clear bag. Ask your child: "Do you think it is shorter or longer than your height?" Take it out and measure to check.
29. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate ways to express anger.
30. Set a positive example by letting your child see you reading. Say, "Reading is so much fun!"
31. Teach your child about fractions. Demonstrate how two *halves* of a sandwich make a *whole* sandwich.

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August 2026

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1. Read at least three books with your child today.
2. Go outside for a bug hunt. How many different kinds can your child find? Which is the biggest? The smallest?
3. At bath time, have your child predict whether certain items will float or sink. Then, test and see.
4. Ask to see a piece of your child's artwork. Say, "Can you tell me about how you made it?"
5. Give your child some positive feedback today. For example, "That's a great idea!"
6. Get two socks. Soak one in water and keep one dry. Ask your child to tell you which one is heavier and why.
7. Think of a social situation that requires talking. Have your child act it out with puppets or dolls.
8. Many libraries offer free access to audiobooks. Download one and listen with your child.
9. Take your child grocery shopping with you. Let your preschooler help make a list, pick items off the shelves and unload at home.
10. Draw a stick-figure of a person. Leave off a body part. Can your child add what's missing?
11. Hold up objects of different colors, like a yellow banana or a red towel. Ask your child to name each color and find a crayon that matches.
12. Create a contact list of phone numbers. Help your child make some calls to family members and friends.
13. Help your child carefully pour uncooked rice from one container into another.
14. Ask your child, "If you had one wish, what would it be?"
15. Let your child help you wash the car. Or, wash toys outside together.
16. Freeze fruit juices in ice cube trays to make ice pops. Enjoy them with your child.
17. Trace your child's hand and wrist on paper. Cut out the tracing and cover with clear self-stick plastic for a bookmark.
18. Hum a familiar song. Can your child tell you the title of the song?
19. Exchange compliments with your child.
20. Develop your child's attention span. Set a timer for 10 minutes and ask your preschooler to play quietly until it goes off.
21. Help your child organize toys into different boxes or bins.
22. Visit a nearby airport to watch planes take off and land. Or, watch dump trucks and bulldozers at a construction site (from a safe distance).
23. Help your child choose clothes for the next day the night before.
24. Tell your child about something new you learned recently.
25. Take a walk and look at traffic signs. What are their colors? Shapes?
26. Think of some "what if" questions to ask your child: What if people walked on their hands? What if cats could talk?
27. Get a large button with more than one hole. Have your child thread a piece of string through every hole.
28. Make up a new rule for a board game your child enjoys. Play it together.
29. Take turns saying words that rhyme with *pop*. Talk about which words are real (*drop*) and which are nonsense (*frop*).
30. Play a game of tic-tac-toe with your child.
31. Ask your child questions about categories of things. What walks? (*people, dogs*) What swims? (*fish, ducks*) What flies? (*airplanes, birds*).

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