

Guidelines for Goal Setting

One of the most important processes the mentor can help the student understand is **how to set short and long-term individual goals**.

Consider the following tips:

- Spend time with your student to establish trust and confidentiality before attempting to set demanding goals. Set a goal that seems readily attainable (e.g., a short-term goal could be to complete all math homework assignments for the next week).
- Involve your student in the setting of goals. A goal must be wanted and articulated by the student with your guidance. It must be his/ her goal, not yours.
- Goals must be specific and measurable (e.g., the student will five pages each day until the book is complete).
- Goals need not be unpleasant or tedious to achieve.
- To assure that your student will attempt to meet the goal, he or she needs to make a commitment to complete it (e.g., a handshake, a written agreement).
- If your student fails to achieve his or her goal, consider the following points:
 - The goal may have been too difficult for the student to complete
 - What other factors could have contributed to preventing the student from fulfilling the goal (distractions at home, illness, etc.)
 - The goal may have been developed without the active involvement and commitment of the student
 - The student may be fearful of achieving a goal. Many at-risk students believe themselves to be “losers” and become accustomed to making poor choices which reinforce their negative self-image
- A long-term goal may need to be articulated before a short-term goal can be explored with a student. A student may not see the need to work toward a short-term goal unless the student sees the relationship between it and a long-term goal (e.g. graduating

from high school may be the motivating factor to help a student work toward short-term

goals such as completing homework and attending classes regularly).¹

¹ Adapted from Organizing Effective School-Based Mentoring Programs. Mentor Program Handbook. School/Community Programs, Columbia, Missouri

Teach your students a simple four step process for setting their personal goals. As well, educate students on the difference between a wish and a goal.

Learning how to set reasonable and attainable goals is a valuable lesson for students of all ages. Preschoolers can set simple goals with an adult. Their goals can be drawn instead of written and they can be accountable for achieving or not achieving their goals. All students should set goals periodically throughout the year and be continually checking on the success of their goals or eliminating goals that are no longer applicable to their life.

Goal Setting Lesson Plan

Divide the blackboard into two sections. In big letters write the word 'Wish' on one side of the board, and 'Goal' on the other side of the blackboards.

Ask students to write one personal goal and wish under the appropriate columns on the blackboard.

After all students have written their wishes and goals have an open discussion on the differences and similarities of a goal and wish. How many wishes on the board can become goals and how many goals are actual wishes? As well, you can begin a discussion on the difference between a failure and failing on a goal. There are assortments of questions that will develop with this open forum.

Four Steps to Writing a Goal

1. Write the goal

Students write one personal goal and write why this goal is important to them. In addition, have students write what the goal looks like when it is finished. As the students are writing you can read their goals but do not tell them the goal is unattainable or a silly goal. Students will be given the tools in this lesson to make the goal attainable if it is truly their goal.

2. Outline the Specific Steps to Achieve the Goal

Outline all the steps to achieve the goal. Each step needs to be broken down into small manageable tasks that the student is able to accomplish. If the student wants to be a professional skateboarder, they must begin with practicing on a daily basis; learn specific tricks, experiment, take lessons, read books on professional skateboarders. Their steps cannot simply play video games of professional skateboarder and experiment the moves on the weekend. They need to look into all the aspects of a professional skateboarder.

3. Chart the Obstacles for Achieving the Goal

Students will chart the blocks on attaining their goal and write how they will deal with each issue. The student with the professional skateboarding goal, may not have the finances for lessons, they must problem solve how to get the money or other ways of learning how to skateboard. The student may take out movies and books from the local library or begin to do

additional chores in the home or begin to save money from their birthday. This part is excellent because often we do not think of the obstacles in achieving our goals.

4. Time Frame

Students should write an approximate deadline for achieving the goal. As well, they can chart the deadlines for the small goals to achieve their ultimate goal. It is best for students and adults to see small successes otherwise they will become frustrated and walk away from the goal. The professional skateboarder has years of practice and hard work, it is ideal that he/she has smaller goals that are attainable in weeks, and months.

Read more: "Goal Setting Lesson Plan: Goal Setting For Kids" - http://teachertipstraining.suite101.com/article.cfm/goal_setting_lesson_plan#ixzz08zGbrdUV

Goal Setting for Students

When we teach children how to set and achieve goals, and how to apply these principles to their school work, they learn how to take more ownership of their education. They learn how they play a significant role in their education and in their future. By learning how to set and achieve goals, how to overcome challenges, the importance of being positive, and how to measure their progress, children learn how to enhance and increase their chances for success.

In order for your child to "buy into" the setting goals principles you will have to help them answer three questions: "why is this important", "how to", and "how do I use this today to make my life (and the lives of those around me) better."

Simply telling a child they need to set goals is not enough in this rapid-paced MTV world. It is important to get them involved by using open-ended, discussion-stimulating questions that gives them an opportunity to express themselves while you guide or facilitate the discussion. Possible topics for discussion:

1. Discuss the key elements of setting goals and give your child samples and practice.
2. Discuss the importance of minimizing the "Bummer Words" words - "no, can't, won't, never, maybe, and if.
3. Assist in a discussion on how to develop an "I'll Make It Happen" attitude for school work and for life.

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4. Breakdown the goal setting discussion into small parts and discuss over several sessions. (i.e. What is Success, Principles of Goal Setting, Samples & Practice, Investing in Yourself, Measuring Your Progress, Meeting the Challenges, How to Get Started, and Summary.
 5. Facilitate a discussion how your child can improve their self image, take more responsibility, and eliminate excuses.
 6. Discuss how they define success - now and five years from now.
 7. Help your child understand the five ways to measure their progress toward reaching their goal.
 8. Help them identify some potential roadblocks they may encounter in reaching their goals and how to overcome them.
 9. In today's world there are plenty of people who belong to the "it's all about me" club. Facilitate a discussion about the importance of helping others.
 10. Together develop a checklist of ten items to keep your child focused on how to implement goal setting principles in their lives.

Having your child understand these principles should have a positive impact on personal decision making, sense of purpose, school engagement, family communications, positive peer pressure, and higher self esteem. Children who know how to set and achieve goals realize that there will be challenges in their path, but they will not allow them to be insurmountable roadblocks to their future.

<http://www.googolpower.com/content/articles/goal-setting-for-students>