

How to Set Get-able Goals

By Terri Mauro, About.com Guide <http://specialchildren.about.com/od/behaviorissues/ht/goals.htm>

Whether you're setting goals for your special child, your family or yourself, thinking small and short-term can help you find big, long-lasting success.

Difficulty: Easy

Time Required: One day at a time

Here's How:

1. **Work from where you are, not from where you want to be.** Don't set a goal for your child that's outside of his developmental ability. And don't set a goal for yourself or your family that you know you don't have the time, ability or resources to attain. These things don't magically resolve themselves just because you've set a goal.
2. **Choose a single area to focus on.** You only have so much energy, patience and concentration, so spend it all in one place. You'll have a much greater chance of success than if you spread yourself too thin.
3. **Pick the thing that's easiest, not necessarily the most important.** Simple is smart, not silly. The goal you set should be the one you or your child has the most chance of attaining, not the one you most dream of achieving.
4. **Break your goal into smaller steps.** And then smaller ones. And then smaller still. Instead of making the overall task your first goal, set your first goal at completing one step.
5. **Set short deadlines.** Your or your child's interest in goals that take months to measure can fade fast. Think of what you can do in a week, set that as a goal, and enjoy meeting a deadline for a change.
6. **Allow for failure.** Things happen. Plans get scrambled. Will gets weak. Backsliding is inevitable. When setting your deadline, leave a little wiggle room for the little surprises life brings.
7. **Make a list.** And check it daily. Breaking even your small one-step goals into daily bits that you can check off will give you a feeling of accomplishment. If your child is involved, post the checklist where he or she can see it and do the checking off.
8. **Be specific.** Instead of writing "work on goal" on your list, write one small exact thing you will accomplish. That doesn't mean you can't do more -- but it does mean you'll get a feeling of success every day.
9. **Give rewards.** Success deserves recognition. Kids often respond to very small rewards for goals gained -- a sticker, pennies, points on a chart. Adults respond well to them, too -- a few minutes of alone time, a sweet snack, a day off from goal-getting. Don't wait for a big success and a big reward. Celebrate every good day.
10. **Move on to the next.** The great thing about small goals is that there is a constant experience of success that then makes the next goal easier to attain. Take things one tiny step at a time, and you'll be amazed at how far you can go.