



Teaching Your Mentee to Set Goals

Mentors can start coaching their mentees in goal setting by looking for ways they already use these skills. To get started, brainstorm with your mentee and identify a time that (s)he planned and accomplished something. Discuss the steps taken to get it done and how good it felt. These same steps can be used for future goal setting.

Start Small and Let Them Choose

Help your mentee think of a fun goal (s)he could achieve within a short time. For example, finishing a book or completing a craft project. It's best to let your mentee decide what (s)he wants to achieve, then you can help make a plan.

Be Mindful of Possibilities

If your mentee says, "I wish I could win a prize in the science fair this year," use it as an opportunity to assist her/him in creating a plan. Together, write down specific action steps and a timetable for accomplishing each of them. Check in to help keep him/her focused on the target.

Show Them How

Adults have a much greater sense of what it takes to accomplish goals. Share your own goal-setting plans with your mentee to show how the process works.

Provide a Reality Check

Kids often underestimate how hard it can be to meet a goal, and then get frustrated and discouraged when they fall short. Be encouraging and realistic by pointing out the challenges and the dedication it will require. The idea isn't to make the goal seem too daunting, but rather to share in the seriousness of the undertaking by helping plan it out.

Applaud Effort

As your mentee begins to set goals and work toward them, don't forget to praise. Complementing the effort will carry him/her forward.

Try Try Again

So your mentee wanted to improve in math, but (s)he got another C on the latest test. Try these steps to get back on track.

- Review the goal with your mentee. Maybe it was too vague or too ambitious.
- Ask your mentee for suggestions. Kids are more likely to follow through on their own ideas about what else they can do.
- Help envision the benefits. Ask: "What do you think it will feel like to do better on the next test?"
- Share your childhood frustrations. Your mentee might feel better when you tell him about your challenges achieving a goal.
- Compliment him/her. Even if your mentee doesn't get the A (s)he hoped for, make sure to give praise for trying ("I'm so proud of how hard you studied!").
- Don't use threats or bribes. Offering a prize in exchange for an A won't help your mentee's follow-through in the long run.

Just Do It! A Five-Step Plan to share with your mentee

1. **Write it down.** Become a better baseball player, for example.
2. **Make it specific.** "I want to be able to get a base hit once each game."
3. **Consider Pros and Cons.**

Pros: It will be much more fun and much less embarrassing to be on the team.

Cons: I already have practice twice a week. Extra practice will cut into my free time.

4. **Define small steps by asking the Three W's.**

"Who can help?" A coach, parent, or friend, for example.

"What do I need to do?" Practice more, go to batting cage.

"When?" 30 minutes twice a week.

5. **Monitor Progress.** Have my parents videotape my swing. Get feedback from my coach.

Information gathered from-

<http://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/style/how-to-teach-kids-perseverance-goal-setting/>