



Mimi Peterson, MD   Scott Radomsky, MD   Amy Montgomery, MD   Alina Boelman, MD  
Sandy Herron, MD   Amelia K. Decker, MD   Jennifer Moher, MD   Brent Watkins, MD  
7507 East Tanque Verde Road, Tucson, AZ 85715   Phone 520-722-2585   Fax 520-722-1097  
[WWW.TANQUEVERDEPEDS.COM](http://WWW.TANQUEVERDEPEDS.COM)

## January 2022

### Introducing Goal Setting with Children

Often times in the New Year, we think about self-development, new goals, bad habits we want to kick, etc. Goal setting is an awesome topic to introduce to your children and is a way to increase family connection as you all work to help each other achieve your goals. However, if we're not careful, we can pick too many, too difficult, or too unrealistic goals without realizing it. This can lead us to feeling poorly about ourselves, questioning our ability to change, ability to be "motivated", or even important enough to consider being better. Often our kids are dealing with thoughts and fears of perfectionism, being unlovable, or simply not good enough. We don't want goal setting to add to these thoughts of failure.

So how do we make it manageable, constructive, and a positive experience?

#### Family Goal Setting Activity:

1. Turn on some music, make a favorite snack or drink, grab your art supplies and a piece of cardstock or poster board for each family member and gather around the table.
2. Section your poster into 4 sections: Physical, Emotional, Social, and Intellectual
3. Go around and brainstorm different things you would like to accomplish in each area. (For younger kids, explain what each means and might fall into that category)
4. If your child mentions a long term goal (getting into preferred college or becoming an astronaut), help them break it down into short term manageable goals. Something like earning money to go to space camp over the summer, passing their math benchmark, learning about being a pilot, watching documentaries about planets or space travel, etc.
5. Always keep a list of the brainstormed ideas or next step goals so your child has ideas once they've completed a goal.
6. Have a regular goal check-in. Maybe this is as often as once a month, or more spread apart like once a quarter. Again, make it fun! Throw a party with balloons and decorations. Celebrate the FAILED goals as well as the ones we've made progress on or completed!
7. Remind our children that failures are learning experiences for future goals. Maybe they learned they don't actually like baseball. Or that they love to run, but waking up early is too difficult with the demands of school. Maybe the goal was too big or difficult and needs to be broken down even more.
8. Encourage your child to celebrate when goals are completed and start another one!

Goal setting encourages continual growth and change in a person. It doesn't have to be a year long slog or embarrassment when we stop the second day. Let's turn the energy of the New Year into something that promotes a growth mindset in our children, and gives us extra reasons to celebrate life!

Wishing you a Safe and Happy New Year from your Mental Health Team at Tanque Verde Peds