

## Aim for the Goal

### ■ onTRAC® Planning

#### Where Are YOU Going?

*"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"*

*"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.*

*"I don't much care where—" said Alice.*

*"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.*

*—Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

#### Define Your Goals

Setting and working toward well-thought-out goals give direction and meaning to our lives. Children benefit from goals just as much as adults do. Goals help children understand why they should work hard at difficult or less interesting tasks. For example, children who want to do well in math so they can become astronauts will be much more motivated than children who are told they must succeed "just because." Goals, however, must be more than just dreams or wishes. In order to truly motivate, goals should be written down, be specific, and have defined steps that can be worked on each day.

#### When I Grow Up ...

Most children have thought about what they want to do when they grow up—and have changed their minds half a dozen times! However, don't



**THINK** about your goals. Are your actions today helping you get where you want to go in the future?

let this changeability stop you from encouraging your child to pursue his or her dreams. Help your child set goals to work on today that are based on his or her dreams for the future. This could mean anything from working on free throws to improving an English grade. Your encouragement to set goals could be the push your child needs to work harder on a current dream or the catalyst to reassess that dream and look for his or her true passion.

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**Many factors contribute to a child's growth and success. Below are tips and ideas for practicing skills that promote your child's academic, social, and emotional well-being outside the classroom.**

### ■ Character

Setting and working toward personal goals is a great way for children to learn accountability and self-discipline. Encourage your child to set goals that matter to him or her! Try not to interfere in this process; personal goals will have a much better chance of being completed than goals imposed by someone else.

### ■ Health

Good fitness doesn't just improve our physical health; it also reduces stress, increases mental prowess, and raises self-esteem! Think about your family's overall health goals, and consider forms of exercise that fit in with those goals. Perhaps you can walk to the park every day, do tai chi together in the mornings, or join a community sports team.

### ■ Anti-bullying

Most children today have encountered or will encounter bullying as a bully, target, or bystander. Discuss these roles with your child. Affirm that no matter what role he or she has played in the past, things CAN change. Encourage your child to set a goal to help end bullying at his or her school. Together, research ways to make this ambitious goal come true.

### ■ STEM

As a continent, we create an incredible amount of waste! Most of the waste we create could have been reused, composted, or recycled. Brainstorm with your child ways that your family can reduce waste this year. Why not put your child in charge of creating and monitoring a family goal related to reusing, composting, or recycling family garbage?

### ■ Study Skills

Critical thinking is essential to success in our rapidly changing world. Critical thinkers are self-disciplined, ask relevant questions, and create original solutions. Challenge your child to think critically about a problem he or she is facing. Have your child write down a goal related to solving the problem. Expect and reward original solutions!

### ■ Learning Strategies

Effort leads to achievement, and recognition often leads to more effort! Help your child see these connections by setting a joint short-term goal. Encourage your child to work with you to reach the goal. When the goal is achieved, make a specific point of recognizing your child's hard work. Explicitly point out how effort leads to achievement.