

How Do I Talk to My Kids about Goals?

Questions to Get You Started

Get a piece of paper, divide it into four spaces, and label them physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual. Ask kids to jot down some goal ideas in each area. Your kids may have already done this at church on the fifth Sunday in September during the video with Elder Ballard about the new children and youth program.

1 Brainstorm Some Goals:

What did you think about the fifth-Sunday video with Elder Ballard and setting goals?

What do you want in your future?

What do you need to prepare for next week or next month or next year?

What skills do you need to learn or practice before you live on your own?

What are you interested in?

What is your preferred future?

Parents: Let kids enjoy the process of brainstorming. Don't shoot down their dreams. Let them be free to write what they want to write.

2 Choose a Goal:

Tell me about your goals.

Which goal are you most excited about?

Which goal do you want to work on?

Do we need to make this goal bigger or smaller?

What does it look like to actually start this goal?

If I made a movie of you doing this goal what would I see you doing?

What action steps do you need to complete this goal?

Parents: Let kids set their own goals, even if the goals don't seem important. It's more important to let kids exercise agency and feel ownership than to have a super-important goal.

3 Remember a Goal:

How can you remember to do this goal?

Where do you want to put your reminder?

Parents: Avoid being your kids' reminders. Let them figure out a way to remember to do the goal.

4 Put Effort into a Goal:

What does effort look like for this goal? (Focus, muscles, brain-power, patience, persistence)

Parents: When your kids are working on a goal (or not working on it and forgetting all about it) give them some space. Set up goal conversation times to check in on goals, but between the conversations, give kids space to succeed or fail on their own.

5 Track a Goal:

Do you need a way to keep track of this goal?

Parents: Help kids create a simple chart, journal, or marble jar to track their progress toward a goal. Not all goals need to be tracked.

6 Check In on a Goal:

What went well with this goal?

Why do you think that part went well? Why do you think it went well this time?

What didn't go well?

What did you learn?

Parents: It's especially important when you are helping kids evaluate goals that you remain calm, positive, and non-reactive. We learn from both success and failure in goals. Both move us forward and give us experience we wouldn't have had without the goal.

7 Adjust a Goal:

Do you want to work on this goal some more?

Do you want to change this goal in some way?

How can we change this goal so it will go better?

Do you want to let this goal go and choose another one?

Do you want to take a break for a while and start again next week?

Parents: It's normal for kids to have mixed reactions to goals. It's also normal to try several different approaches to a goal before finding one that works. Don't be afraid to experiment and try new ways of doing a goal.