



LEARNING STYLES

Learning is reflected in the way we respond to environmental, social, emotional and physical stimuli, to understand new information. Learning style is defined as the way that information is processed. It focuses on strengths, not weaknesses. There is no right or wrong learning style. Most children show a preference for one of the following basic learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic/ manipulative.

It is not uncommon to combine the primary and secondary learning styles. Parents also show a preference for one of these learning styles. It is not unusual for parents to prefer a different style of learning than their child. In order to work effectively with your child it is important to understand your own learning style. (Take inventory at this point)

Visual learners learn by watching. They call up images from the past then trying to remember. They picture the way things look in their heads. Forty percent of secondary students fall into this category. Auditory learners tend to spell phonetically. They can sometimes have trouble reading, because they don't visualize well. These students learn by listening and remember facts when they are presented in the form of a poem, song or melody.

Kinesthetic learners learn best through movement and manipulation. They like to find out how things work and are often successful in the practical in the arts, such as carpentry or design. These students make up 50 percent of secondary

students and have difficulty learning in a traditional setting. Knowing your child's preferred learning style can help you interest a child in new material. With this information you can also learn which style your child needs to strengthen because of the way most information is presented in school. Only 10 percent of secondary students learn best auditorily, but 80 percent of instructional delivery is auditory.

You may have found that you use different learning styles in different situations. Your child does the same. If your child is having difficulty in school you might want to explore the way that information is being presented in school and approach the subject with your child at home using a different learning. It may also be advisable to discuss this with his/her teacher.

Another consideration is the environment in which people learn best. While tradition tells us to have a quiet room, well lit with a straight back chair, some children learn best in a more chaotic environment. Loud music, laying on the bed, and a dimly lit environment may be the best study situation for others. Trying different methods of learning may prevent the children from feeling frustrated and inadequate when they are not able to work up to their potential. Experimenting with different learning styles and environments may improve the child's accomplishments and feelings of achievement.

The America's Rising Stars Program is an innovative and unique inside-out development program that focuses on three critical elements that promote personal leadership, healthy behaviors, and the skills employers identify as essential. These elements are: developing attitudes, developing interpersonal skills, and developing goal-achievement skills. Call today to learn more about how you can help your teen enroll in a Rising Stars program near you!



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Congratulations Rising Stars!

Eleven students from the freshmen and sophomore class of John Adams High School are America's Rising Stars! Monday, May 12th 2008 the students completed an intense, ten week, after school program focused on developing leadership skills. Students took away valuable training on goal-setting, communication, time management as well as many other characteristics of a good leader. Freshman Guadalupe Garcilazo said, "ARS has taught me the importance of writing out my goals, having a positive attitude and using my time wisely. Because of Rising Stars I have more self-confidence. I say 'I can' now instead of saying 'I can't' when I come up against an obstacle." Sophomore Terry Riggs says, "With the principles I have learned in Rising Stars I have started to look at things differently by checking out all my options, writing them down and figuring out the possible obstacles."

Students saw the practicality of the program as area business leaders came as guest speakers to share the importance of leadership in the work world and characteristics their companies are looking for in an employee. The program was sponsored and paid for by AM General, Lake City Bank, JAHS Alumni and Bayer HealthCare.

Five Star Performance, Owner, Patrick Frazier and Rising Star coach Kyle Pierpont lead the class in a casual, conversational manner which encourages much discussion among the students. The characteristics taught were constantly put into everyday life situations making them easy to apply.

Rising Stars classes are now forming for Fall 2008. For more information, contact Patrick Frazier at Patrick.S.Frazier@comcast.net or (574) 286-1123.



Front Row, Left to Right: Guadalupe Garcilazo, Victorlyn Carr, Tameka Prosper, Erica Liddell, Wendy Oduor. Back Row, Left to Right: Annah Usabyimana, Tom Walker, Terry Riggs, Brieon Eskridge, Jerome Udongo

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Powerful Written Goals In 7 Easy Steps

The car is packed and you're ready to go, your first ever cross-country trip. From the White Mountains of New Hampshire to the rolling hills of San Francisco, you're going to see it all. You put the car in gear and off you go. First stop, the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

A little while into the trip you need to check the map because you've reached an intersection you're not familiar with. You panic for a moment because you realize you've forgotten your map.

But you say the heck with it because you know where you're going. You take a right, change the radio station and keep on going. Unfortunately, you never reach your destination. Too many of us treat goal setting the same way. We dream about where we want to go, but we don't have a map to get there.

What is a map? In essence, the written word.

What is the difference between a dream and a goal? Once again, the written word.

Goal setting however is more than simply scribbling down some ideas on a piece of paper. Our goals need to be complete and focused, much like a road map, and that is the purpose behind the rest of this article.

If you follow the 7 goal setting steps I've outlined in this article you will be well on your way to becoming an expert in building the road maps to your goals.

1. Make sure the goal you are working for is something you really want, not just something that sounds good. I remember when I started taking baseball umpiring more seriously. I began to set my sites on the NCAA Division 1 level. Why? I knew there was

no way I could get onto the road to the major leagues, so the next best thing was the highest college level. Pretty cool, right. Wrong.

Sure, when I was talking to people about my umpiring goals it sounded pretty good, and many people were quite impressed. Fortunately I began to see through my own charade. I have been involved in youth sports for a long time. I've coached, I've been the President of leagues, I've been a treasurer and I'm currently an Assistant State Commissioner for Cal Ripken Baseball. Youth sports is where I belong, it is where my heart belongs, not on some college diamond where the only thing at stake is a high draft spot.

When setting goals it is very important to remember that your goals must be consistent with your values.

2. A goal can not contradict any of your other goals. For example, you can't buy a \$750,000 house if your income goal is only \$50,000 per year. This is called non-integrated thinking and will sabotage all of the hard work you put into your goals. Non-integrated thinking can also hamper your everyday thoughts as well. We should continually strive to eliminate contradictory ideas from our thinking.

3. Develop goals in the 6 areas of life: Family and Home Financial and Career Spiritual and Ethical Physical and Health Social and Cultural Mental and Educational Setting goals in each area of life will ensure a more balanced life as you begin to examine and change the fundamentals of everyday living. Setting goals in each area of life also helps in eliminating the non-integrated thinking we talked about in the 2nd step.

4. Write your goal in the positive instead of the negative. Work for what you want, not for what you want to leave behind. Part of the reason why we write down and examine our goals is to create a set of instructions for our subconscious mind to carry out. Your subconscious mind is a very efficient tool, it can not determine right from wrong and it does not judge. It's only function is to carry out its instructions. The more positive instructions you give it, the more positive results you will get. Thinking positively in everyday life will also help in your growth as a human being. Don't limit it to goal setting.

5. Write your goal out in complete detail. Instead of writing "A new home," write "A 4,000 square foot contemporary with 4 bedrooms and 3 baths and a view of the mountain on 20 acres of land. Once again we are giving the subconscious mind a detailed set of instructions to work on. The more information you give it, the more clear the final outcome becomes. The more precise the outcome, the more efficient the subconscious mind can become.

Can you close your eyes and visualize the home I described above? Walk around the house. Stand on the porch off the master bedroom and see the fog lifting off the mountain. Look down at the garden full of tomatoes, green beans and cucumbers. And off to the right

is the other garden full of a mums, carnations and roses. Can you see it? So can your subconscious mind.

6. By all means, make sure your goal is high enough. Shoot for the moon, if you miss you'll still be in the stars. Earlier I talked about my umpiring goals and how making it to the top level of college umpiring did not mix with my values. Some of you might be saying that I'm not setting my goals high enough. Not so. I still have very high goals for my umpiring career at the youth level. My ultimate goal is to be chosen to umpire a Babe Ruth World Series and to do so as a crew chief. If I never make it, everything I do to reach that goal will make me a better umpire and a better person. If I make it, but don't go as a crew chief, then I am still among the top youth umpires in the nation. Shoot for the moon!

7. This is the most important, write down your goals. Writing down your goals creates the road map to your success. Although just the act of writing them down can set the process in motion, it is also extremely important to review your goals frequently. Remember, the more focused you are on your goals the more likely you are to accomplish them. Sometimes we realize we have to revise a goal as circumstances and other goals change, much like I did with my umpiring. If you need to change a goal do not consider it a failure, consider it a victory as you had the insight to realize something was different.

So your goals are written down. Now what?

First of all, unless someone is critical to helping you achieve your goal(s), do not freely share your goals with others. The negative attitude from friends, family and neighbors can drag you down quickly. It's very important that your self-talk (the thoughts in your head) are positive.

Reviewing your goals daily is a crucial part of your success and must become part of your routine. Each morning when you wake up read your list of goals that are written in the positive. Visualize the completed goal, see the new home, smell the leather seats in your new car, feel the cold hard cash in your hands. Then each night, right before you go to bed, repeat the process. This process will start both your subconscious and conscious mind on working towards the goal. This will also begin to replace any of the negative self-talk you may have and replace it with positive self-talk.

Every time you make a decision during the day, ask yourself this question, "Does it take me closer to, or further from my goal." If the answer is "closer to," then you've made the right decision. If the answer is "further from," well, you know what to do.

If you follow this process everyday you will be on your way to achieving unlimited success in every aspect of your life.

The difference between a goal and a dream is the written word.

by Gene Donohue

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SMARTY Goals

Goals need to meet the SMART criteria. In fact, you can even take it one step further. Goals must meet the SMARTY criteria.

Your goal needs to be Specific. This is where many people fall short. They don't make it specific enough and then struggle with the rest of the process. "What is it exactly that you want?"

Your goal must be Measurable. You will need to know how you are doing with your goal. It's important to be able to see when the goal has been accomplished. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

You must believe that the goal is Attainable. You can attain most any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps, but you need to believe in yourself. You need to believe that you are capable of achieving the goal.

Your goal must be Realistically High. When setting a goal, you need to believe that you can accomplish the goal; however, you do want to stretch yourself. A goal can be both high and realistic. When you are striving to achieve, your motivation will help propel you to accomplishing your goal.

Your goal must have a Target Date. When do you want to have this goal accomplished? Each goal must have a target date to be completed, so you can

measure your progress.

And finally, the goal must be YOURS!

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Goal Setting Guide

A guide to teach students how to set their own personal goals, and to be a part of setting classroom, school, and global/local community goals. Students and adults frequently write their personal goals but often overlook goals for their community, and globally. As a class have students participate in writing personal, school, their community, and global goals.

Personal Goals are goals that are specific to only the student. Students should be encouraged to write a variety of goals that deal with their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual capabilities. Their personal goals will alter something about themselves.

Physical: Student will lose weight, eat a fruit a day, do 30 sit ups each morning are just a few examples of physical goals. Physical goals have to do with altering the physical body for the better.

Mental: Student will spend 30 minutes a day reading a book, work on projects on the first day it is assigned not the last, learn a new language are the mental goals that gets the brain more active. It is important to keep the brain stimulated. Mental goals have to do with challenging the brain.

Emotional: Student will walk away from a fight, will choose not to participate in put downs, will refrain from using inappropriate words are examples of emotional goals. Emotional goals have to do with gaining control of our emotions. Students are very emotional and it is a great lesson to teach them ways to deal with anger that is different from their usual style.

Spiritual: Students will take time to reflect on their choices weekly, students will read a page from their religious books, take 5 minutes a day and just sit without disturbances are a few examples of spiritual goals. Spiritual goals are taking time to quiet the mind and body to be in the moment and to

learn from the past.

Classroom Goals: As a class you brainstorm on a goal for the classroom. The students may decide it is best to do agendas in the morning, or to clean desks on a bi-weekly basis. The goals will be decided on a democratic basis. All goals need to follow the four basic steps to writing a goal.

School Goals: The class brainstorms on what they would like to see different in the school. Maybe the class feels they would like to know the lower grades and establish a reading buddy system or they might feel there is too much waste and educate classes on recycling. The class should only work on one school goal at a time otherwise it will become overwhelming. Another solution is to divide the class into two and have two groups working on different goals. Have weekly meetings to discuss their successes and obstacles.

Community Goals (Local or Global): Class suggests a variety of important community issues that are in need of help. Some examples are feeding the homeless, making booties for premature babies, raising money to create a skate park, or foster a child in a developing country. Students just need a platform and you will be amazed with their ideas of how to help the community.

by Susan M. Heathfield, Your Guide to Human Resources

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Top 10 Elements of a Successful Goal Setting Program

What makes a successful goal setting program?

Several things must be done to persuade students to "buy into" these concepts and to change their life habits. Our children live in a rapid paced, MTV world. To be effective the program must be an organized, discussion-stimulating program that answers three questions for the students: "how to", "why is this important", "how do I use this today to make my life (and lives of those around me) better."

It is important to guide the discussion- not lecture. Ask your child discussion stimulating questions that give them an opportunity to express themselves while you facilitate or guide the discussion. Breakdown the discussion into small parts and discuss over several sessions. Some key topics to cover:

Goal Setting Topics:

1. Discuss the why, what, how and when aspects of goals setting and give your child specific samples and practice.
2. Positive words that can change their lives like "yes, I can and I will."
3. Why minimizing the "Bummer Words" words - "no, can't, won't, never, maybe, and if "is important.
4. Help them define success.
5. Discuss how they can stay focused and positive.
6. Show them specific ways they can measure their progress.
7. Help them identify and overcome potential roadblocks.
8. Show them how to use goal setting in their school activities.
9. Facilitate a discussion about the importance of helping others.
10. Help your child understand that success takes time, determination and action.

When we teach our children how to set and achieve goals and how to use these principles in the classroom we teach them how they can take ownership of their education and in their future. With educational ownership comes increase

academic achievement, better decisions, fewer excuses, and have a greater sense of purpose.

by John Bishop · <http://www.TeachingMoments.com> · Accent On Success

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Making the Most of Teachable Moments

One of the most important skills to nurture as a parent, is the ability to recognize and capitalize on "teachable moments" in everyday life. A teachable moment can happen almost anywhere - in the supermarket, when picking your child up from school, when walking through a shopping mall or setting the table for dinner. Chances are that many of the valuable moral lessons that you learned from your parents as a child were not consciously taught at all. They were rather learned in the midst of casual moments of real life, just as our children's real lessons come from being, living and interacting with us in a hundred different ways we could never predict in advance. This is why an important key to teaching children ethical behavior is learning to recognize teachable moments through which your children can develop the habit of being aware of ethical challenges. For example, when you are checking out at the supermarket, and the checker inadvertently gives you too much change, or fails to charge you for an item in your cart, that is a teachable moment.

As your child watches you point out the mistake or return the change, he or she learns in the most powerful way possible about honesty, integrity, good citizenship and being part of a society. One of the most common teachable moments happens every time you drive your car with your kids inside. Think of all the lessons they are learning about life and being part the social fabric of the community just by riding in your car. You put on your seat belt, and they learn about personal responsibility and self-respect (after all, you care enough about yourself to protect your body); you let someone in to your lane on the freeway, and they learn about mutual respect for others and doing your part to help society run smoothly; you put money in the meter, stop at the stop sign and obey traffic rules and they learn about good citizenship. And imagine the lesson in caring behavior and ethics they might learn if they saw you putting money in a stranger's parking meter so that they don't get a ticket!

Home, school, work and play are all fertile ground for discovering teachable moments. If you arrive to pick up your child from school and you see a classmate's parents are late in coming, waiting with that child to be sure he or she is OK will teach your child the value of friendship, the importance of social responsibility. Of course one of the best ways to do that is to take your child along as you bring clothes to a homeless shelter, donate food to a food bank or volunteer for a community charity event. Even participating in walking precincts or making phone calls for political candidates will teach them a valuable lesson about citizenship and the importance of being part of the political process.

Finally, here are six keys to recognizing teachable moments:

1. Recognize that your children often learn moral lessons unconsciously, in casual moments.
2. Be aware of situations that represent moral choices.
3. Talk with your children about the ethical challenges represented in everyday situations, the media and popular culture.
4. Praise your children for their ethical choices.
5. Point out ethical behavior in others.
6. Let your children see your own thought processes regarding ethical decisions.

by Steven Carr Reuben, Ph.D. · Santa Monica, CA: Canter & Associates 1997

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Achieve Your Dreams : Six Steps to Accomplish Your Goals and Resolutions

Don't let your goals and resolutions fall by the wayside. Chances are that to achieve your dreams and live a life you love, those goals and resolutions are crucial. Goal setting and goal achievement are easier if you follow these six steps for effective and successful goal setting and resolution accomplishment.

- You need to deeply desire the goal or resolution. Napoleon Hill, in his landmark book, *Think and Grow Rich*, had it right. "The starting point of all achievement is desire. Keep this constantly in mind. Weak desires bring weak results, just as a small amount of fire makes a small amount of heat." So, your first step in goal setting and achieving your dreams is that you've got to really, really want to achieve the goal.

Visualize yourself achieving the goal. Lee Iacocca said, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind." What will your achievement feel like? How will your life unfold differently as a result? If the goal is a thing, some gurus of goal setting recommend that you keep a picture of the item where you see and are reminded of it every day. If you can't picture yourself achieving the goal, chances are - you won't.

- Make a plan for the path you need to follow to accomplish the goal. Create action steps to follow. Identify a critical path. The critical path defines the key accomplishments along the way, the most important steps that must happen for the goal to become a reality. Stephen Covey said, "All things are created twice. There's a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation of all things. You have to make sure that the blueprint, the first creation, is really what you want, that you've thought everything through. Then you put it into bricks and mortar. Each day you go to the construction shed and pull out the blueprint to get marching orders for the day. You begin with the end in mind." He's right.

· Commit to achieving the goal by writing down the goal. Lee Iacocca said, "The discipline of writing something down is the first step toward making it happen." I agree completely. Write down the plan, the action steps and the critical path. Somehow, writing down the goal, the plan and a timeline sets events in motion that may not have happened otherwise. In my own life, it is as if I am making a deeper commitment to goal accomplishment. I can't fool myself later. The written objective really was the goal.

· Establish times for checking your progress in your calendar system, whatever it is: a day planner, a PDA, a PDA phone or a hand written list. If you're not making progress or feel stymied, don't let your optimism keep you from accomplishing your goals. No matter how positively you are thinking, you need to assess your lack of progress. Adopt a pessimist's viewpoint; something will and probably is, going to go wrong. Take a look at all of the factors that are keeping you from accomplishing your goal and develop a plan to overcome them. Add these plan steps to your calendar system as part of your goal achievement plan.

· Review your overall progress regularly. Make sure you are making progress. If you are not making progress, hire a coach, tap into the support of loved ones, analyze why the goal is not being met. Don't allow the goal to just fade away. Figure out what you need to do to accomplish it. Check the prior five steps starting with an assessment of how deeply you actually want to achieve the goal .

This six step goal setting and achieving system seems simple, but it is the most powerful system you will ever find for achieving your goals and living your resolutions. You just need to do it. Best wishes and good luck.

From Susan M. Heathfield, Your Guide to Human Resources.

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SIX STEPS TO STUDY

Reviewed by: Chris Cortellessa, M.Ed, NCC - ©1995-2006 The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved

How did you learn how to ride your bike? Someone probably gave you a few lessons and then you practiced a lot. You can learn how to study in much the same way. No one is born knowing how to study. You need to learn a few study skills and then practice them. Why work on your study skills? It will make it easier for you to learn and do well in class, especially as you move up to middle school and high school.

Here are six steps to smarter studying:

1. Pay attention in class.
2. Take good notes.
3. Plan ahead for tests and projects.
4. Break it down. (If you have a bunch of stuff to learn, break it into smaller chunks.)
5. Ask for help if you get stuck.
6. Get a good night's sleep!

1. Pay Attention: Good Studying Starts in Class Here's a riddle for you: Did you know that before you even begin studying, you've already started? Huh? Here's what we mean. When you pay attention in class and take good notes, you are starting the process of learning and studying. Do you have trouble paying attention in class? Are you sitting next to a loud person? Is it hard to see the board? Make sure you're sitting in a good seat that lets you pay attention. Tell your teacher or parents about any problems that are preventing you from paying attention and taking good notes.

2. Good Notes = Easier Studying Not sure how to take notes? Start by writing down facts that your teacher mentions or writes on the board during class. Try your best to use good handwriting so you can read your notes later. It's also a good idea to keep your notes,

quizzes, and papers organized by subject.

3. Plan Ahead and You'll Be Glad You Did

Waiting until Thursday night to study for Friday's test will make for a homework night that's no fun! It also makes it hard to do your best. We're all guilty of putting things off sometimes. One of the best ways to make sure that doesn't happen is to plan ahead. Ask for a cool calendar (something you like and can keep by your desk or study area) and write down your test and assignment due dates. You can then plan how much to do after school each day, and how much time to spend on each topic. Are lessons or extracurricular activities making it hard to find time to study? Ask your mom or dad how to make a schedule of what to do when.

4. Break It Up!

When there's a lot to study, it can help to break things into chunks. Let's say you have a test on 20 spelling words. Instead of thinking about all of the words at once, try breaking them down into five-word chunks and working on one or two different chunks each night. Don't worry if you can't remember something on the first try. That's where practice comes in. The more days you spend reviewing something, the more likely it is to stick in your brain.

There

are also tricks called mnemonic (say: new-mah-nik) devices that can help you remember stuff. When you're trying to memorize a list of things, make up a phrase that uses the first letter of each. For example, are you trying to learn the nine planets and their order from the sun? Think: My Very Earnest Mother Just Served Us Nine Pickles to remember Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Your teacher can give you ideas, too.

Congratulations!!!

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Isha Gibson
Charnelle Maefield-Martin
Justin Nowak
Tamika Bolunt
Chelsa Williams*

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Developing Performance Character and Moral Character in Youth

The Fourth and Fifth Rs: Respect and Responsibility, Volume 10, Issue 2, Winter 2004.

A person of character embodies both performance AND moral character. Performance character refers to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dispositions needed to achieve human excellence in performance environments- in school, extracurricular activities, and work.

Performance character is built on "willing values" such as perseverance, diligence, and self-discipline. Moral character refers to the dispositions needed for ethical functioning and includes qualities such as justice, caring, respect, and honesty. Here are 12 strategies for developing performance character and moral character for success in school and beyond.

1. Help students make character the core of their identity by challenging them to define who they are in a way that transcends their possessions and achievements.
2. Have students regularly grapple with existential questions such as: "What is the meaning of life?" "What is happiness?" "What gives my life a positive sense of purpose?"

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Developing Your Career With Smart Goals

Article from en.wikipedia.org

Many colleges require students to choose a major upon applying, and many students who plan on working after high school will do so immediately following graduation - because of this, it is important for every student to begin thinking about their career goals. High school is a great time to do this, and this article offers suggestions for students deciding on a career, as well as how to use the Smart Goals system.

There are so many career possibilities that deciding the right career path can be scary. This is also an exciting process, and is one that will ultimately lead you to a career that is stimulating, and right for you. Studies show the average job-seeker will change careers at least five times, and some will change their minds up to ten times, www.aie.org. Your initial decision will not bind you for life, but it will give you some direction and help you start deciding what is right for you.

When you begin thinking about your career goals, it is important to explore your skills and interests. Find out what it is you love - are you interested in math? Do you like to paint? Once you have an idea of what makes you happy, research occupations that fit your personality and abilities. If you love working outside, perhaps accounting is not the right job for you. After you decide what it is you are interested in, you must figure out how to accomplish your goals. Spend some time mapping out a plan for your educational path. Take challenging courses in high school to help you get ahead, especially if you want to go to a university.

It may help you to set goals if you use the SMART Goals theory. According to Paul J. Meyer, Smart Goals are: * *Specific* * *Measurable* * *Attainable* * *Realistic* * *Tangible*

List generated by www.topachievement.com.

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished. When you come up with a goal, ask yourself, who is involved, and what you want to accomplish. Also, you should establish a time frame for your goal, so you can have a deadline to achieve it by.

A measurable goal helps you monitor your progress and stay on track. Ask yourself if your goal is something attainable.

Attainable goals are goals that are reasonable enough for you to develop the abilities, skills, and resources necessary to reach them. Mapping out a game plan helps you find opportunities you may have overlooked.

Realistic Goals represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. You can have a high goal which is realistic, but goals are usually only realistic if you truly believe that they can be accomplished. Tangible goals are ones you can experience it with one of the senses.

Using Smart Goals, you can narrow down your career objectives, and find a way to make your dreams reality. This is especially useful for important goals, such as a dream college or dream career.

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Planning Student-Directed Transitions to Adult Life

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Today, transition is seen as more than providing service routes in the individual's movement from high school to employment-it is seen as a comprehensive approach to educational program development consisting of an alignment of student goals with educational experiences and services.

Since the early 1980s, federal law has underscored the need for comprehensive transition planning and broadened its focus. The 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that:

- Is designed within an outcomeoriented process, which promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
- Is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests.
- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the

development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

IDEA also states that transition planning must be part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and begin at age 14. By age 16, the IEP should contain a statement of needed transition services for the child, including, when appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages. Further, students must be invited to attend their IEP meetings if the purpose of the meeting will be to consider the student's transition service needs.

How can educators facilitate these new requirements- especially those that promote and strengthen the involvement of students with disabilities in decisions regarding their own futures? This digest describes how research is helping to inform practice around that programmatic issue.

Facilitating Student-Centered Transition Planning

IDEA '97 and its 1999 Regulations reflect a body of research-much of it supported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP-that describes aspects of quality transition programs for students with disabilities. One of those key aspects is facilitating student-centered transition planning.

With OSEP support, Kohler (1998) organized the research literature, model projects, and exemplary programs on transition into a taxonomy of relevant practices. She found that studentfocused planning was a necessary component in facilitating transition. Because the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the planning vehicle for implementing the transition requirements specified in the IDEA, student participation in this process is essential. Specifically, students should be included in decisions related to post-school goals to ensure they are valued and attainable. As such, self-determination skills are considered to be fundamental to student participation in their own IEPs.

Practitioners should begin early to assist and guide students in developing appropriate education programs based on individual transition goals. With OSEP support, Martin et al. (in press) has studied skills students need to participate actively in their IEPs. These include:

How to choose goals. Provide experiences so students identify their interests, skills, and limits across transition areas.

How to participate in and lead their IEP meetings. Teach students self-determination, self-advocacy, and meeting skills.

How to accomplish goals. Teach students how to develop a plan to attain their goals, take action on the plan, evaluate and adjust their plan of action.

Curricula are available to assist practitioners in helping students direct their IEPs (e.g., Martin et al., 1996).

Helping Students Participate in their IEP

With sufficient preparation and support, students can participate in their IEP process in various ways. The extent of participation will depend on their abilities and interests—for example, some students direct their own meeting, while others take a specific part to direct. Teachers experienced in involving their students in the IEP process have made the following suggestions (ERIC/OSEP Special Project, 2000):

Begin instruction as early as possible. Some areas of study, such as self-determination skills, can begin in the elementary school.

Be prepared to support students with sensitive issues. Some students may never have seen their IEP and some may not even know what it means. Even if a student knows about IEPs, reading about one's disability can be unsettling. Teachers need to work through all issues and questions with students. It may help to talk individually with students before sharing the IEP.

Ensure that students understand what their disability means. It is important that students know about their disability and can talk about it to others. Encourage students to become comfortable stating what they need and what they do not need.

Make sure you feel comfortable with the process. Students will know if adults are uncomfortable talking about a topic or allowing the student to lead the IEP.

Schedule time for students to develop skills related to IEP participation on a regular basis. It is very easy to let other subjects-particularly academics-take priority. Teachers must believe that self-determination, planning, and self-advocacy skills are priorities.

Teach IEP participation skills as a semester course. Students need sufficient time to master the skills. Although students can be taught skills once a week or in a daylong course, if you really want students to take an active role, you must allow sufficient time.

Use motivational techniques to interest students. Before you begin training, invite an individual with a disability to talk to students. It helps to have role-alike models as speakers (e.g., an individual who is a college graduate, an individual who has gone to a vocational education center, an individual who works in supported employment, a person who owns a business).

Communicate with families. Let parents know your intentions. It helps to invite families to a meeting where you can explain the approach and answer their questions.

These teachers believe that with sufficient preparation and support, students at all levels can actively participate in the IEP process. Teachers also have found that without preparation, students may not understand the language or the IEP process, and may feel as if other IEP team members have not listened to them.

Teachers who have included students successfully note that they feel good about their participation, and they have a sense of accomplishment and empowerment as a result of their participation in the process.

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New Years Resolutions

As the New Year is approaching, now is a great time to help our youth focus on setting goals by using New Year's resolutions.

Ten Ways to Accomplish Your New Years Resolutions

Successfully completing your New Year's resolutions can be difficult, but with a little planning and determination you can greatly improve your chances for success. The ideas below should help you stay focused, positive and motivated.

Ten ways to improve chances for success:

1. Be realistic - Make sure that the resolution(s) is realistic. For example, losing thirty pounds by the end of February is not safe or realistic. Set yourself up for success by setting one or two reasonable and attainable goals that stretch your capabilities.
2. Write down your goal and action steps - Breakdown the goal into achievable parts called action steps. With the completion of each action step you are moving closer to accomplishing your goal.
3. Set a time table - Without a specific completion date your resolution is only a wish.
4. Read the resolution(s) each night before bed and again when you wake up.
5. Determine what you will sacrifice - Accomplishing your resolution will take time and effort on your part. What habits and behaviors are you willing to change in order to reach your goal?

6. Be determined and minimize excuses. You will face some hurdles as you strive to be successful. Avoid making an excuse a roadblock that stops you from reaching your goal. Measure your progress toward reaching your goal. Your action steps and the completion date are two valuable tools to check your progress.

7. Use positive affirmations like "yes, I can and I will."

8. Minimize the Bummer Words - "no, can't, won't, never, maybe, and if."

9. Ask yourself each day "Did I give my best effort today's activities?" An honest answer will help you stay focused and move you closer the successful completion of your New Years Resolutions.

10. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Good luck! This is your life! Your goals! Your success!
You are a WINNER!

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LEARNING STYLES

Learning is reflected in the way we respond to environmental, social, emotional and physical stimuli, to understand new information. Learning style is defined as the way that information is processed. It focuses on strengths, not weaknesses. There is no right or wrong learning style. Most children show a preference for one of the following basic learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic/ manipulative. It is not uncommon to combine the primary and secondary learning styles.

Parents also show a preference for one of these learning styles. It is not unusual for parents to prefer a different style of learning than their child. In order to work effectively with your child it is important to understand your own learning style. (Take inventory at this point)

Visual learners learn by watching. They call up images from the past when trying to remember. They picture the way things look in their heads. Forty percent of secondary students fall into this category.

Auditory learners tend to spell phonetically. They can sometimes have trouble reading, because they don't visualize well. These students learn by listening and remember facts when they are presented in the form of a poem, song or melody.

Kinesthetic learners learn best through movement and manipulation. They like to find out how things work and are often successful in the practical in the

arts, such as carpentry or design. These students make up 50 percent of secondary students and have difficulty learning in a traditional setting.

Knowing your child's preferred learning style can help you interest a child in new material. With this information you can also learn which style your child needs to strengthen because of the way most information is presented in school. Only 10 percent of secondary students learn best auditorily, but 80 percent of instructional delivery is auditory.

You may have found that you use different learning styles in different situations. Your child does the same. If your child is having difficulty in school you might want to explore the way that information is being presented in school and approach the subject with your child at home using a different learning. It may also be advisable to discuss this with his/her teacher.

Another consideration is the environment in which people learn best. While tradition tells us to have a quiet room, well lit with a straight back chair, some children learn best in a more chaotic environment. Loud music, laying on the bed, and a dimly lit environment may be the best study situation for others.

Trying different methods of learning may prevent the children from feeling frustrated and inadequate when they are not able to work up to their potential. Experimenting with different learning styles and environments may improve the child's accomplishments and feelings of achievement.

Helping Children Succeed in School was developed by Darla Binkley, Extension Educator, Youth Development; Kay Mayberry, Extension Educator, Family Life; Rachel Schwarzendruber, Extension Educator, Family Life; Nancy Schreiber, Extension Educator, Prevention; and Melinda States.

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