

Encourage your family to meet new goals in four simple ways

January is a time for taking stock and setting goals. Most people make some type of New Year's resolution. Then two weeks later, they realize they haven't followed through.

Kids are no different. Why not try to make this the January that everyone in the family takes action to meet some new goal? Here are four ways to encourage that change:

1. Pay attention. Suppose your child has decided she wants to do her homework without nagging. The first time she sits down without being reminded, pay attention. A short, "Grace, you're meeting your goal for the day. Good work!" is all it will take.

2. Don't wait. We all get caught up in what we're doing. But there is nothing that works as well as immediate feedback. "Kylie, thanks so much for taking the dog for a walk," you'll say. Kylie will be much more likely to take the dog for a walk tomorrow.

3. Reinforce the small steps. She wants to pull her spelling grade up to an A. This week she's not quite there--but she made some improvement. Remind her of the fable of the tortoise and the hare. Slow but steady really does win the race.

4. Be specific. Your child is trying to bring up her math grade. So after she does her homework, she takes time to check her answers. Don't just say, "Good job." Tell her, "You checked your work. That's a good way to catch little mistakes that can lower your grade."

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