



TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN TO SET GOALS FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

A new school year brings great anticipation and excitement. New learning adventures, new curriculum, new courses, and renewed time together as you meet and learn as a family. But, while finding curriculum, creating a schedule, and renewing your homeschool space are all great activities, many homeschooling parents forget one important step in school year readiness: goal setting. Learning to set and meet goals is an important life skill that will impact every area of your child's future, including college, careers, family life, etc.

Here are 5 simple ways to motivate your Einsteins to reach for the stars this new school year!

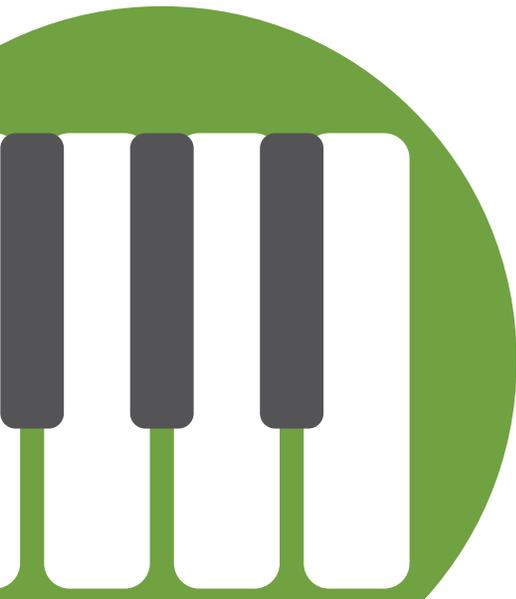
1. SHOW THEM HOW, STEP BY STEP

If we really want our children to learn to set goals and strive to meet them, we need to be practicing and living this process out in our homes. And we need to do it out loud! To reach a goal, you need to be able to break the process down into steps and then decide what actions or efforts you must engage in to make each step a reality. If your goal is to clean each room of the house over the course of the week, plan out a schedule with them, assign chores and tasks, and check them off as you go. Your child will not only see the process of setting goals, but will get a bird's-eye view of what it takes to turn a goal into reality.



2. BE REALISTIC

Homeschooling works best when the child is at the center. So, when setting goals with your child, be realistic. Keep in mind their strengths and weaknesses. Plan according to who they are, and their abilities and interests, not your own goals or a list of what they should be able to accomplish by their age or grade level. Make sure to work in increments. For example, if your child's goal is to learn to play piano, you wouldn't give them a Bach composition and say, "Go for it!" You would find a teacher and an instrument, then begin to teach each note, key, etc., slowly. As your child progresses towards their goal, the steps may need to be redefined and tweaked.



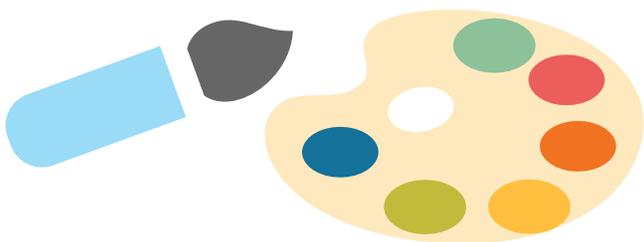
3. SHARE POWER

We all want what is best for our children, their future, and the day-to-day routine of homeschooling. We set academic, social, and spiritual goals for them because they are our responsibility, and we want to help them realize these dreams! But often we forget to include THEM in the process. Nothing is more discouraging than making all of your child's choices for them and not giving them a voice. When it comes to setting goals, be sure to include them in the process and encourage them to make obtaining the goal their personal challenge. We are all more apt to accomplish something if we feel ownership, so allow them to have a few goals based upon their interests, ideas, and the areas in which they want to excel.



4. START OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Let's face it, school adds extra pressure, even when you're homeschooling. When it comes to teaching kids to set goals for the school year, why not take the pressure off and start in other areas of life? Set goals for vacations, chores, earning income or allowance, etc. This way they will be in the practice of setting and working towards a goal before school starts. Then, when you do hit the books, the process will go much more smoothly!



5. APPLAUD SUCCESS AND FAILURE

One reality that parents often learn the hard way is that nagging never works. Oh sure, it may get the job done, but in the process, your children become slaves to keeping you happy and never develop the intrinsic desire required for life-long goal setting and attainment. Therefore, instead of nagging or fussing or even checking in, praise success and acknowledge effort once it is achieved. When your child fails to meet a goal, praise their effort and help them to learn from their mistakes. Ask questions like, "Why do you think you didn't meet your goal?" and "How can you do it differently this time so that you can get there?" The more you praise, the more they will want to achieve their goals.

As challenging as it is to teach our children how to set goals, it's a vitally important skill that reaches into every aspect of life. However, sometimes we reach a place where homeschooling has become too difficult, building a wall between our children and us that makes character training that much harder.

Looking for the perfect curriculum for your Einstein this school year? give us a call at 800-685-3357 and we can help you pick out the perfect curriculum for your student to succeed! We have been working with families like yours, helping them to set and reach their homeschooling goals, for over 25 years. We would love to help you!

