

TEACHING LIFE SKILLS TO PARENTS

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Teaching Life Skills to Parents

Section Five: Setting Goals and Staying Organized

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Setting Goals/Getting Organized Tool Kit

Teachable moments

- The client is chronically late for your appointments.
- The client never seems to have everything she needs (diaper bag, important papers, keys)
- The client talks with you about always losing things.
- You know the client has a demanding plan with child welfare.

Life skills questions

- Do you have the following identification: birth certificate, photo ID?
- Do you know where they are?
- Do you manage your time to complete tasks?
- Do you have places for your important papers?
- Do you ever miss appointments because you forgot you had them or when they were?
- Do you have something you want to accomplish in the next six months?
- Do you have a plan to accomplish it?

Pitfalls

- You need to have a sense of what might be going on for a client who is deeply disorganized and overwhelmed. It might be symptomatic of a deeper issue like depression.
- Getting organized is very straightforward. But, it is important to have patience with a client who is learning this skill. Remember that change won't happen overnight

Life skills

- Tools to get organized
- Strategies to get organized both overall and in specific areas
- Tools to set goals
- Strategies to set goals
- Ways of overcoming procrastination

Curriculum Units for Setting Goals/Getting Organized

Setting goals

- Why it is important to set goals? Characteristics of goals.
- What is the difference between short-term and long-term goals?
- How to set short-term goals that build into long-term goals.
- How to make setting goals a productive process.

Getting organized

- Why get organized?
- Learn how to assess one's life for organization.
- Learn tips to organize different areas of one's life.

Setting Goals/Staying Organized Activities to do with Clients

Setting goals

- Help the client set a one-month goal including all the steps involved with the goal.
- Help the client set one short-term goal in the area of parenting including all the steps.
- Regularly review client's progress towards this goal.
- Work with the client to set one long-term goal (one-year). Help the client list the short-term goals that will lead to completing this long-term goal.
- Help client come up with goals in three areas of her life.
- Help client adjust a goal if her progress was not what she anticipated.

Staying organized

- With the client, review the process of getting off in the morning to see how smoothly it works.
- Help the client assess different areas of her life to see where she would like to be more organized.
- Help the client make a plan to organize her kitchen, bedroom, bathroom.
- Help the client organize her child(ren)'s papers.
- Help the client make a list of household chores and see if there are any she can delegate.

Exercise One: Let's get organized

In five minutes, come up with as many good organizing tips in as many of the following areas as you can.

Getting out of the house in the morning: _____

Laundry: _____

Meal Preparation: _____

Car (maintenance, operation, etc.): _____

Health Care: _____

Grocery Shopping: _____

Work (office, work materials, etc.): _____

Recreation: _____

Important papers: _____

Kids and School: _____

Procrastination

Procrastination is probably the single most common time management problem. Learning some strategies to control procrastination can help make getting started less painful and reduce getting behind. Here's how:

Strategy 1: Realistic goal setting

One common reason for procrastinating is that often too much of the same activity must be done at one sitting. Rather than spending three hours one evening working on a project, plan to work for one hour each day over three days. This is especially important for tasks that are difficult or unpleasant. If you spend thirty to sixty minutes each day, rather than leaving a week's work for one marathon session, you'll be far less likely to put the work off.

Strategy 2: Plan to work, plan to play

In the section above we've used the term "plan" - something which is usually missing from the procrastinator's vocabulary. Although there is something to be said for waiting for inspiration to strike, it is usually not a very efficient way to get things done. Planning does not mean rigid or elaborate scheduling, but it does require some skill and intelligent decision making. A good time plan is probably the single most effective way to control procrastination.

Strategy 3: The "making a molehill out of a mountain" method

Procrastination often results when the task seems difficult, unpleasant, or overpowering. By using the "Making a Molehill out of a Mountain" method you can bring the task down to size and make it less intimidating. When you have a big assignment, set aside a mere 10 or 15 minutes a day to work on it. By the end of one week, you'll have spent at least an hour on the task, and you may have found that it's not quite as horrible as you thought.

Strategy 4: Self discipline?

People often blame their problems with procrastination on laziness or a lack of self-discipline. However, the cause is usually not as simple as that. For example, there is an interesting connection between procrastination and perfectionism. People for whom nothing less than a perfect product will do, may procrastinate so that when their results do not measure up to their standards, they can blame it on the fact that they did the task in a hurry. Procrastination can also be an indication of a fear of failure. Sometimes it is a symptom of a lack of motivation or the loss of a sense of purpose. In fact, there are many reasons why people procrastinate. Understanding why you procrastinate is essential for its long-term management.

This material was adapted from information provided by the Learning Commons at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario Canada.

Setting Goals

What are goals? Goals are accomplishments we want to achieve in the future. We can set short-term goals and long term goals. Short-term goals may be something we want to accomplish in the next day, week, or month. Long-term goals are goals we want to accomplish in the next six months, year, five years or beyond.

Why should I set goals? Setting goals is a tool to help you get where you want to go in your life. It's a way for you to plan and to take charge of your life. It is a way to make your own personal road map. If you don't know where you're going, you won't get there!

How do I figure out what my goals are? A good place to start is with your values. Values guide our behavior. Our values determine what's important in our lives. Your values will also determine how motivated you are to reach a goal. Some of the following questions might help you set some goals: Where do I want to be a year from now? five years from now? What do I want my life to look like? What are my talents and how do I want to advance them? What do I want for my family? How satisfied am I with my personal health and well being?

You should set goals in the different areas of your life. For example, you can set goals in the areas of education, career, family, self or lifestyle. Some examples are: To do a family fun activity every weekend; to take a course to help advance my career; to move to a different neighborhood; to exercise three times a week.

Short and long term goals can build on each other. If, for example, you have the long term goal of getting a college degree, a short term goal that will lead to your long term goal is to sign up for and take a class in the next semester that will count towards a college degree. You should always have short-term goals that lead to your long-term goals. This is how you reach your long-term goals.

Pick reasonable goals and reasonable time frames. Is your goal one you have the desire, talent and resources to accomplish? And, do you have a reasonable chance of achieving the goal in the time you have given yourself.

You may not reach your goal in the time you gave yourself. You also may not reach your goal with the steps you planned. That's okay! Life happens. You can

always fine-tune your goals and the steps to get there. Sometimes you just need more time.

📌 **Be inspired!** Think of someone who is a role model for you because of what he or she has accomplished in life and then learn how that person did it.

📌 **Get your cheering squad.** Be sure to share your goals and dreams with people who believe in you and can help you stay on the path towards these goals and dreams.

📌 **Be sure to dream!** Your dreams are very important because many times these are your long-term goals. And figuring out the steps to achieve your dreams can be some good short term goals. Setting goals towards your dreams is a way to reach for the stars...and get them!

📌 **Steps for reaching your goals:**

1. Create a vision for yourself and set a goal.
2. Identify and plan the steps you need to take to reach this goal.
3. Work to reach your goal by taking each step in your plan.

Getting Organized Saves Time

Organize to Reach a Goal

By Barbara Myers

We all need to periodically reevaluate our goals. Most of us do it around the beginning of every year if not more frequently.

How can you avoid setting a goal only to forget it or give up on it? Follow these four steps.

1. Set a specific goal with a specific time frame. For example, instead of "I'm going to lose weight this year," say "I'm going to lose 24 pounds by December 31, 2003. My monthly goal is to lose two pounds each month for 12 months" (or whatever your personal goal might be).
2. Write it down. A goal is more real to you when it's in writing. Place it where you can see it every day. Attach it to the bathroom mirror, in your planner or on the fridge.
3. Write down exactly what you will do every week or every day to reach your goal. For example, "I will eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. I will walk 20 minutes daily. I will drink eight glasses of water daily."
4. Promise yourself a reward when you accomplish your goal. Also give yourself monthly rewards when you reach your monthly goals.

Good luck!

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MY GOALS

√ **Next week I want to:** _____

What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In one month I want to:** _____

What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In six months I want to:** _____

What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In a year I want to:** _____

What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In five years I want to:** _____

What are three steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____


Staying Organized


Why be organized? Because your life runs smoother!


➔ You get things done when they are due like paying your rent, getting your child's immunizations updated.


➔ You don't waste time running around doing things twice like realizing you need milk when you just came back from the grocery store


Some tools to help


 An **alarm clock** to wake you up to get to places on time. You also need a watch so you know what time it is when you are on the go!


 A **calendar** to keep track of dates to remember like upcoming appointments, when things are due, people's birthdays, etc.

 A **list of important phone numbers** to keep in your wallet or calendar, backpack and posted at home.

 A **running grocery list**: Keep your list someplace handy –like in the kitchen and then write down what you need to buy as you run out of it.

 A **"To Do" list**. This is a list of what you have to do on a given day or in a given week. This will help you keep track of all the parts of your busy life!

 An **envelope or box for all the very important documents** in your life such as your birth certificate, your child's birth certificate, your child's and your immunization records, etc. You should keep this in a safe place with a location that's easy for you to remember.

 **Individual Files** for important subjects like "MediCal" or "Child Care" or "Bills to Pay." That way, all your papers for a certain topic are in one place.

Getting Organized Saves Time

9 Secrets of Successful Organizers

By Barbara Myers

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You can reduce your stress and enjoy more time for yourself and your family. Discover these seven secrets of getting and staying organized.

1. Keep like items together. Keep cutting boards, knives, peelers and vegetable brushes together near the sink. Place all manicure/pedicure supplies in a basket.
2. Store things where you use them. Keep extra sheets in bedrooms, videos near the TV and cleaning supplies on every floor.
3. Make frequently used items easily accessible and rarely used items less accessible. If you use your blender daily, keep it on the counter. If you use it once a month, put it in the back of a low cabinet.
4. If you don't use it get rid of it. Unless it's a beautiful decorative item or a cherished memento, why are you keeping it? Pass it on.
5. Establish a place for everything. Designate a "home" for every item in *your* home. Make them so specific you can find things in the dark.
6. Always put it back where it belongs after you use it. Teach household members to do the same.
7. Use lists. Make lists of things to do and buy. Keep an on-going grocery list. Post a current leftovers list on the fridge door. Use a meals list.
8. Make it easy. Use hooks instead of hangers for kids' coats. Take the lids off hampers. Preprint a grocery list so household members can simply circle needed items.
9. Develop systems and routines. Find the most efficient way to do laundry and stick with it. Use a meal planner consistently. You'll save time by not having to think about the details.

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Getting Organized Saves Time

Time-Saving Tips

By Barbara Myers

- Prioritize items on your to-do list if you feel like you're spinning your wheels. Use A for the items that have to be done today, B for the things you should do today, and C for the tasks you hope to do.
- Never wait for anyone or anything. Always carry something to do with you when you go out -- a reading file or a project, perhaps.
- Save time by making fewer decisions during the week. For example, make a list of kids' lunches. Each evening or morning, simply pack the next one on the list.
- Plan 60 or 90 days out for everything: purchases, to-do's and projects. You'll save time and money.
- Spend your TV viewing time wisely. Pay bills, clip coupons, iron, or work on tomorrow's to-do list while watching your favorite programs.
- Make doctor's appointments for first thing in the morning. Run errands and grocery shop early morning also. Do everything you can during off-hours to save LOTS of time (and stress!).
- Spend ten minutes at the end of your workday planning and making tomorrow's to-do list.
- Save time at the video store by keeping a list in your planner of movies you want to see. Video previews, newspaper reviews and television entertainment shows have information on new movies and videos.
- Plan only 75% of your day. Allow for emergencies and interruptions. The more organized you are, the easier it will be to deal with last minute and unexpected problems.
- Save time by withdrawing enough cash to last until you receive your next paycheck. Stopping at the bank once every two weeks instead of twice a week can save you 19 hours per year!

- Delegate. It's the number one time saver! You can barter, hire or beg. Start with neighbors, co-workers and college students.
- Take care of things immediately or write them down. In a spiral notebook, keep a master list of tasks to do. Choose an A, B or C priority for each.
- Try starting your day 15 minutes earlier every day this week. You'll be more effective at home and at the office.

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Getting Organized Saves Time

Daily Organizing Checklist

By Barbara Myers

Follow this checklist every day to maintain an organized life.

- Wash Dishes and/or run dishwasher. Wipe kitchen counters.
- Take out the trash.
- Make a decision on the clothes worn today. If they need to be washed, throw them in the hamper. If they need to be dry cleaned, place them in the dry cleaning bag. If they just need to be aired out, hang up to air.
- Grab a basket and walk around the house before bed. Pick up clutter and return it to its designated place.
- Sort the mail. Open it over the trash can or recycling bin and dispose of junk mail. Sort the rest into files or folders: to do, to pay, to consider, to read, awaiting answer, hold and refer.
- Pack lunches and set out breakfast dishes. Decide on tomorrow's dinner and make necessary preparations.
- Lay out tomorrow's clothes for each household member.
- Place by the door: backpacks, shoes, coats, briefcases, purses, sports uniforms, and anything else that will be needed tomorrow.
- Make tomorrow's to-do list for work and home.

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Getting Organized Saves Time

7 Organizing Tips for Parents

by Barbara Myers

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1. List responsibilities for school-age children and teens. Post the list. It might include: place clothes in hamper, brush teeth, do homework and take out trash. Make it clear that all items must be completed before any privileges are allowed (watching TV, talking on the phone, using the computer).
2. Help your older children and teens schedule their weekdays. For example, if they are home at 3:00 p.m. and go to bed at 9:00 p.m., they have six hours to accomplish x, y and z.
3. Be sure to make time in your schedule (minimum 30 minutes) to spend with your kids every day.
4. Prepare five outfits for each child on the weekend. Make sure clothes are clean, mended and pressed, and shoes are clean. Do this for yourself, too!
5. Designate a file folder or box for each child and each adult in your household. Mail, school papers, and notes to one another can easily be passed along this way. Instruct kids to empty backpacks upon arrival and place all paperwork into parent's folders.
6. Place shoes, coats, keys, backpacks and anything else needed for the next day, by the exit door or in the car every evening to avoid last minute searching for misplaced items.
7. Have everyone make a list of fun things to do. Keep it handy and choose one or two fun family activities each weekend.

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MY GOALS

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What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In one month I want to:** _____

What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In six months I want to:** _____

What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In a year I want to:** _____

What are two steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

√ **In five years I want to:** _____

What are three steps I need to take to get to this goal?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____