Reach for the Goal!*

A great thing to teach children is how to get something done. Often kids want to accomplish something, but they don't know how to start or where to get supplies or what to do next. Yet reaching a goal is a satisfying adventure! The first step is to imagine it completed—just the way you want it to be—in your mind. Once you clearly know what you want, it's easier to take the next action steps.

Here are steps to teach your children:

1) Ask your children to tell you about something they really want. It could be a small or large goal, a skill they want to develop, an interest they want to expand, or something they want to own. For example, a child may want to build a tree house, be on a sports team, make a birthday card, have a special costume for Halloween, learn to ride a bike, dig a hole to China in the backyard, become a bird-watcher, own a pet, etc.

2) Ask your children, "What would that look like and feel like?" Let them pretend seeing it in their mind's eye. Ask appropriate questions: Does it have a color? How big is it? How do you feel when you imagine having it? How would you use it? Would you share it with anybody? Would you need a place for it? What would happen if you had it or could do it? (It's possible they may start by telling you what their goal is NOT like. That's fine, as it may be part of the process of getting things clear.)

   Let them enjoy their imaginations, for the human imagination is creative, powerful, and useful.

3) Next, invite your children to talk about all the things or experiences they would need to reach this goal. Write down these ideas or steps on a sheet of paper and put it in the **Our Adventures** section of your WAY TO GO! FAMILY LEARNING JOURNAL™.

4) Then ask your children, "What's the very first thing you need to do to achieve this?" Guide them to identify one single next step. It might be getting a phone number, asking for help, gathering supplies, making space in a room, or starting to save money. Help them take that first step. And then identify the next one... and the one after that....

5) Support your children over time to stick with their goals by consistently encouraging them to take the next action step. Assisting kids to create a plan to go for what they want is a hugely valuable gift!

"I've found there's magic in watching children set a goal and go for it. Todd decided he wanted to be a bird expert when he saw some birds build a nest in his family's yard. He got a book about birds and talked his folks into taking him to places where he could watch them. He keeps a list of all the kinds he's seen. His enthusiasm got me hooked! When he visits, we go bird-watching together."

— Grandma Anna

Reach for the Goal!* supports the English-Language Arts Content Standards related to organizing information and sequencing ideas. **Next month, go to www.familylearningjournal.com for a new Family Activity!

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