Elementary School
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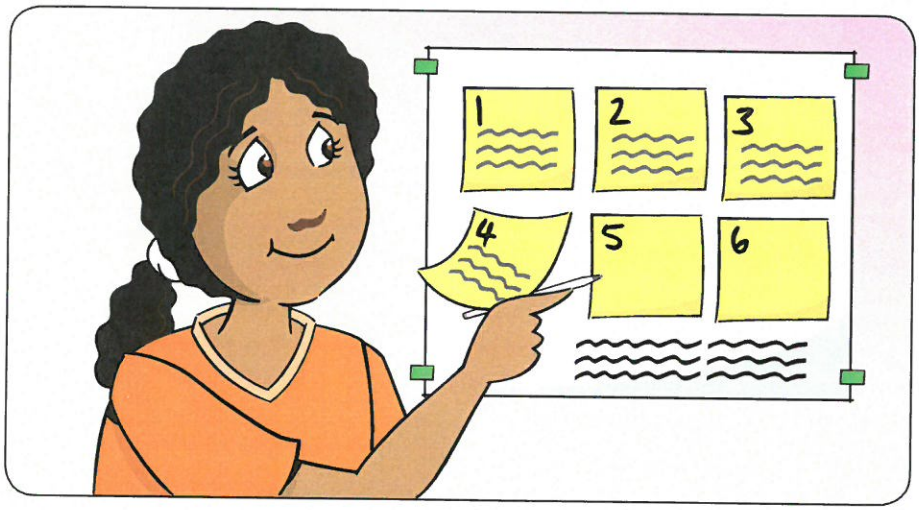
Warwick School District
Student Services Department
make the difference!



Help your child follow these steps for achieving a goal

January is a time for taking stock and setting goals. Most people make some type of New Year's resolutions. Then two weeks later, many realize that they haven't followed through. Kids are no different.

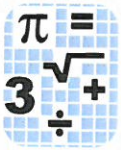
Why not make this the year that your child learns how to achieve the goals she sets for herself? When your child sets a goal, encourage her to choose one she can reach in a short time frame.

Then, help her follow these four steps for achieving the goal:

1. **State the goal.** "My goal is to learn my multiplication facts." She should write it down and post it where she will see it.
2. **Plan how to meet the goal.** "I will make flash cards and study them for 15 minutes every night. I will ask Dad to quiz me on Fridays."
3. **Talk about the goal with others.** This builds commitment to the goal. Your child should tell her teacher what she plans to do.
4. **Do each step in the plan,** one at a time. If problems come up, talk about possible solutions. Perhaps she is too tired after doing her homework each night to review her flash cards. Maybe she could study them in the mornings while she eats breakfast instead.

Don't forget to praise your child for her effort each step of the way. "I am proud of you for studying your multiplication facts this morning." And when she achieves her goal, celebrate the way her hard work paid off!

Look for lines of symmetry in nature



Look at a picture of a butterfly. Fold it in half. The two sides match up. That means the butterfly, like many other things in nature, is symmetrical.

Showing your child how to look for lines of symmetry is a great way to help him recognize patterns. It is also a fun family activity that can give your child a new way of looking at nature.

Here's how to get started:

- **Look for natural objects** that are symmetrical. Flowers, leaves, shells and butterflies may all have these lines.
- **Have your child predict** where the line of symmetry will be. Then, if possible, fold along that line to see if the two sides match up exactly.
- **Look for lines of symmetry** in other places. You can have your child look through the pages of a magazine or book. Remember that lines of symmetry can be vertical (as in the letter A) or horizontal (as in the letter B). They can even be diagonal. Sometimes, a figure may have more than one line of symmetry.

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Try a new strategy to improve conversations with your child

Are you tired of asking your child questions about school and getting little response? Then try this strategy.

Instead of asking your child lots of questions when he gets home from school, tell him five things about your day first. For example:

1. *I've had such a busy day.*
2. *I went to the library this morning to get some books.*
3. *Then I met Grandma for lunch.*
4. *We went to buy Rachel a present.*
5. *It was good to get home.*

After you've finished, say "Tell me a little bit about your day." Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. Instead, say things like, "What was the best part of your day?" or "Tell me about what you learned today."

You can also use this strategy to start discussions about schoolwork. If your child brings home a picture from school, look at it and make five observations about what you see. Comment on the colors. Say what you like about it. Tell what it reminds you of, etc. Then ask your child, "What does it mean to you?"

"To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well."

—John Marshall

Encourage independence during your child's homework time

It usually starts with a simple question: "How do you spell *Illinois*?" And before you realize it, you've spent the next 20 minutes answering all your child's homework questions.

Your child will often be asked to find and learn facts for homework. It's important for you to encourage him to do this on his own. Here's how:

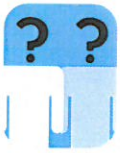
First, tell your child that he has to try to answer all homework questions by himself. He should start with the questions he knows the answers to, skipping over any that give him problems. Then have him go back and think about the questions he couldn't answer the first time around.

Then, and only then, should your child ask you for help. And when he does, keep your goal in mind: You don't just want your child to get the right answer. You want him to learn *how* to get the right answer—by himself.

Suppose your child asks you to spell *Illinois*. Instead of rattling off the spelling, you might ask, "Where could you find that?" Then get out the dictionary or a map and have your child find *Illinois*. This way, your child learns about the silent *s* at the end of the word, and he also learns how to use a dictionary and a map.

Showing your child how to find information by himself is the most effective way to help him learn facts now and be prepared to learn more in the future.

Are you teaching your child how to deal with failure?



Some parents want to wrap their kids in a protective bubble so they never have to experience failure. Others know that overcoming disappointments can teach valuable lessons.

Are you helping your child learn from failure? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

___**1. Do you give** your child a chance to solve problems on her own rather than jumping in to help right away?

___**2. Do you encourage** your child to think about what she could do differently the next time?

___**3. Are you** a good role model? When you fail at something, do you talk about it and about how to fix it?

___**4. Do you help** your child keep disappointments in perspective? "You didn't ace your test, but you earned a higher grade than last time!"

___**5. Do you show** your child how to be a gracious winner and a good loser?

How well are you doing?

If most of your answers are *yes*, you are helping your child learn to bounce back from disappointment. For each *no*, try that idea in the quiz.

Elementary School Parents make the difference!

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Focus on your child's self-control to improve behavior at school

Everyone wants kids to be well-behaved in school. But today, parents and teachers are often concerned about a lack of self-discipline in students.

When classroom instruction is continually interrupted by students who misbehave, no learning can take place. Students need a quiet, orderly environment in which to learn.

Remember: Positive habits begin at home. To help your child develop self-control:

1. **Review the school rules** and regulations. Talk to your child about them and be sure to support them.
2. **Let your child** experience the consequences of her actions. Don't always rush to bail her out.
3. **Talk to your child's teachers** about how she behaves in school.
4. **Talk to your child** about the importance of self-discipline at home and at school.
5. **Show respect** for your child. She will be more likely to respect herself and others.
6. **Encourage independence.** Allow your child to take part in making the decisions that affect her life.

You can help your child develop valuable leadership skills

Some children seem to be born leaders. They have the self-confidence, helpfulness and friendliness that make other people want to work with them.

But all children, whether they are born leaders or not, have the ability to *become* leaders. Here are some ways you can help your child develop leadership skills:

- **Look at leaders in the news.** Whether you're watching a story about a winning football team or a community effort to build a park, help your child see that someone was the leader of that group. Talk about what makes people good leaders.
- **Be a leader yourself.** Elementary school children want to be like their parents. When you take a leadership role—whether it's at school, in business or in your community—tell your child about what you're doing and why. "I volunteered to help your school raise money because I want all of the classes to have more computers."
- **Teach your child** to see things from other people's points of view. Good leaders aren't bossy. They make people *want* to work together.
- **Find leadership opportunities.** Children can learn leadership skills in houses of worship, clubs, Scouts, athletic teams and many other organizations. Family meetings are another good way to develop "home-grown" leadership. Let children take turns chairing the meetings and managing family projects.
- **Don't push.** Pressuring a child beyond her abilities will destroy self-esteem, not build it. If your child seems stressed or unhappy, it's time to lighten up.

Source: L. Balter, *Child Psychology: A Handbook of Contemporary Issues*, Psychology Press.

Q: My son gets average grades, but I know he could do better. Some parents pay their children for good grades. Is this something I should consider?

Questions & Answers

A: Parents want their children to do their best in school—and they are constantly looking for effective ways to motivate their kids to achieve. But most experts agree that paying kids for getting good grades is a bad idea. Here are three reasons why.

Paying for grades:

1. **Doesn't allow your child** to enjoy the satisfaction of learning. Kids don't need bribes to *want* to learn. Children naturally love to learn. As they master new skills or memorize new facts, they gain self-steem and self-confidence. However, when you pay your child for grades, you actually run the risk of *decreasing* your child's self-confidence.
2. **Doesn't recognize effort.** Your child should focus on doing his best. If he's tried his hardest, neither he nor you should worry too much about whether he earns an A or a B. What matters is that he's learning.
3. **Decreases motivation.** Kids who get paid for doing some things expect to get paid for doing everything. Pretty soon, your child will have his hand out every time you want him to do something, from mowing the grass to taking out the trash to feeding the dog.

So what can you do to get your child's grades up? Help him focus on what he is learning. Help him keep track of his new skills. And praise him for working hard and doing his best!

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It Matters: Reading

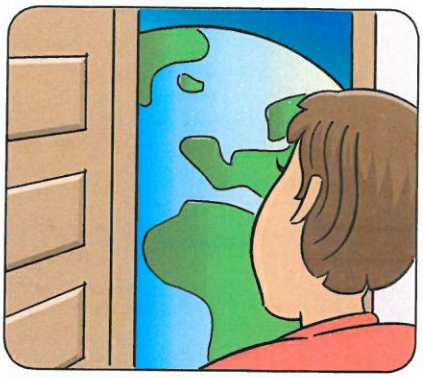
Be a reading role model to build reading interest

Children who see their parents reading are often more motivated to read themselves. To show your child that reading matters to you:

- **Let her see you** reading every day. Pick up a newspaper, book or magazine. Your child will see that you choose to read, and will want to read, too.
- **Tell her** *why* you are reading—for information, to double-check something you think you know. Or you may be reading just for pure enjoyment.
- **Look up a word** in the dictionary if you come across one you are unsure of. Ask your child if she knows the meaning of the word.
- **Read aloud** to her. When you come across something you think your child might find interesting, read a small part of it to her. She may be motivated to finish reading the article herself.
- **Use your library card.** When you take your child to the library, find something to check out for yourself.
- **Join her.** When you see your child reading, pick up something to read yourself and make a snack to share.
- **Give books as gifts.** Show her that books are special by giving them as gifts. Encourage your child to give her friends books as gifts, too.
- **Ask relatives** to support her reading habits, too. They can record themselves reading a book to your child.

Show your child how reading is connected to so many things!

Reading opens the doors to a world of information and enjoyment. That's why it's essential to help your child understand the value of reading and how it connects to so many things in his life and in the word.



Reading is essential for:

- **Obtaining information.** People learn about rules, directions, facts and more. Have your child read a recipe to you as you cook. Read a manual aloud that explains how to put something together. Challenge your child to read to find answers to questions, such as "How can I get this grass stain out of your shirt?"
- **Communication.** Talk with your child about the ways reading helps you communicate with others—through mail, email, texts and notes. Then suggest that your child exchange letters with a long-distance friend. Or perhaps he could write an email to a local politician about an issue that's important to him.
- **Pleasure.** Help your child plan a relaxing end-of-the-day reading routine. And be sure to help him find books that will give him a good laugh or take him on an exciting adventure.

Why not include reading in your New Year's resolutions?

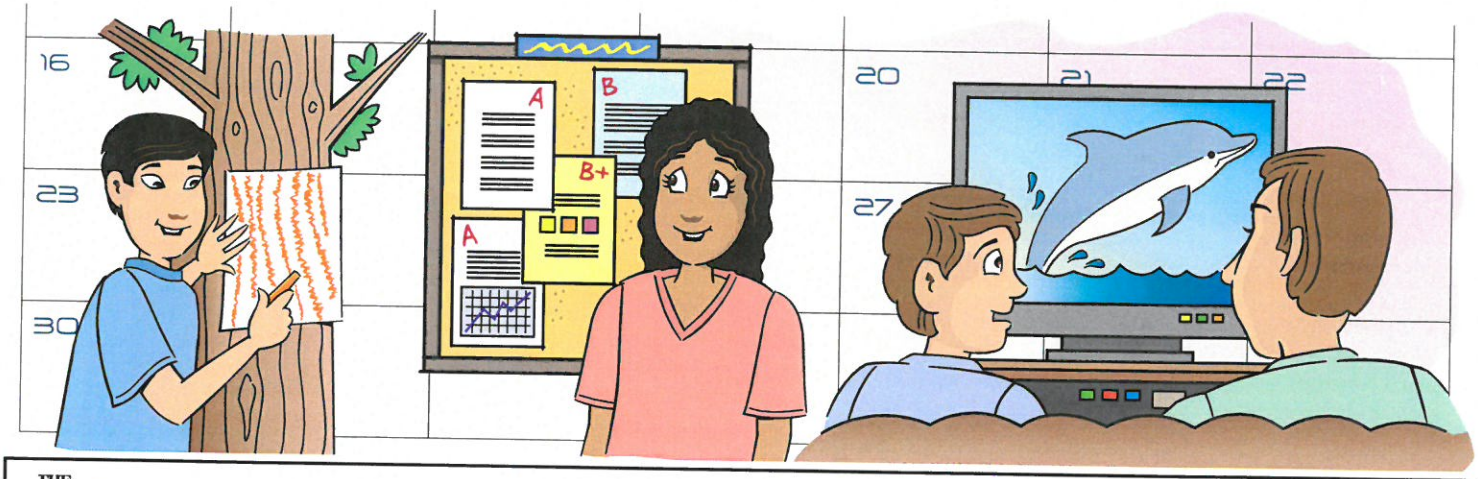
The new calendar year offers the opportunity to think about the past and set goals for the future. This includes family reading goals!

Take time with your child to:

- **Review favorite books** or stories from the past year. If the books are nearby, look through them together. Have your child choose his three favorites. Ask, "What was the best part of this story? Why?" Or, "What is your favorite picture in this book?"
- **Discuss future reading plans.** How much time are family members spending on reading for pleasure? Are there ways you and your child can improve your reading habits? Together, write any ideas or goals you may have. Post them in a place where you will see them often.
- **Plan to read new things.** In addition to books, suggest your child read magazines, newspapers, cookbooks, catalogs—anything and everything he can get his hands on!

Parent & Child Elementary School Activity Calendar

Warwick School District
Student Services Department



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Parent & Child Activity Calendar

Elementary School Parents make the difference!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Help your child set a goal and write a plan to achieve it this year.	**2** Talk with your child about a choice you've made. Also talk about the consequences.	**3** Do a crossword puzzle with your child. It's a great way to help him learn new words.	**4** Ask your child to pretend she's Mayor for a day. Have her list three ideas to make your community a better place.	**5** Encourage your child to start a diary or journal this year.	**6** When you're in the store, ask your child to figure how much tax you will be charged on a purchase.	**7** Encourage your child to put on a talent show or puppet show. You provide the popcorn and the applause.
8 Look for ways to involve your child in your hobbies. For example, if you are a runner, take your child for a short jog.	**9** Write an encouraging note and tuck it in your child's lunch box or in a school book.	**10** When you watch TV, ask your child questions: "Was what that person did a good idea?" "What would you do?"	**11** Try a geography quiz. Someone names a city, state or river. The next person has to locate it on a map or globe.	**12** Have a contest: Who can name the most parts of the body? (Organs count, too.)	**13** Start a sentence-a-day story. In a special notebook, have your child write a story by adding one sentence each day.	**14** Help your child create a family joke book. Write one or two jokes per page. Staple the pages together.
15 Look at some family photos with your child. How many relatives can he name?	**16** Decide on a location anywhere in the world. Take turns telling one thing you would like to see there.	**17** Write your child's name vertically. Have her use each letter in her name to begin a line of a poem.	**18** Have your child read to you as you're cleaning up after supper. Or read to your child as he cleans up!	**19** Have your child teach you something she needs to learn for homework. It's a great way to reinforce learning.	**20** Let your child plan dinner tonight. How many food groups can he include?	**21** Have your child cut out pictures from several magazines. Then have her write a story about them.
22 Cook breakfast with your child for the rest of the family. Or invite friends over!	**23** Play Alphabet Mixup. Choose a word and put the letters in alphabetical order. Can your child figure out the word?	**24** Talk about the best and the worst parts of everyone's day. Each person gets a turn to talk.	**25** Ask your child to calculate the average age of family members. Add ages and then divide by number of family members.	**26** Talk about three ways you used math today. Ask everyone in the family how they used math.	**27** Play the Opposites Game. Say a word and see if your child can tell you its opposite.	**28** Enjoy some outdoor physical activity as a family today.
29 Help your child clean out his closet. Pass on unused toys or clothes in good condition to other families.	**30** Remove three items from your purse or pocket. Show them to your child. Put them away. Can she name them?	**31** Encourage your child's creativity. Ask unusual questions. "What would you bring to a picnic in space?"	**January 2017**			

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