

# Building Life Skills



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## 40 Key Building Blocks to Help Kids Succeed

Search Institute has identified 40 building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible. These building blocks are referred to as "assets." Local schools have united in identifying monthly "asset" themes for schools and communities to help kids reach their potential.

### Theme for August

#### COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

Young people develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.

#### Caring school climate

I have teachers and other adults who help me and care about me in my school.

I am encouraged to do my best by the adults in my school.

#### Parent involvement in schooling

I have family members who get involved and help me succeed in school.

#### Achievement motivation

I care about doing well in school and in all of my activities.

I do the things I need to do so that I can do well in school and in all of my activities.

#### School engagemen

I am interested, I pay attention, and I participate when I am in school.

I enjoy exploring new ideas. I am excited when I learn new things.

#### Homework

I do all of my homework every day.

## Had time to talk with the Kids?

By Larry Tracey

With the school year quickly approaching here is an excellent way to help your child be more successful in school, learn a valuable life skill and develop this month's Asset of the Month, Commitment to Learning.

Setting goals has multiple benefits and is a great opportunity for positive communication with your child. It creates motivation and is a non-threatening way to look at areas for improvement.

I first started setting goals with my oldest son Joe, when he was in second grade. We were lying on the bed having a conversation about the new school year and how exciting it would be. We talked about things he learned last year and I asked if he knew what he would be learning this year.

From that conversation my son set a goal to learn to write cursive. Cursive was something he was going to learn regardless, that year.

Our purpose is to get our children to learn how to set goals and create the memory and feeling of being successful. This helps them gain self-confidence in themselves and the process.

Since writing cursive was his goal, he was excited and eager to learn. The idea is that they set the goal and they remember achieving it. At the end of



Brian, 4th Grade

the year we went to Chuck E. Cheese's to celebrate. With my second and third son we started goal setting in kindergarten.

Sometimes kids will set a goal that is unrealistic. When Brian was in fourth grade I asked him what is one thing he would like to

improve on in school this year? He said spelling. So he wrote a goal to score 100% on all his spelling tests. Realizing these were extreme odds I had to do some quick thinking. I asked him if he ever made an "i" that looked like an "e" or if he ever accidentally forgot a letter? He said yes. From there, we figured he would take about thirty spelling tests during the year. I suggested he try for 100% on 20 tests and he agreed.



Brian, Age 24

We made a spelling test chart for the desk in his bedroom. There he could see his goal and his progress and in April of that year he reached his goal of 100% on twenty tests.

Here's the best part, rarely did I have to remind him to study for spelling. This is not to say you will not have to take the lead roll.

As adults and the parent you may have to be highly active in helping your children reach their goals.

Last year, my now 24-year-old son Brian, called me and said, "Hey dad, email me a goal sheet will you?" Teach your children valuable life skills and you will get those unexpected gifts from them later in life. If you would like more information or have a question on how to get started email me: [goals@larrytracey.com](mailto:goals@larrytracey.com)

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### Goal Setting Tips

- ? Put goals in writing. This is a MUST.
- ? Focus on do's not don'ts.
- ? Goals must be specific or measurable. Learning to write cursive is measurable. 100% on 20 tests is specific. Good grades are nether specific or measurable.
- ? Set one, two or three goals to start with. Set fun or personal goals too!
- ? Post goals where they can be read, seen and remembered. Get creative here. Make signs or posters. Use pictures. Put them on book bags, t-shirts, binders or folders and more!
- ? Celebrate your victories.
- ? Make sure these are your child's goals, not yours.
- ? Learn the language of support and genuine encouragement. Nagging, shaming or guilt tripping is not an option.
- ? Have patience. As your child gain fidence you will see them using goal setting in many areas of their life.

### MONTHLY THEMES

August.....Commitment to learning  
September.....Decision-making  
October.....Respect  
November.....Responsibility  
December.....Caring  
January.....Fairness  
February.....Trustworthiness  
March.....Positive Identity  
April.....Citizenship  
May.....Empowerment  
June.....Support  
July.....Constructive use of time



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