

Building Family Goals for Your Children

by Michelle "Shelly" Vicari

The start of a new year is the perfect time to focus on making goals together as a family. Whether you call them resolutions or goals, they are an opportunity to think about what your family can do together to prioritize health in a fun and achievable way.

Developing Your Family Goals

Take some time to discuss with your children why it's good to have goals and how they will help your family be healthy in body and mind. As a family, brainstorm the health goals you would like to achieve this year. The more you can involve your children in helping set these goals, the more likely it is they'll be on board with working to achieve them.

Make sure your family's goals are specific, measurable and trackable. Pair each goal with specific actions you can take to achieve them. Keep track of and celebrate your family's goal progress. For example, if your family goal is to get more active, perhaps you can plan to find a 5K charity walk you can all participate in every month. Register for the event and place it on your family calendar. Take a family photo at each of the finish lines so next year, you can look back at all those fun memories and feel the satisfaction of a goal accomplished.



Let's look at some of the most common goals and fun, family-friendly ways to make them happen:

GOAL: Spend More Time Together

Start a weekly ritual. For instance, once a week, have a family movie or game night. Turn on some tunes and have a Saturday night dance party. Eat Sunday dinner together. Make it device-free and simply talk to each other. (Use our conversation starters on page 30.)



GOAL: Less Screen Time

This is a goal that children and teens often fight parents on. How about making screen time something you do together as a family? Try a TikTok dance challenge, create a YouTube cooking show or make an Instagram account for your family pet.



GOAL: Eat Healthier

Sit down as a family and plan the menu for the week ahead of time. Not only will you hear the dreaded "What's for dinner?" question much less, but you will ensure an overall healthier and more balanced week of meals.

Maybe a family goal could be to eat more vegetables. Pick out a vegetable of the week and choose a recipe to try that highlights it. Research suggests that cooking together increases the likelihood of children eating and enjoying new foods.



GOAL: Volunteer as a Family

Make a list of various ways you want to help others this year and figure out how to make them happen. Schedule something each month. From participating in a charity walk or collecting used blankets and towels for your local animal shelter to raking an elderly neighbor's leaves, there are endless possibilities.



GOAL: Get More Active

Get some fun exercise together. Take an after-dinner walk, fly a kite on a windy day or build a snow person. Create a family step challenge! You can use a smartwatch or an inexpensive, less-than-five-dollars step counter to chart each family member's number of steps per day. The person with the most steps at the end of the week can pick the movie everyone will watch on family movie night. These ideas are also opportunities to spend more time outdoors, which is a great mood booster.



GOAL: Drink More Water

There is a debate as to how many glasses a day we should drink, but most of us aren't drinking enough regardless. Create a chart for each family member to fill in at the end of the day. Plan a prize for the best water drinker each month – like a cool new water bottle! To track water intake and keep everyone motivated, you can download a fun app like Plant Nanny, which helps encourage sipping to keep a plant alive and healthy (think 90's Tamagotchis).



Final Thoughts

Many people set a weight-loss goal for the New Year. While weight-loss might be an area you want to work on to improve your health, make sure you work with your healthcare provider (find one at [ObesityCareProviders.com](https://www.obesitycareproviders.com)) and be mindful of what you are role-modeling. Avoid negative comments about your body, food and eating, which can be harmful. Be a positive role model by making the healthiest choices you can each day, which will help create a healthy environment for the whole family.

I hope these ideas inspired you to make some family goals so that 2023 will be your family's healthiest and happiest yet.

“ Be a positive role model by making the healthiest choices you can each day, which will help create a healthy environment for the whole family. ”



Family Dinner Conversation Starters:

- If you could plan the perfect day, what would you do from the time you woke up until bedtime?
- What is your favorite thing that we've done together as a family?
- What is something that makes you feel happy?
- When was a time you felt very proud of yourself?
- What do you think the best part about being a kid is? (For the adults: What was the best part?)
- What's the best part about being in this family?
- If you had a million dollars, what would you do?
- What was the highlight of your day?
- What was the worst or hardest part of your day?
- What was the funniest thing that happened this week?
- How were you helpful today?
- What is your favorite memory from this year?

About the Author:

Michelle "Shelly" Vicari, Immediate Past OAC Chair, majored in Child Development and Family Studies as well as Political Science at San Diego State University. She is the former Curriculum Director of the largest National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited Child Care Centers in Southern California. She has authored many curriculum guides for teachers working with young children and was lucky enough to once meet Mr. Fred Rogers!



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

info@obesityaction.org

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



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