

Ask the Pediatrician: What goals for the new year can be set with children?

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Q: I would like to set some reasonable, healthy resolutions for the new year with my kids. What are some good ones to try?

A: The start of a [new year](#) is a great time to help your children focus on forming [good habits](#). Making New Year's resolutions can be a fun way to do this.

As a pediatrician and mom of three kids, I know how important it is to set healthy goals with kids—and to be realistic about those goals. Kids can have fun keeping track on sticker charts or getting praise or rewards as they reach these goals, depending on their age.

I encourage you to sit down with your kids and pick a few goals they want to set as their New Year's resolutions. If it's too overwhelming to think of them as resolutions, then just talk about them as goals and make it fun.

Involving kids in the [decision process](#) and making these goals fun for the whole family can help turn these resolutions into long-lasting habits.

Here are some ideas you can suggest to your children, depending on their age:

For preschoolers:

- I will try to clean up my toys by putting them where they belong.
- I will let my parents help me brush my teeth twice a day.
- I will wash my hands after going to the bathroom and before eating.
- I will try new foods, especially different colors of vegetables.
- I will help clear the table when I am done eating.
- I will be friendly to all animals. I will ask the owners if I can pet their animal first.
- I will always hold a grown-up's hand when I cross the street.
- I will do my best to be nice to other kids who need a friend or who look sad or lonely.

- I will talk with my parent or another adult I trust when I need help or am scared.

Ages 5 to 12 years old:

- I will drink water every day and healthy beverages like milk with meals.
- I will try to find a physical activity (like playing tag, jumping rope, dancing or riding my bike) or a sport I like and do it at least three times a week.
- I will always wear a helmet when riding a bike, scooter or skateboard.
- I'll try to be friendly to kids who may have a hard time making friends by talking with them and inviting them to join activities.
- I will tell an adult about bullying that I see or hear about to do what I can to help keep school safe for everyone.
- I will keep my personal info safe and not share my name, home address, school name or phone number online. Also, I'll never send a picture of myself to someone I chat with online without asking my parent if it is OK.
- I will try to talk with my parent or a trusted adult when I have a problem or feel stressed.
- I will do my best to follow our household rules for video games and internet use.

Ages 13 and older:

- I will try to eat two servings of fruit and two servings of vegetables every day. I will drink sodas or [fruit drinks](#) only at special times.
- I will do my best to take care of my body through fun [physical activity](#) and eating the right types of foods.
- I will try to choose educational, high-quality nonviolent TV

shows and video games that I enjoy. I will spend only one to two hours each day on these activities. I promise to respect our household rules for video games and internet use.

- I will try to get eight to 10 hours of sleep each night.
- I will help out in my community. I will give some of my time to help others, working with community groups or others that help people in need.
- When I feel angry or stressed out, I will take a break and find helpful ways to deal with the stress, such as exercising, reading, writing in a journal or talking about my problem with a parent or friend.
- When I notice my friends are struggling, being bullied or making risky choices, I will look for a trusted adult so that we can attempt to help.
- I will be careful about whom I choose to date. I will treat the other person with respect and not force them to do something they do not want to do. I will expect to be treated the same way in return.
- I will resist [peer pressure](#) to try drugs, alcohol, or smoking or vaping.
- I will not text or talk on a cellphone while driving and will always wear my seat belt.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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